

All Things New: The Lamb and 144, 000 – Revelation 14

1. “How are we all doing?” (High, Low & Buffalo)

- i. High – What was a high point in your week? What was good or went well?
- ii. Low – What was a low point in your week? What was a challenge, disappointment, or struggle?
- iii. Buffalo – What was something interesting, random, or different that happened this week?

2. “The past few weeks we’ve read about the dragon, the beast from the sea, and the beast from the land. These symbolically describe the holy war that God’s people are in for a limited time. Before moving on, what feels important or meaningful to you about Revelation 12-13?”

3. “Now let’s read Revelation 14. Try to read slow and imagine what John saw as we listen.”

4. “What images stick out to you from this passage? What questions does it bring up?”

5. “If you heard the sermon this week, what helped you understand or apply this passage?”

6. “Revelation 14 contains three sections. The first section (verses 1-5) shows the Lamb (Jesus) standing on Mount Zion (pointing to Psalm 2, where God appoints a king to rule over all rebellious leaders). Jesus stands with a crowd of 144, 000 (symbolic for the countless people of God through all of history – also seen in Revelation 7).

God’s people are described as virgins who ‘did not defile themselves with women’ (verse 3). At first glance, it seems like God’s people are only male virgins. This is not the case! The Bible often uses sexual fidelity as a metaphor for faithfulness, calling God’s people to follow Him instead of the ways of rebellious nations. In Revelation 14, this means that God’s people remain faithful to God and resist the ways of the beast by ‘following the Lamb wherever he goes’ (verse 4).

Can someone read Psalm 2:2-6? And someone else read Zephaniah 3:12-13? How is God described in these two passages? How are humans described? How do these themes relate to Revelation 14?

Which description of the 144, 000 stands out to you the most (verses 4-5)? How have you seen that quality lived out by other followers of Jesus before?”

7. “The second section shows three angels. The first proclaims the gospel of Jesus and coming judgement. The second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, which serves as a “code word” for humanity living in rebellion against God.¹

¹ Darrell Johnson *Discipleship on the Edge* page 275.

“The third angel further proclaims the eternal consequences for those who choose to worship the beast. Some biblical scholars read the descriptions of judgement as more symbolic than others – but within this disagreement, they all agree that it is unquestionably better to have given your life to Jesus.

What part of the judgement descriptions do you find most difficult to read? What about it feels hard? Is there anything about God's judgement that actually reflects God's goodness – even if it doesn't seem that way at first?”

8. “The third section shows the Son of Man using a sickle² to reap a harvest of grain, which is a metaphor for salvation. It also uses the metaphor of grapes crushed in a winepress, which many people read as a metaphor for the beginning of God’s final judgement against those who worship the beast.

Can someone read Joel 3:12-17? This connection to Joel shows us that reaping, harvest, and winepresses were familiar images to John's original audience. Joel 3:16-17 also emphasizes God's protection for his people in the midst of judgement. What stands out to you about this imagery?

Optional: Break into smaller groups for this section

9. “The descriptions of the 144, 000 are descriptions of God’s people – which means they’re also descriptions of us! Let’s reflect on a couple of the descriptions from this chapter:

‘No lie was found in their mouths’ (verse 5) – *What characterizes your conversations with others? Are you sometimes tempted to exaggerate your accomplishments, or hide your failures to avoid a consequence? How often do you tell stories that make yourself look like a hero, or someone else look like a villain? What would it cost you to tell the truth in those moments instead?*

They are called to endure patiently (verse 12) – *Patient endurance forces us to watch as things happen that we don’t want, trusting that God will do what needs doing. What about God feels most difficult to trust in those seasons? (e.g., His goodness, knowledge, timing, closeness...?)”*

10. “Thanks for sharing _____. Can I pray for you?” *Take time to pray for each other.*

11. “Next week is the last weekly discussion guide for the Revelation series! Have we decided what our summer schedule will look like?” *A spring wrap-up guide is available on the website.*

² A sickle is a traditional agriculture tool used for harvesting crops (usually grain).