

Revelation - Chapter Fourteen

Chapter summary – [Again] *Many have pointed out that seven personages appear in chapters 12-13: (1) a woman clothed with the sun, representing Israel (12:1-2); (2) the red dragon with seven heads and 10 horns, representing Satan (12:3-4); (3) the male Child, representing Christ (12:5-6); (4) the archangel Michael, casting Satan out of heaven (12:7-12); (5) the offspring of the woman, persecuted by the dragon (12:13-17); (6) the beast out of the sea, the future world dictator [the Roman Prince] (13:2-10); (7) the beast out of the earth, the false prophet [the Jewish Antichrist] (13:11-18). These chapters do not advance the narrative chronologically, but present events and situations that are concurrent with the soundings of the trumpets. Chronological progress of events resumes in chapter 16.*¹

In the previous chapter we were introduced to the two beasts. The first was the beast of the sea, who I believe is the Roman Prince; a political and military leader. The second I believe to be the Jewish Antichrist; a religious and economic leader. We were not only introduced to these individuals; but we were also introduced to the terror they will inflict.

“The awful persecutions which the two beasts will inflict upon the saints of the tribulation period will cause the people of God to cry out in anguish, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou delay to judge our enemies and deliver us from out of their hands?’ The information in chapters 14-15 of Revelation is just the encouragement they will need for remaining true to Christ in the midst of a most terrible purge. God will not remain inactive and silent indefinitely; His out-stretched arm will eventually smite all of the Gentile enemies of the faithful remnant and will also sever all of the apostate Jews from the saintly Jews.”² That is what this chapter and chapter 15 will reveal.

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IV. the vision of the Final Days, (Chs. 6-22)

C. SOME MAJOR PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAMS -
(12:1-14:20)

6. The 144,000 described, (14:1-5) - "**GETTING THE RIGHT TATOO!**"

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹ **Then** (after being introduced to the two beasts and their wicked ambitions), **I looked, and behold, a Lamb** (who is Jesus Christ, slain for the salvation of the world), **standing** (in Jerusalem), **on**

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

¹ Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System.

² Benson, *Revelation: The Grand Finale of History*, p. 61

Mount Zion (the mountain on which Jerusalem is build), **and with Him** (Jesus Christ), **one hundred and forty-four thousand** (Jews, Rev. 7:1-8), **having His Father's** (God the Father's), **name written on their foreheads**, (identifying the 144,000 as belonging to God and thus protected by Him).

F APPLICATION:

1. Who seals believers? The Holy Spirit.
2. Are believers any less secure than the 144,000? No.
3. What are some of the reasons for our being sealed for security purposes in the first place? Because God promises to watch over us, because our enemy the devil seeks to destroy us and because we need to know that we have everything we need in order to fulfill God's purpose for our lives.
4. How should being secure impact our lives? If God is for us, who can be against us?!

² **And** (then), **I heard a voice** (coming), **from heaven**, (it was so powerful that it roared), **like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard** (along with the voice), **the sound of harpists playing** (in heaven with), **their harps**.

³ **They** (we are not told exactly who "they" are, only that they), **sang as it were** (presumably because of the occasion), **a new song before the throne** (in heaven), **before the four living creatures, and the elders** (around the throne); **and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand** (signifying a uniqueness to their person and/or experience), **who were redeemed** (through professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior), **from the earth**.

⁴ **These** (144,000), **are the ones who were not defiled with women** (they have not given away their purity/innocence to another; they have no divided interests [1 Cor. 7:32, 33]), **for they are virgins**, (they never married or had premarital sex; they are unconnected to anyone). **These are the ones who** (faithfully), **follow the Lamb wherever He goes**, (wherever He leads them—whether into danger or safety, whether into difficulty or comfort, whether into labor or rest, whether into the familiar or unfamiliar, whether into giving or receiving). **These were redeemed** (purchased of God through Christ), **from among men, being firstfruits** (of the many others that would eventually come), **to God and to the Lamb**, (for salvation [*especially the remnant of Israel which needs to happen before Christ can come to the earth to set up His earthly kingdom*]).

⁵ **And in their mouth** (their conversations), **was found no deceit** (no falsehood ever spoken, only the truth), **for they are without fault** (blameless), **before the throne of God**.

F APPLICATION:

Christ was standing among the saints of God (v.1), and so has He always been. What an encouragement that is meant to be to us!

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE.” Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

Genesis 39:2-3,21—The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Exodus 3:12—So He said [to Moses], “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Joshua 1:5—No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you [Joshua]. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Psalms 46:7—The Lord of hosts is with us [the psalmist tells us]; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Isaiah 41:10—Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’

Daniel 5:11—There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him...

Matthew 1:23—Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.

Matthew 18:20—For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Mark 16:20—And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

John 14:18, 23—I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you... “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Acts 18:9-10—Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; “for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

2 Timothy 4:17—But the Lord stood with me [Paul tells Timothy], and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Revelation 22:21—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Read Hebrews 11:32-12:4 now. If there was ever a time to remember these promises, it is in the tribulation period! It is very easy to see why God says in Revelation 1:3, “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*”

NOTES:

7. The angels their announcements, (14:7-12)

NOTES:

1) An angel announces the ageless gospel (6,7) - "*THE GATES OF HELL ARE NO MATCH FOR THE GOSPEL IN HEAVEN!*"

INTERPRETATION:

⁶ **Then** (after the description of the 144,000 and hearing their song), **I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting** (the ageless), **gospel** (good news, glad tidings), **to preach** (proclaim), **to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—³**
⁷ **saying with a loud voice**, (the good news is), “**Fear** (reverence, honor, obey the), **God** (who sits on the throne of the universe [Rev. 4, 5] not the beast of the sea or earth), **and give glory to Him** (testify of Him), **for** (here is the good news), **the hour of His judgment** (damnation, condemnation), **has come; and worship** (kneel before, prostrate yourself before, pay obeisance to), **Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water,**” (not to the beast of the sea who recovers from a mortal wound or the beast of the earth who does miraculous signs and wonders).

F APPLICATION:

Verse six tells us that this good news is eternal and verse seven tells us that in light of the good news man should fear, glorify and worship God. The good news itself is also expressed in verse seven and that is that the moment of God’s judgment has arrived. What can we say is good about this?

For one thing what is eternal? What or who has always been and always will be? God, and thus His attributes. People are quick to draw to mind that God is loving, gracious, merciful and good; but what are some of His other attributes that pertain to judgment?

- He is a **holy** God, which requires that God evaluate what is right according to His own standards.
- He is a **righteous** God which “requires God to do what is right in conformity to His own laws,”⁴ based on His standards.
- He is a **just** God, which “requires that God do what is right judicially in His response to the actions of His personal creatures, (Isa. 45:21).”⁵

But again, the question remains, why is this judgment good news? How does this help us to discover why this should cause people to rejoice? It’s good news because God is clearly stating to all those on

³ There are many different ways gospel is used in Scripture. For example in Acts 20:24 you find the gospel of the grace of God. In Matthew 4:23 you find the gospel of the kingdom of God. God warns us in Galatians 1:8 about many false gospels. Verse seven gives us an idea as to just what this eternal gospel is. God is eternally just, righteous and holy. He cannot be mocked and will judge sin and sinners; ultimately bringing both of them to a perfect conclusion.

⁴ Floyd Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology*, MI: Kregel, 1998, p. 55

⁵ Ibid.

the earth at this time—that no matter how impressive the works of the devil through these two beasts are, they are still a part of God’s creation, thus are accountable to Him, are in His control, and will be dealt with accordingly. Which God says, “The hour has arrived.” That will be very good news to all believers who are yet alive upon the earth! That should be very good news to all believers upon the earth today, but it should also cause all unbelievers to tremble. It should as well, incite the compassion of believers to seek out those who are yet lost with the gospel of Christ while there is time. No enemy of God and the salvation He offers, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, can or should stop us!

2) An angel announces the fall of Babylon, (8)

⁸ **And** (after the angel announced the eternal gospel), **another angel followed, saying, “Babylon** (the commercial center of the world during the tribulation period), **is fallen** (ruined—and again the angel says for emphasis expressing the certainty), **is fallen** (ruined [Rev. 18]), **that great** (impressive and influential), **city,** (is fallen and the reason for her utter ruin is), **because she has made all nations drink** (participate with her), **of the wine** (of the elements of her idolatry and thus as well), **of the wrath** (divine judgment), **of** (or for), **her fornication,**” (i.e., spiritual idolatry).

F APPLICATION:

Again we see that sin does not only affect the person committing the offense against God, but it affects those associated with them as well. We can also see from this verse, that if we join others in their sinful escapades, we will all suffer the consequences alike, (Prov. 1:10-19). It doesn’t matter if we were involved from beginning to end, during half of it, or even just dabbled with it. If we chose to enjoy their sin with them, we have no choice but to suffer with them in the consequences. One last thing we can learn from this verse is that not only will sinful man fall in this time of judgment, but so will his enterprises. Babylon is destroyed and the beasts are judged. All of the time, effort and resources spent on sinful ventures will collapse. The superpowers and the superstructure of hell all crumble alike.

3) An angel announces the destiny of the beast and all those who follow him, (9-12)

⁹ **Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone** (it doesn’t matter who they are), **worships** (offers homage to), **the beast and his image, and receives his** (identifying), **mark on his forehead or on his hand,**
¹⁰ **“he himself shall also** (as will the beast), **drink** (partake), **of the wine** (or the consequences), **of the wrath** (divine judgment), **of God, which is poured out** (administered), **full strength** (undiluted with water), **into the cup of His indignation,** (vehement fury). **He** (the beast), **shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** (burning sulfur), **in the presence** (before the witnesses), **of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb,** (Jesus Christ).

¹¹ “**And the smoke** (or the visual evidence), **of their** (the beasts and those who take his mark), **torment ascends forever and ever** (for eternity); **and they have no rest** (from the torment), **day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.**”

¹² **Here** (in this context, displayed in a world of terror and dictatorial rule) **is the patience of the saints** (seen); **here** (in this context, when the depravity of man is at its zenith), **are those who keep the commandments of God** (love and obey Him [Jn. 14:15, 21], **and the faith of Jesus**, (those who prefer to die a martyrs death that to yield to fear and tyranny).

F APPLICATION:

Images like “fire and brimstone” (Rev. 14:10) and “smoke” (Rev. 14:11) upset some people. They ask, “How can a God of love actually permit His creatures to suffer eternal torment?” But we must keep in mind that God’s love is a *holy* love, not one based on sentimentality, and therefore He *must* justly deal with sin. We may not like the word *torment*, but it is here just the same (Rev. 14:10; see also 9:5; 11:10; 20:10).

We must also keep in mind that God has repeatedly warned sinners and given them opportunity to repent...If people persist in their sins even after God sends judgments and warnings, then they have only themselves to blame.⁶

The creature of this human race for whom His Son died who turns his back on the God whose name is Love, and chooses His enemy, the old serpent and murderer—God plainly tells us what He will do with him! He shall have indignation forever!”⁷

8. The dead in Christ find their rest, (14:13) - "*HOME AT LAST!*"

1) The way to die (13a)

INTERPRETATION:

¹³ **Then** (after seeing the destiny of the beast), **I heard a voice from heaven** (again), **saying to me, “Write:** (record this for the record, that in contrast to the beast and his followers), **‘Blessed** (happy, fortunate, to be envied), **are the dead who die in the Lord** (who identified themselves with Him), **from now on** (as it will be better than living through these times).’ ”⁸

⁶ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Logos Library System.

⁷ Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 224

⁸ This passage is often quoted in regard to God’s general blessings on all Christians, but the context indicates that the blessing is especially for those who die in the Great Tribulation. For them it is a blessed release from persecution, torture, and trial and a deliverance into the glorious presence of the Lord. Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Logos Library System.

2) The result of death (13b)

NOTES:

“Yes,” says (echoes), **the** (Holy), **Spirit, “that they may rest** (cease), **from their labors** (wailing, grief, trouble, beating upon the breast), **and their works** (rewards), **follow them** (are carried into eternity with them to be collected).”

F APPLICATION:

Better to reign with Christ forever than with Antichrist [or the pleasures (Heb. 11:25)], for a few short years! Better to endure persecution patiently now than to escape it and suffer throughout eternity!⁹

9. The great harvest, (14-16) -"A HARVEST OF NOTHING BUT WEEDS!"

INTERPRETATION:¹⁰

¹⁴ **Then** (after recording the blessings of the saints) **I looked, and behold, a white cloud** (appeared), **and on the cloud sat** (signifying deity, [Mat. 24:30; 25:31; 26:64]), **One like** (implying that this person is more than just human), **the Son of Man** (Jesus Christ [Dan. 7:13]),¹¹ **having on His head a golden crown** (victor's), **and in His hand a sharp sickle**, (signifying a harvest of judgment).¹²

⁹ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System.

¹⁰ There are a couple of dominate views as to what these two harvests are. Some say that the first has to do with Christ taking believers to glory and the second has to do with the angel taking the unbelievers to hell at the end of the tribulation period. The problem is, only the unbelievers will be gathered out of the world at the end of the tribulation. The believers are left to enter into the 1,000 year millennial reign of Christ and populate the world. Unbelievers and believers alike are not brought together until the end of the millennium at the Great White throne judgment.

The other view sees these two harvests as having to do with unbelievers, but there is a lot of speculation as to why there are two judgments and not just one.

I take the view that they both apply to unbelievers and are really a part of each other. Verses 14-16 I believe describe the judgment in a general way, meaning that it would fall upon all unbelievers. Verses 17-20 I believe describes how and when a certain portion of the unbelievers would fall.

¹¹ John in his vision next saw seated on a **white cloud one like a Son of Man** wearing a **crown of gold** and holding a **sharp sickle**. Though some have identified "a Son of Man" as an angel, it is more probable that it is Christ Himself who is frequently called "the Son of Man" (cf. 1:13). In the Book of Matthew alone this title is ascribed to Christ more than 25 times (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8, 32; 13:41; etc.). Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System.

The fact that this One who is to reap the earth is a son of man, is alone set forth. But compare the words of our Lord in John 5:22, 23: the Father "hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father: . . . and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man." (Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 288)

¹² While winning lost souls to Christ is sometimes pictured as a harvest (John 4:34-38), this image is also used of God's judgment (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; Luke 3:8-17). God permits the seeds of iniquity to grow until they are ripe, and then He judges (Gen. 15:16). Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System.

¹⁵ **And** (then), **another angel came out of the temple** (from the immediate presence of God the Father), **crying** (or announcing), **with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in** (into the sea of wicked mankind), **Your sickle and reap** (cut them down), **for the time** (of the end that You told Your disciples You, nor the angels knew the date of, but only the Father knew [Mk. 13:32; Mk. 4:29]), **has come for You to reap** (cut them off [Rev. 14:7; Joel 3:13]), **for the harvest of the earth is ripe**, (actually overripe, it’s withered, wasting away).”

¹⁶ **So** (when the time of judgment announced), **He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the** (wicked of the), **earth** (in general), **was reaped**, (cut off [the wicked are going to begin to drop like flies during the last half of the tribulation]).¹³

10. The great battle, (17-20) - "THE LAST WORLD WAR!"

INTERPRETATION:

¹⁷ **Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven** (from the presence of God the Father), **he also having a sharp sickle**, (to reap the last harvest for judgment).

¹⁸ **And** (yet), **another angel came out from the altar** (where the prayers of the saints are offered up before God [Rev. 8:3-5]), **who had power over fire** (used as a judgment for purging sin and sinners), **and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp** (unstoppable, unavoidable), **sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth** (symbolizing the masses of wicked humanity), **for her grapes** (the individuals who make up the mass), **are fully ripe** (are in their prime, ready to burst).”

¹⁹ **So the angel** (did as he was told and), **thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth** (all of the remaining unsaved), **and threw it** (the unbelieving masses), **into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**

²⁰ **And the winepress** (with the unbelievers in it), **was trampled outside the city** (probably Jerusalem), **and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles** (about 4’ high), **for one thousand six hundred furlongs**, (about 180 miles).¹⁴

¹³ Alford holds that verse 14 refers to the harvest of the saints, and that verses 15-16 describe judgment on the wicked (*The Greek New Testament*, 4: 691). But it is difficult to imagine a harvest of saints as being withered or overripe. (Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Logos Library System.)

¹⁴ This probably pertains to the last battle at the conclusion of the seven year tribulation period; the battle of Armageddon, (Rev. 16:14-16; 19:17-9). All those who survived the first swipes of the sickle, will not survive this one. All unbelievers will be removed from the earth at this time.