

WEEK 18: CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 14

- At the end of chapter 13, it appears that Satan (the Dragon), Antichrist (beast from the sea) and the False Prophet (beast from the earth) are in a spot to have their final victory.
- The earth is under their power, the image of the first beast has been set up, people are worshipping it and taking his mark so that they can buy and sell goods.
- By all accounts, evil has prevailed and the constant slaughter of God's people will continue to be normal practice on the earth.
- But now we are entering into chapter 14 and a shift from the apparent victory of evil to a front row seat to the complete sovereignty and power of the true God who sits in the heavens.

CHAPTER 14:1-5 ~ THE LAMB AND HIS PEOPLE

Revelation 14:1-5 "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. {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..."

- There are two focal points here that John mentions.
- There is the Lamb who was standing on Mount Zion.
 - John is now looking past all the judgments (seals, trumpets, and bowls) and is gazing at the earthly reign of Jesus at the start of His millennial reign.
 - This is a reference to the 2nd coming of Jesus and is anticipate in the Old Testament.
 - **Psalms 2:6-9** "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." {7} "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. {8} 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. {9} 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

- **Psalm 48:2** “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion in the far north, The city of the great King.”
- **Isaiah 24:23** “Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders.”
- **Zechariah 14:4** “In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”
- There are the 144,000 who were kept for this day.
 - These are the same 144,000 that were first mentioned in 7:4-8. They were sealed at the beginning of the tribulation and will not just survive through, but will be with the Lamb.
 - “In their first mention they are seen at the beginning of the great tribulation. In their second mention in chapter 14, they are seen still intact, preserved by God through the fearful days of persecution and standing triumphantly with the Lamb on Mount Zion at the beginning of the millennial reign.” (Walvoord)
 - They sing a new song that only they know.
 - “The preponderance of evidence seems to indicate that this is indeed a heavenly scene which John is seeing “in the Spirit” while his body is on earth. If the 144,000 are on earth in Zion, who then are the company in heaven? Though the natural questions concerning their identity are not clearly answered in the text, the heavenly group are probably the martyred saints of the tribulation, in contrast to the 144,000 who are on earth and do not suffer martyrdom. Both groups, however, experience the trials of the great tribulation and therefore are alone worthy to enter into the song of redemption recounting their victory over their enemies and praising God for His grace which has numbered them among the redeemed.” (Walvoord)
 - “Chronologically, the song John hears is their hymn of praise in heaven during the time of the great tribulation, but the same song is echoed by the 144,000 who stand triumphantly on Mount Zion after the tribulation.” (Walvoord)
 - We don’t know why they alone know the song
- In **verses 4-5**, notice the contrast between those sealed for the beast and those sealed for Jesus.
 - 666 on the hand or forehead – Father’s name on forehead
 - Demonic deception and apostasy – Pure, blameless, chaste
 - Short-lived earthly reign – Eternal, sovereign rule on Zion

- These 144,000 have been kept from sexual immorality (this doesn't mean they were no married), they followed Jesus where He went (living their lives during the tribulation for Christ), they are the godly remnant of Israel which is going to start the nation after it has been cleansed.
 - They are going to point many others to come to Christ after the tribulation and during the Millennium rule of Jesus.
 - **Zechariah 12:10** "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."
- There was no lie in their mouths, and they were blameless (not that they were perfect, but that they did not hold to or promote the false religion of the beast.).
- "...this language represents complete devotion and spiritual chastity in an age of rampant demonic and religious apostasy."
- We can learn from this today in our walk with the Lord.
 - "Christians in the present age are exhorted to be "without blame before him" (Eph. 1:4), "without blemish" (Eph. 5:27; 1 Peter 1:19), "unblameable" (Col. 1:22), "without spot" (Heb. 9:14), and "faultless" (Jude 24)." (Walvoord)

CHAPTER 14:6-8 ~ 2 PROCLAMATIONS

Revelation 14:6-8 "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." {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 is the gospel message going forth throughout the whole world and a prophecy of destruction.
- This is God's mercy towards an unrepentant and hateful world. Just because someone does not take the mark of the beast does not mean they are automatically saved.
- They still need to respond to the gospel message; that's what we have here. God uses supernatural means so that the gospel can be heard around the world.
 - Notice the language in **13:7** says that the beast was given authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.

- Now in **14:6** the gospel is supernaturally preached to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.
- Even though God gave the beast authority, it was not absolute authority. God still cares about those people who are under the beast's rule.
- Interesting to note in **verse 7**, the content of the message.
 - Fear God...in other words, don't look around and think that you should fear evil.
 - Worship Him as creator (instead of the created beast).
- The hour of judgment has come...the bowl judgments are about to be poured out and then Christ is going to return and establish His 1000-year reign upon the earth.
- The 2nd angel pronounces that Babylon the great *is fallen* (this is a past tense and guarantee of it happening).
- "Babylon has from its inception symbolized evil and rebellion against god. It was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:9), a proud, powerful, God-rejecting ruler. Babel (Babylon) was the site of the first organized system of idolatrous false religion (Gen. 11:1-4). The Tower of Babel, the expression of that false religion, was a ziggurat; an edifice designed to facilitate idolatrous worship. God judged the people's idolatry and rebellion by confusing their language and scattering them over the globe (Gen. 11:5-9). Thus the seeds of idolatry and false religion spread around the world from Babylon, to take root wherever these proud rebels and their descendants settled."¹
- "Babylon represents both a literal future geographic epicenter and the global anti-God economic, political, and religious system. The use of the past tense (*is fallen*) is a prophetic certitude. It guarantees the absolute annihilation of the global system that seduced the nations into spiritual fornication."²
- "The destruction of the city of Babylon itself, whether a reference to Rome, as is commonly held, or to a rebuilt city of Babylon on the ancient site of historic Babylon, does not take place until the end of the great tribulation (Rev. 16:17-19). Inasmuch as the context here seems to deal primarily with the end of the great tribulation and the beginning of the millennial kingdom, the reference seems to be to the literal city."
(Walvoord)

CHAPTER 14:9-13 ~ TWO ETERNAL DESTINATIONS

Revelation 14:9-13 "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. {11} "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast

¹ MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 90.

² Michael Vlach

and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." {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."

- Again, there are two types of people represented here...those who took the mark of the beast and those who kept the commandments of God and faith in Jesus.
- For those who chose the mark of the beast, it was not by accident. It was an intentional act of worship to turn from the living God to worship the beast. Nobody is going to *accidentally* take the mark of the beast nor are they going to not understand what they are doing.
- Notice the language, *if anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark...* these are not acts of someone who does not understand what they are doing.
- This means that these people must be held accountable for their actions.
- In **verse 10**, those who chose to worship the beast ***will drink of the wine of the wrath of God.***
- It is going to be full strength; God's wrath will not be held back upon those who worship the beast.
- "There is no way to describe hell. Nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person has any real idea of it. No madman in wildest flights of insanity ever beheld its horror. No man in delirium ever pictured a place so utterly terrible as this. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produces a terror to match that of the mildest hell. No murder scene with splashed blood and oozing wound ever suggested a revulsion that could touch the border lands of hell."³
- God's undiluted wrath is described with fire and brimstone...most likely real fire but could also symbolize horrible and continual suffering...brimstone is fiery sulfur.
- The Bible give some details of hell, but overall is it not a place to spend eternity.
- "...this passage as an undeniable biblical refutation of annihilationism. It establishes the reality of conscious, eternal punishment for those who choose the Beast over the Lamb."⁴
- "*The righteousness of God is as inescapable as the love of God is infinite.* The love of God is not free to express itself to those who have spurned Jesus Christ. Their torment is not a momentary one, for it is described in verse 11 as continuing forever, literally "into the ages of ages," the strongest expression of eternity of which the Greek is capable. To emphasize the idea of continued suffering, they are declared to have no rest day or night. In describing the worshipers of the beast, the word *worship* as well as the word *receive* in verse 11 is in the present tense emphasizing continued worship of the beast over a long period of time, the worshipers spurning the testimony of the godly remnant and plunging blindly to their

³ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/2304/the-furnace-of-fire>

⁴ Michael Vlach, Matt Waymeyer

doom. The same present tense is used in describing their torment. As the worship of the beast is not interrupted by repentance, so their torment is not interrupted when repentance is too late.” (Walvoord)

- **For those who do not take the mark of the beast and do not worship the beast...they are blessed.**
- The tribulation saints are patiently waiting for judgment upon the wicked. They know that keeping God’s commands and staying strong in the faith will only be met with punishment. But they maintain the course at any cost.
- In **verse 13**, there is a great contrast between the wicked and the righteous. While the wicked face eternal torment and have no rest day or night...those martyred saints enter into rest immediately upon their death.
- Their faithful deeds follow them; meaning their deeds are a witness to their faithfulness in the midst of the greatest persecution the world has ever witnessed.
- “The reference to the blessing of those who die in the Lord from this time on is not a general reference to all saints who die, but specifically to those who die in this period, that is, as martyrs of the faith. It is far better to be dead at the hand of the beast than to have favor as his worshiper.” (Walvoord)

CHAPTER 14:14-20 ~ JUDGMENT UPON THE WICKED

Revelation 14:14-20 “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. {17} And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. {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." {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.

- This “son of man” coming down sitting on a white cloud is Christ Himself.
- He has the golden crown which is given to royalty and those who rule.
- “The sharp sickle indicates this is the time of harvest, referring to the climactic judgments relating to the second coming.” (Walvoord)
- An angel came out and calls for Jesus to use His sickle. The time of judgment has come because the harvest of the earth is ripe.

- “The expression ‘the harvest of the earth is ripe’ seems to imply that judgment is overdue. The verb form “is ripe” meaning “to become dry or withered,” has a bad connotation (cf. Matt. 21:19-20; Mark 3:1, 3; 11:20; Luke 8:6; Rev. 16:12). The picture here is of a fruit or vegetable that has become so ripe that it has begun to dry up and wither. The rotten moral condition of the world is dealt with now with a sharp sickle.”
(Walvoord)
- Those on earth are now in a moral place where they can no longer be used for anything good.
 - **Matthew 13:40** “So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.”
- This is an encouragement for and a prelude to Christ’s judgment to be unleashed in His second coming.
- This is a preview of what is going to take place at the Battle of Armageddon. Those against Christ will not stand a chance nor have an opportunity against Him.
- Jesus will mow down His enemies like a farmer who is cutting His grain.
- This will begin with the final bowl judgments (the first phase of the final reaping of the earth) and will reach its high point in Christ’s return.
- In **verses 17-20** we have God using one of His angels for divine judgment against wicked mankind.
- This angel also had a sickle and those whom he reaped were to be put into the wine press of God’s wrath. This was to be done outside the city...this refers to the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:17-19)
- This is “a literal description of the immense scope of the Battle of Armageddon. The blood from catastrophic military engagements will pool and flow through the deep ravines and valleys of Israel, spanning the entire length of the country.”⁵
- The valley of Megiddo or the Jezreel Valley as it is known now, will be the place for the final battle between Jesus and the antichrist.
- This battle will actually be taken place throughout the length of Israel.
- The blood from the battle will be *up to the horses bridle for 200 miles*. This would be blood pooling to a depth of about 5 feet.
- “Perhaps it will actually be this deep: “If at the end of the Tribulation, 1.5 to 2 billion people remain on earth, and if 10 percent of them are fighting at Armageddon, that means 150-200 million people will be fighting and, presumably, most slaughtered. The valley of Megiddo, where the war will be fought in the north of Palestine, drains into the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea, allowing sufficient distance to literally fulfill this prediction.”⁶

⁵ Michael Vlach, Matt Waymeyer

⁶ Ryrie, Revelation, 126.