

Wednesday Evening Bible Study
The Book of Revelation
Chapter 14
Lesson 21

- Let's review the events of Revelation up to this point (quickly/briefly)
 - Chapter 14 ends this last great pause/parenthesis, for when we examine chapter 15 we see the final preparations are made for the bowl/vial judgements to begin
 - Remember, the events in this pause/parenthesis do not follow a strict chronology (some events skip larger spans of time than others)
- 1) v. 1, John sees a "Lamb standing on Mount Zion"
 - a) Throughout the book of Revelation the Lamb is the picture of Jesus
 - b) John then sees a large group of people with Jesus, the 144,000
 - 1) This is the same group we were first introduced to in chapter 7, some commentators feel that this is a different group, but they are the same.
 - 2) Notice how they are described, "having His (Jesus') name written upon their foreheads."
 - 3) Some manuscripts read, "having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads"
 - 4) Seiss says the mention of both the Father's and the Son's name are important, for, "their identification with the Father is their mark of being saved Jews; their identification with the Lamb reveals their salvation through faith in Christ."
 - c) Chapter 13 tells us that the people of the earth in that day will have the name/number of the Antichrist upon their, "right hand or on their foreheads." (13:16)
 - d) Everyone will wear a "mark" in that day . . . either God's or Satan's
 - e) The fact that John sees the group standing on Mount Zion is also symbolic Zion represents that which is stable, secure, and safe
 - f) Some commentators argue over when and where the 144,000 are located (heaven/earth)
 - 1) I believe that Mount Zion is that literal place as found in Israel still today
 - 2) I believe that 144,000 are NOT in heaven, but in Israel in this vision
 - 3) I believe that Jesus is standing there with this group just before the millennium begins (the kingdom is NOT established yet, for the judgment has not come yet . . . but it's all in place!
 - 2) John continues to describe the 144,000 in v. 4 and 5
 - a) "virgins" – Walvoord believes that this reference is to spiritual purity; many other commentators say that a marriage "blessed by God" will be impossible in that day, so the 144,000 will not marry, but simply preach the gospel (In my mind, they won't have time for wives, only to preach/evangelize)
 - 1) Just as the remainder of the verse is symbolic, so is this statement.
 - 2) Paul refers to the church in II Corinthians 11:2, "For I have betrothed you to the one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Were all the members of the church virgins? No, therefore this statement may be very symbolic.
 - b) "who follow the Lamb wherever He goes" – NOTHING holds them back from faithfully serving Jesus in those days! Can the same be said of you and me today?
 - c) "redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb"

- d) “first fruits” refers to the impending “harvest” that has taken place, and that is about to take place (more on this later)
 - e) Before the Great Tribulation began, the angel cried out in 7:3, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”
 - f) Criswell says this is a new era, a new dispensation, and the first fruits of that era are the 144,000 who have been marked/sealed by God
 - g) Walvoord says, “The 144,000 are the godly nucleus of Israel which is the token of the redemption of the nation and the glory of Israel which is to unfold in the (millennial) kingdom.”
 - h) “in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.”
 - i) The implication in this verse is that there is no falsehood, especially no false religion within the 144,000
 - j) Walvoord says, “How important this makes the life and testimony of any believer who seeks to emulate these who in this most trying time are found in no compromise with error and no defilement of their purity.”
- 3) v.2, Who’s voice did John hear from heaven? We’ll answer this later
- 4) v. 3, what kind of “song” are the “harpists” playing, and why can no one learn the song,
- a) “except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.”
 - b) We have no idea what the words, or melody, of this song might be, but it is indeed a special song.
 - c) Who is singing this song?
 - d) Many think that the 144,000 are singing there in heaven, but they can’t for they are on the earth, on Mount Zion
 - e) It is the harpists who sing, but they sing a song that only the 144,000 can learn to sing. God is reminding us that those who are called shall receive a tremendous reward if they remain faithful!
 - f) Remember, this is a vision, and those things John sees in the vision are often very symbolic
 - g) Walvoord thinks that John is seeing those who are murdered for their faith, now standing in heaven. The truth is, “I don’t know”
- 5) v. 6-11, we are introduced to 3 angels, each having a different message to proclaim
- a) v. 6, “another angel” this angel is of the same nature and stature as those in the previous chapters (high ranking)
 - 1) Notice the opportunity/responsibility given this angel, “having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people”
 - b) v. 7, Yet, this gospel message doesn’t sound like what you and I call the gospel message,
 - 1) “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgement has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”
 - 2) When we think of the gospel, we think of the “good news” that Jesus died so that sinners might be forgiven of their sins and given eternal life
 - 3) The message this angel bears is NOT “good news” to sinners, rather it’s a warning of judgment.
 - 4) However, this is “good news” for this message reveals that God is about to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth, and thereafter eternally establish His sovereignty over all the earth!

- c) v. 8, we are introduced to a 2nd angel, “and another angel followed, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’”
 - 1) Prophetically, Babylon refers to a literal city, a religious system, and a political system.
 - 2) The announcement here is prophetic, for the “beast” will fall later in the book
 - 3) Babylon’s, “fornication” has been her spiritual intimacy with Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet. Chapter 13:4 says the people worship the “dragon” (Satan) and
 - 4) the “beast” (Antichrist) in those days, which is “fornication” in God’s eyes
- d) v. 9-11, here we read of a 3rd angel, “Then a third angel followed them saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name’”
 - 1) Clearly, those who worship the beast and take his mark, will suffer the same punishment as the beast and Satan . . . why? Because they have rejected Jesus!
 - 2) Walvoord has a great statement, “The love of God is not free to express itself to those who have spurned Jesus Christ . . . How dangerous it is for men to trifle with false religions, which dishonor the incarnate Word and contradict the written Word.”
- 6) v. 12, what does this mean?
 - a) This verse simply says, “Here’s is how the saints will persevere in those days: by keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”
 - b) Even though some of the saints will go into hiding, while others are martyred for their faith, their fate is far better than for those who worship the beast
- 7) v. 13, This is a classic verse of scripture read at funerals
 - a) The reference is for those who are martyred during the Great Tribulation, however we believe that this principle applies to all who die “in the Lord”
 - b) Who is speaking in v. 13, “the Spirit.” Walvoord believes that it is the Holy Spirit who is speaking in v. 2 as well
- 8) v. 14, “white cloud”
 - a) “One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle”
 - b) We see here that Christ Himself is personally involved in the judgement of those on earth who have worshipped the beast
- 9) v. 15, “And another angel (#4 in this chapter) came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’”
 - a) The “harvest” represents the souls of men, specifically the souls of those who have rejected Christ as Savior and Lord
 - b) When John says that, “the harvest is ripe” the term in the Greek means that the fruit is brown, dry, and withered (it’s beyond being ripe)
 - c) Walvoord says, “The expression, ‘the harvest is ripe’ seems to imply that judgement is overdue . . . The rotten moral condition of the world is dealt with now with a sharp sickle.”

- 10) v. 16, Then the “harvest” is “reaped”
- 11) v. 17, “Then another angel (#5 in this chapter) came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle”
- a) This angel (#5) is told, “Thrust your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”
 - b) Why will there be 2 harvests
 - c) Some believe that the first harvest, by Christ, is the removal of the church, but the implications of the Greek tell us that this harvest is NOT of good fruit, but of dried, shriveled, rotten fruit.
 - d) I agree with those commentators who believe that the first harvest is that which surrounds the entire tribulation, for we’ve seen death all throughout chapters 4-14, and this 2nd harvest is one that will precede the final bowl/vial judgements.
- 12) v. 18, Who gives this 5th angel the message to “thrust your sharp sickle”?
- a) “Another angel” (#6 in this chapter)
 - b) v. 18 tells us that the 6th angel, “had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle (5th angel)”
 - c) These angels are not ordinary angels, for we are told that the 5th angels comes, “out of the temple which is in heaven” (v. 18) and the 6th angel comes, “out from the altar”
 - d) Some people struggle with the fact that Jesus begins the harvest, and that God uses angels to continue the harvest
 - e) I don’t have a problem with this perspective, for was it not Christ who established the church, and then His disciples, whom He sent out, to continue the work of the church? Yes, and the same principles apply here.
 - f) Christ is the foundation of salvation and judgement, yet in His sovereignty, He uses all of creation, angels and even man, to continue the work.
- 13) v. 19, “So the angel (5th angel) thrust his sickle into the earth” and the “vine of the earth” is gathered and then thrown into the “winepress of the wrath of God.”
- 14) v. 18 again says that the, “grapes are fully ripe”
- a) Here we see a different Greek word than we did in v. 15. In v. 15 the grapes are beyond ripe, and are beginning to dry, wither, and rot. In v. 18, the grapes are so full of juice that they are about to burst, but they are not near rot and decay
 - b) The reason for the differing terms is this . . .
 - c) The world today is beginning even to dry, wither, and rot spiritually. Yet, the time has not yet been fulfilled when the angel will draw his “sharp sickle” and pour out God’s wrath.
 - d) In that day, the grapes will be fully ripened, and the angel will reap his bloody & final harvest
 - e) It’s important to remember that these events are still in the future, so this is a prophetic vision. They will not be fulfilled until we get to Revelation 19.
- 15) v. 20, “And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.”
- a) This is the picture of the 2nd coming of Christ, and the ultimate judgement He will pour out upon the wicked world.
 - b) For the picture we have is of that great and final battle, between the armies of God and the armies of Satan (after the millennial reign). The blood shed will be so terrible that it

will literally cover the streets for miles (1600 furlongs is 200 miles), and as the horses gallop through the streets, blood will splash up on their bridles.

- c) Remember that Israel is only 160 miles from North to South, so John's vision is that all of Israel will be covered with blood.
- d) I know that some of this sounds gruesome, but let me remind you that the only way to avoid such a death is to first be covered by the blood of Jesus.
- e) Ill-"What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus
 - 1) What can make me whole again, nothing but the blood of Jesus
 - 2) Oh precious is that flow, that makes me white as snow!
 - 3) No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus!"