

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 2ND-3RD, 2024 // REVELATION

THE CONTRAST (REVELATION 14:1-5) TWO OPPOSING SIDES

Ch. 13 shows the influence and plan of Satan to deceive humanity and attack Christianity via two "beasts," or Antichrists. Ch. 14 will show the plan and power of God.

- Ch. 14 reveals the true victor of the epic drama we've been studying. The only advice given in this chapter is to **be patient**.

THE 144,000 AGAIN?

The difficult to interpret number from Ch. 7 appears again. This could be the same group (Jewish remnant?) or possibly people killed during the 7 years of the Great Tribulation.

- Whoever they are, they appear to be in a "glorified state" with God in heaven. They also appear to be ready for battle.

MORE THAN LIKELY A SYMBOLIC NUMBER

The 144,000 is more than likely a "round" number that symbolizes all Christians.

THEY STOOD ON MOUNT ZION

Zion is an ancient name for heaven (Hebrews 12:22). The image of God and His followers on an immovable mountain directly contrasts Satan on his movable sand (Revelation 12:18).

AGAIN, WE FEEL THE VOLUME OF REVELATION

As John saw Jesus (the Lamb) standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000, he said it sounded like "cascading waters," "loud thunder," and "harpists playing on their harps."

- These sounds come from the **redeemed people of God who are singing and praising because of their salvation**.

"THEY SANG A NEW SONG"

The redeemed people sing a song about redemption that only they will know. Some believe this is a song specifically for the martyrs from the Great Tribulation.

- The song is sung before God's throne and the 24 elders mentioned in Chapter 4.

THEY ARE NOT "DEFILED?"

V. 4 is odd in how it uses gender. The 1st part, "not defiled themselves with women" refers to men, but the 2nd part of the statement, "since they remained virgins," refers to women.

- This can mean sexual purity, but it's probably a metaphor for following other gods (**spiritual adultery**).

NO ONE IS "BLAMELESS"

John says these people are "blameless," but this isn't implying they've never sinned. **Redeemed** means **bought back from captivity** (Micah 7:19).

- They were slaves to sin, but repentance and "follow[ing] the Lamb wherever He goes" made them recipients of grace.**

MESSENGERS (REVELATION 14:6-13)

MESSENGERS ARE NOTHING NEW

Though we have seen God use angels several times in Revelation, these three offer more direct and unique messages.

- The proclamation of these three angels are not specifically for John, but for all humanity. They are warning Earth that the end is near, similar to the "woe" angel in Ch. 8.

THE FIRST ANGEL (VS. 6-7)

The first angel delivers the "eternal gospel...to the inhabitants of the earth." This is urgent and spoken with a "loud voice." The people are called to "**fear God and give him glory**, because the hour of his judgment has come."

- God is pulling out all the stops in order to get people to repent.

THE SECOND ANGEL (V. 8)

This angel continues the same proclamation but mentions that "Babylon the Great" (city/culture mentioned in Chapter 11) has fallen.

- We see the opposite imagery of the "virgins" in v. 4. **The evil people of "Babylon" are drunk on "her sexual immorality."** This is both literal and metaphorical.

THE THIRD ANGEL (VS. 9-12)

The last angel pronounces doom to anyone who receives the mark of the beast. If they get "drunk" off the beast's immoral ways, they will also "drink the wine of **God's wrath**, which is poured **full strength** into the cup of his anger."

- Modern Christianity often shies away from the topic of God's wrath.**

IT GETS WORSE

Evil people will experience God's anger, be eternally separated from God, and "tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels...and the Lamb...forever and ever."

- Hell is real. It is a place of mental and physical anguish with eternal unrest and separation from God.**

WE GET A CHOICE IN OUR DESTINY

John says if we have "endurance" and "keep God's commands" we will not only avoid hell but be rewarded with heaven.

- Look at the contrast in v. 13. Those who deny Christ suffer, but **those "who die in the Lord from now on" will "rest from their labors, since their works follow them."**

MANY THINGS DO CARRY OVER

We often say, "You can't take it with you." This is true with material things, but our **good and righteous works and actions do transcend into the next life** (v. 13).

- Diligence now yields relief from "labor" in eternity.** This is not talking about work, but the "labor" pains of life.

THE 1ST HARVEST (REVELATION 14:14-16)

THIS IS STILL PART OF THE EPIC DRAMA

John is still witnessing a drama showing him the future. The 6th and 7th visions of this drama play out one of Jesus' metaphors (Matthew 13).

- Jesus often mentioned parables about harvests, planting seeds, and separating wheat and weeds. Here we see the world is the harvest God will reap.

A WHITE CLOUD AND THE SON OF MAN

Revelation 1:7 says Jesus will be coming in the clouds. John describes Him as "seated on the cloud, with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand."

- Clouds often represent majesty. The sickle indicates that God is prepared to harvest. Harvesting is also a time to store things up.

"ANOTHER ANGEL CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE"

Many have wondered who this angel is and why he was telling Jesus to "use your sickle and reap."

- The fact that Jesus said He didn't know the time of His return may help us with this (Mark 13:32). But what does this harvest mean?

SOME POSSIBLE MEANINGS

Some believe this is the rapture, simultaneous to Ch. 11 (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). Others see this as the completion of all the martyrs being killed during the Great Tribulation.

- People debate where the 2nd coming is in Scripture. The question shouldn't be "When?" but rather "Are we ready?"**

HARVEST CAN SIMPLY MEAN COMPLETION

The 1st harvest can mean that all the people who are going to give their lives to Christ during the Great Tribulation have done so. Jesus said that when this takes place, He will come back (Matthew 24:14).

- So, maybe not a rapture or martyrdom, but a complete harvest of those who are saved.

THE 2ND HARVEST (REVELATION 14:17-20)

THE CURTAIN CALL OF THE EPIC DRAMA

The 1st harvest was more than likely the saints' exodus by rapture or martyrdom. That harvest was described using grain as the analogy. The 2nd harvest uses grapes harvested later.

- God is about to close the epic drama with a graphic account of His wrath being poured out on an evil society.

ANOTHER ANGEL WITH AUTHORITY OVER FIRE

Another angel comes from "the temple in heaven" and calls to the one "who had the sharp sickle" to "gather" the grapes because they "have ripened." **Evil's time has come.**

- This is not Jesus swinging the sickle, but an angel that will gather the "grapes" to be thrown into a winepress.

THE CHRONOLOGY GETS TRICKY

We don't know how much time passes between the harvests or how long it will take before God pours out His wrath. V. 19 sets up the bowls of wrath, and v. 20 sets up the final battle of good and evil: **Armageddon** (Ch. 19).

- We can assume the time between these events is very short (Matthew 24:22).

GRAPHIC IMAGERY

John is shown gruesome imagery of people being trampled under the power of God like a winepress crushes grapes.

- These are people who consciously **denied God, put themselves first, and participated in evil things**. Does the violence we glorify come back to haunt us?

THIS HAPPENS "OUTSIDE THE CITY"

This may just be a reference to rural areas where vineyards were, or it could specifically be referring to an area outside of Jerusalem called Megiddo. We will focus on this more in Chapter 19.

"...BLOOD FLOWED OUT OF THE PRESS"

Again, the imagery is extremely violent. Blood up to a horse's bridle and 180 miles across is probably hyperbole to show how much carnage will take place at the last battle evil mankind has with Jesus.

- We see in Chapter 14 that unaddressed sin leads to a destructive end.**

A CONTRAST OF IDEOLOGIES

- Jesus says in Matthew 12:30 that **we are either for Him or against Him**. There is no middle ground. This means we either trust and follow His teachings and principles, or we don't. Of course **there is much grace**, but **there is no compromising the standards of the Creator of the Universe**.
- The Bible speaks of two harvests; the "wheat" and the "weeds" (Matthew 13). This is symbolic of people who choose to flourish and be useful in this life or those who "compete for resources (self-serving) and negatively impact the soil around it" (Iowa State).

OUR CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES

- Our desire to seek God's Kingdom and align our minds and hearts to Jesus yields amazing benefits now (restoration, purpose, joy, peace, etc.) and forever (heaven).
- Our failure to pursue and align with biblical truth has extreme consequences both in this life and the one to come (separation).

MESSENGERS OF GOD'S STANDARD/WAYS

- God has given us the Word, the example of Christ, the discernment and wisdom of the Spirit, and even angelic interventions at times to make the correct path clear and to enrich our lives and ensure a perfect afterlife.
- Are we putting effort into knowing the path? Are we living in agreement with it?