

REVELATION 14

I. BKGRD.

In chapters 14 and 15 various other details of the world scene in heaven and earth are introduced in preparation for the final series of seven bowl judgments in chapter 16 and the judgments in chapters 17-18. "Angel" or "angels" mentioned 186 x's the NT! 79 x's in Revelation alone!

II. TEXT

v. 1 First, another view is given of the "**144,000**" who were "**standing on Mount Zion**" with "**the Lamb**." This is the same group mentioned in 7:4-8, except that here they are in a later period of the Tribulation and in Heaven, not earth. Since they are in Heaven, we must assume all were martyred (*martus* = witness)...

The Jehovah Witnesses jump on the verse "having their Father's **name** written in their foreheads." They say, "What is the Father's name? It's Jehovah." Actually, there is no "J" or "V" in the Hebrew alphabet; the name is YHWH, "Yahweh." We pronounce it "Jehovah" because of the influence of German upon our language, where substitutions of J for Y and V for W are common (think "volks-yagen" and "jagerschnitzel").

v. 2 Jesus, in chapter one when he spoke, his voice was as many waters.

v. 3 Notice: they are *before* (enôpion; lit. "in the eye," i.e., eye-to-eye, on in front of ; facing eye-to-eye) the throne, the cherubim and the 24 elders (NT/OT saints including the Church). Thus, they are standing *in front of* the throne, not sitting *on them* as the Church Triumphant is, ruling and reigning with Jesus (cf. Matthew 19:28; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21). They "**had been redeemed from the earth**" (perfect passive participle), purchased by the blood of the Lamb (5:9). For the identity of the 144,000 see Rev. 7:4-8 (12,000 Jews from each of the 12 historic tribes of Israel).

The theme of this "**new song**" is deliverance. They are singing an exclusive song; they have an exclusive relationship with the Lord, they were sealed and they were preserved during a portion of the great tribulation period and so they have that special relationship with God and they can sing of that special relationship.

By the same token we, the Church, have a special relationship and we have our *own* song which no one can sing except the Church. Ours is a song of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ; we find it back in chapter 5 when they sang a new song saying, "*You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests [1 Peter 2:9] to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.*"

That is a song for the Church exclusively.

v. 4 Can only mean they were unmarried virgins. Jesus recognized celibacy for those able to receive it (Mt 19:12), as did Paul (1 Cor. 7:1,8,32,36). The NT exalts marriage and this passage should not be construed as degrading it; during this time of great tribulation, it is easier being celibate (1 Cor.7).

The 144,000 "**follow the Lamb**," but the Church as the Bride of Christ will be with the Lamb.

"**The firstfruits to God and the Lamb**," that is, out of this Great Tribulation period. The word "firstfruits" suggests that these converted Israelites precede many others who at the Lord's Second Coming will turn to Him (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:15, 26-27).

Jehovah Witnesses have sought to identify themselves as the 144,000. Herbert W. Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God seek to identify themselves as the 144,000. Who in their right mind would *want* to be on earth during the catastrophic Great Tribulation and be brutally martyred for their faith??!

The groom was coming but they did not know exactly when and they would then bear the bride and groom through the streets. The virgins, the bride's-maids, would all follow after. Now they were not the Bride,

but they followed the Bride and the Groom. So these 144,000 are not the Bride of Christ -- the Church is the Bride of Christ (quite obviously, Chapter 19) but these are virgins who follow the procession; after the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:17).

v. 5 “Blameless” – the kind of lives we should strive to live here and now!

- “He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8);
- “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Eph. 1:4);
- “Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

When Jesus presents you to the Father he is going to present you faultless; blameless. You say, “Impossible!” Yes, that's what Jesus said. “*With man, it's impossible; but with God, all things are possible.*”

v. 6 The Great Commission was first given to Abraham and, by extension, the nation of Israel:

- Abraham was told it was God's intention that Abraham and his descendents be a “*blessing to ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH*” (Gen. 18:18); they were to tell the whole world about God. They failed....
- When Christ came, he came preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God; many rejected...
- When Jesus rose from the dead, He gave the Great Commission to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 “‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’.” Has the Church evangelized every man, woman and child on the planet? Nope . . . (and what's OUR excuse in this age of information, easy transportation and technology?).
- Now the angels, who have probably been chompin' at the bit since they showed up in Bethlehem announcing Christ's birth, get the chance to spread the Good News.

These angels will preach the Gospel to all people in all nations. Jesus said that the Gospel shall be preached for a witness to all nations, “*and then shall the end come*” (Matthew 24:14). For a long time many people have been saying, “The Lord can't come yet, because the Gospel hasn't been preached as a witness to all nations.” Nowhere in the Bible does it say the CHURCH will be the one to accomplish the task!

Is this “Sky Angel” or “Daystar” or TBN or Christian satellite TV providers? – No . . . it is “**another angel**” (*allos*: another of the same kind as before in Rev. 10 and 11; and the Trumpet angels of chs. 8 and 9).

v. 7 “Fear God” – the noun form, *phobos*, first had the meaning of “flight,” that which causes one to flee from fear, having been startled, afraid or scared; that which causes flight; fear, dread, terror; that which causes fear (W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words). “A reverential fear of God is a controlling motive of the life, in matters moral and spiritual, not a mere “fear” of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him.”

v. 8 “Babylon the Great” – spoken of in much greater detail in Rev. 17-18. Cf. Gen. 10:8-10 where Nimrod the great hunter builds “**Babylon**” (mentioned 274 x's in the OT). Ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia was the political, commercial and religious center of a world empire; noted for its excessive luxury, moral decadence and idolatry. It symbolizes an end-times world political and religious system run by the Antichrist and False Prophet and opposed to God, His purposes and His Christ.

- Some take this to refer to a rebuilt, literal Babylon in the deserts of Iraq . . . not likely as it has not been a viable commercial or religious center for centuries . . . and the end-times “Babylon” appears to be a large, well-populated commercial seaport: Rev. 18:11-13, 17.
- Rome, Italy (Rev. 17:9)?
- Or symbolically applied to the end-times world empire of the Antichrist & the world system he establishes?

“Fallen, fallen” is a prophetic aorist active indicative verb: it WILL physically and literally happen at some point-in-time in the future.

vv. 10-11 outline the temporal (“wrath” on earth) and eternal consequences for those who take the mark of the Beast and his kingdom (Rev. 13:16-17). The doctrine of eternal punishment, though unpopular with liberal scholars and difficult to accept, is nevertheless clearly taught in the Bible. Jesus and the Apostle John say more on this subject than does all the rest of the Bible.

- Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in a rain of burning sulfur (Gen. 19:24);
- Psalm 11:6 speaks of a similar fate for the wicked.
- The description here does not jive with the worldly concept of soul-sleep, cessation of being or annihilationism.

v. 12 “Patient endurance” (cf. 13:10) is required on the part of the Tribulation saints, NOT the Church, which is in heaven with the Lamb at the time. The Greek is *hypomone* [“steadfastness, perseverance;” *Hupo-* means beneath or under; *meno* – to abide, live, make residence; lit., to live beneath [with patience] a difficult circumstance or situation.” Its one thing to endure; its another thing to endure it patiently, with dignity and not lose sight of the FRUIT of the Holy Spirit (“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” Gal. 5:22)!

v. 13 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!

vv. 14-20 Note: TWO harvests take place: one a harvest of the righteous on the earth; the other a harvest gathering together those destined for destruction in the Valley of Megiddo (cf. Matthew 13:30, 40ff; Rev. 16:16).

v. 14 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 x’s (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8, 32; 13:41; etc.). The sickle in His hand speaks of judgment. The crown is a *stephanos*, the victor’s plaited wreath, not the *diadem* (ruler’s crown) Jesus wears in Rev. 19:12.

Interesting: in Rev. 12:3; 13:1 Satan and the Antichrist wear the *diadem*; but Jesus reclaims the earth and wears the ruler’s crown (*diadem*) in Rev. 19:12! JESUS now rules!!!

RWP, Halley’s Bible Handbook, William Barclay, John F. Walvoord (The Revelation of Jesus Christ), Hal Lindsey, Chuck Missler, Chuck Smith and BKC all feel this is Jesus . . .

v. 15 Symbolizes, in a general way, the coming judgment.

- John 5:22 Jesus said, “*the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son...*”
- Cf. Matthew 13:30, 37-43 “*Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn... He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”*”

v. 17 **“Another”** (*allos*) – another of the same kind.

v. 18 **“The angel who had charge of the fire”** – the angel of 8:3-5 (the fire of the censer). This seems to indicate the figure in v. 14 is not Jesus Christ, as this second angel gives him orders, and they are obeyed; same in v. 15.

“Sharp sickle” --

v. 20 Blood is splattered as high as the *“bridles of horses.”* More about this battle in Rev. 16, 19.

“1600 stadia” is about 180 miles, about the length of present-day Israel north to south. We read in Isaiah's prophecy (63:1-5) that he would be coming from Edom with his garments stained with blood: *“Who is this that comes with garments stained with blood?”* From Edom to Armageddon is about 1,600 furlongs, about 180 miles. This describes the valley of Megiddo, which runs diagonally in northern Israel from Mt. Carmel by the sea, as filled with blood from the great Battle of Armageddon (in Hebrew, *har magedon*, “the mountain of Megiddo”). This is in the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel, the valley just below the ancient city of Megiddo.

In Rev. 16 we will see 3 unclean spirits who gather together the kings of the earth (vv. 13-14). The Antichrist will establish his power and his authority through a united European coalition and will develop tremendous military power. The people of the world will be saying, *“Who is able to make war with the ‘beast’?”* The nations of the East numbering *“200 million men”* (Rev. 9:13-16) --- probably a combination of Japan, China, N. Korea and India -- will launch an attack on the Antichrist by coming down across from the east through the dried up River Euphrates. They will meet the forces of Europe, with which the United States will probably be allied, in that great battle in the valley of Megiddo. God's wrath and indignation, the day of His vengeance, shall come. The world has one great war yet to endure -- the war to end all wars. The rebellious nations of man will be as ripe grapes trodden and bursting. The slaughter that will take place is too frightening to imagine. Just be thankful that you're not going to be around!