

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 3RD, 2024 // REVELATION

TRUE FOLLOWERS (REVELATION 14:1-5)

DESPAIR THEN HOPE

We've been through some hard truths so far in this book. We've seen destruction, imprisonments, starvation, wars, famine, disease, and cosmic upheaval. We've learned that to follow Christ comes with a price, but also with a hope. **No matter how bad things get, God is working out His plan for His people to give them a hope and future.**

THE LAMB HAS OVERCOME

In Ch. 13, it seems the unholy trinity of the dragon, the beast from the sea, and the beast of the earth have won. But John sees the Lamb, Jesus, standing victorious on Mount Zion (Psalm 2:6) with 144,000 people. These may refer back to the 144,000 in Ch. 7 or may be a new group. Whichever, these have received a mark, but of the Father and Son.

GOD AND HIS PEOPLE WILL PREVAIL

If these are the same people in Ch. 7, the 144,000 point to God's faithfulness to His people, even when it seems His people are being destroyed. Notice, it's the same number, indicating not one was lost. That these people carry the name of the Father and the Son shows **He knows us, loves us, protects us, and preserves us!**

THE GLORY OF JESUS ON DISPLAY

John hears the overwhelming sound of worship coming from heaven. It is the new song of the redeemed who humbly, but loudly, sing it before all of heaven. It's a particular song that the 144,000 sing, thanks to all Jesus has done for them to bring them salvation.

- Remember in 12:11 that we also have our story to proclaim.

TRUE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS BEAR FRUIT

What's so unique about the 144,000? John says they have been sexually pure which may be literal but may refer to spiritual adultery. They follow the Lamb wherever He leads. They don't lie. No one can bring an accusation against them concerning their walk with Jesus.

- We draw strength from true Believers who have gone before us in the faith (Hebrews 11).

THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

The 144,000 weren't sinless saints, but saints whose sins have been covered by the blood of the Lamb. John calls them the "redeemed," which means they have been purchased by Jesus from destruction and the wrath of God.

- Our only hope to be redeemed is to **repent** and **trust** in Jesus' finished work.

RESPONSE (REVELATION 14:6-13)

THE CHOICE

In this world, there are two ways to live:

1. One can live as a follower of God through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 2. One can live as a follower of the spirit of antichrist, seen in the allure of Babylon, who promotes spiritual and physical promiscuity leading people to worship the beast.
- We all will choose one of these ways.

THE MESSAGES OF THE THREE ANGELS

John sees 3 angels. The first announces the good news of the gospel to everyone everywhere. There is no limitation to whom the gospel can be preached. And notice it is the "eternal gospel." This reminds us that God has always had a plan to redeem a people for Himself to the praise of His glory and for the good of all who will repent and believe.

PROOF OF THE CHOICE FOR GOD

We again see the role of repentance and faith as a response to the gospel. The angel tells people to "fear God and give him glory." This is a call to repentance from self-centered, idolatrous pursuits. He also calls people to "worship." This is our ongoing expression of faith in the Maker of the heavens and Earth, Who made a way for the lost to be redeemed in Jesus.

BABYLON HAS FALLEN

In the Old Testament, there were three great oppressive enemies of Israel: Egypt, Assyria (fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.), and Babylon (fall of the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C.). Babylon exiled many Jews, destroyed Jerusalem, and destroyed the Temple. Babylon became synonymous with any nation that opposed God & oppressed His people.

THERE'S AN EXPIRATION DATE

The second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon the Great. This deceptive system has led the nations to drink from her anti-Christ passions. To live in opposition to Jesus is to fall under His wrath unless one repents.

- There's a day coming when this world system under the dragon's sway will pass away. Evil has an expiration date.

WRATH

The third angel warns that those who worship the beast and receive his mark will be eternally tormented with fire and sulfur. This is the price of rebellion against their Creator and Savior. To deny Christ and embrace the ways of Babylon is to claim allegiance with the dragon and the beast.

- Eternal separation from God is real.
- Romans 1:18
- 2 Peter 3:8-9

ENDURANCE

Knowing that a day is coming when Jesus, the Righteous Judge, will settle all accounts and make all things right, Christians are called to endure despite the suffering, persecution, and even death they may face. They are not to grow weary in their walk with Jesus but are to keep His commands and keep their faith in Him.

BLESSINGS IN DEATH FOR THE SAINTS

Heaven declares a blessing on those who die in the Lord—rest is promised to them. The rest promised to the saints is verified by the works that follow them.

- This is **NOT** promoting a works salvation. Christians aren't saved by their works but unto good works (Ephesians 2:10). We are rooted in Jesus and our fruit gives evidence of this.

JUDGMENT (REVELATION 14:14-20)

NO LONGER THE SUFFERING SERVANT

John now sees the Son of Man seated on a cloud with a crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. In 5:6 we saw Jesus as the slaughtered lamb. He is now the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, coming to bring the final judgment to the world.

- God's patience will come to an end one day. Are we ready to see Him?

THE HARVEST

In Matthew 13:36-43, Jesus speaks of a harvesting that will occur at the end of the age through the imagery of wheat and weeds. Wheat refers to those who have repented and trusted in Jesus. Weeds refers to "the children of the evil one," those "who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness." We now see this imagery in fulfillment.

THE FIRST HARVEST

An angel cries out to Jesus asking Him to harvest the earth. This first harvest is the wheat harvest of those who have the Father and Son's names written on their foreheads. The sealing and protection of these produces a people who are called by His Name, for His glory, who will stand as testimonies to God's saving grace.

THE SECOND HARVEST

This harvest is the harvest of grapes. These are the people who have rejected Jesus, have been seduced by Babylon the Great, and chose to live their own way for their own desires and pleasures. This isn't a harvest unto rest, but unto the wrath of God for the people the third angel spoke about. We once again are shown that judgment is real.

WHY GRAPES?

The grapes are thrown into the winepress of God's wrath. In v. 8, Babylon the Great made all the nations drink the wine of her spiritual sexual immorality. Those who joined in are now shown the foolishness of their decisions. Also, the OT often pictures God's wrath in a cup (Luke 22:42) that will be poured out on the day of judgment.

RIPENED GRAPES

The angel is told to gather the grapes that have ripened. This is a picture of God's merciful patience. God has been patient giving people the opportunity to repent. That the grapes have ripened shows that instead of repentance, their hearts have been hardened and now they receive their just judgment for their rebellion against God.

OUTSIDE THE CITY

In the OT, the scapegoat, symbolic of the sins of the people, was taken outside the camp/city. Jesus was crucified outside the city. Outside the city was symbolic of where sin was judged.

- The good news for sinners is that Jesus was taken outside the city for us so we can receive forgiveness.

NO ESCAPE

The scope and scale of the blood flowing outside the city in v. 20 is unimaginable. While this may be literal, at the very least it portrays that God's judgment will be universal and severe for all who have rejected Jesus.

- Unbelievers reading this passage should respond with an **urgency to repent**, not with fear of judgment.

ALL THINGS END WITH JESUS

- Every day is a gift from God. A day is coming, whether with death or Jesus' return, when we must all give an account.
- No matter an election, a war, a pandemic, a sickness, a loss of job, a hurricane, or a tornado, all of history is under the control of God and will one day culminate with Jesus making all things new forever.

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

- Followers of Jesus are called to obey Jesus, live for Jesus, and make Jesus known.
- This means how we live indicates who we are.
- Works salvation means we are saved by our works. **Biblical salvation says our works come from our salvation.**
- Confession & Repentance (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9).
- Obedience to the Word (John 14:23; 17:17).
- Prayer (Matthew 7:7-8).
- Community (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- Evangelizing (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Discipling (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Expectantly (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:20)

THE HARVEST

- Jesus tells us we can pray to Him and He will send us into the harvest with the gospel (Matthew 9:37-38).
- No one's eternal destination is set until they die or Jesus returns: **there is still time!**
- **Until He comes for us, we must prioritize living for the eternal and not becoming seduced by the Babylon of our times.**