

Revelation Chapter 14

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.³ They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.⁴ These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.⁵ And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.⁶ Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—⁷ saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."⁸ 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."⁹ 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,¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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."¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.¹⁵ And another angel 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."¹⁶ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."¹⁹ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God.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.

Introduction

Two weeks ago we discovered in Revelation Chapter 13 that the beast from the sea was the anti-Christ and the beast from the earth was the false prophet.

They worked together to deceive the whole world concerning their doctrine and teaching.

They did this through signs and wonders and through the deception of the death and resurrection of the anti-Christ.

People at this time would not be able to buy or sell, unless they had the mark or the name of the beast on their right hand or on their foreheads. (Rev.13:v.17)

They forced people to worship an image of the beast who was made to speak.

Christians who were alive during this period were challenged to remain patient and not to take up arms against the beasts.

They were told to remain faithful and true to Jesus.

We now come to chapter 14 of Revelation.

In v. 1-5 we are introduced again to the 144,000 that we first met in chapter 7.

Although at the time I explained about the possibility of who these 144,000 were, I will need to repeat this teaching because you all weren't here at the time.

It is also very important for our encouragement to go over these verses again.

1. Who are the 144,000 mentioned in Chapter 14: v. 1-5?

The only time that these 144,000 people are mentioned in the Bible is here in Revelation chapter 14 and in Revelation chapter 7.

Therefore, in order to get the fullest picture of their possibilities we need to include information about them from these two chapters.

Here is what the Bible teaches about these people.

- a) They are 144,000 Jews from all the tribes of Israel – Rev.7:v.5-8.
- b) They are virgins (not defiled with women) – Rev. 14: v. 4
- c) They were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb. – Rev14: v.4
- d) They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. – (also v. 4)

This is all the information that we have about these people.

Now we need to search the Bible to try and discover if there is any information about who these people might possibly be?

Firstly turn with me to 1 Corinthians Chapter 15: v.20.

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

We are clearly told in this verse that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is describes as the **“first-fruits”**. Notice that the word **“first-fruits”** is in the plural.

Next we need to turn to Isaiah chapter 53 : v. 1-8.

Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness;

And when we see Him,

There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

³ He is despised and rejected by men,

A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs

And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have turned, every one, to his own way;

And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He opened not His mouth;

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

In v. 7 we are told that Jesus is the Lamb.

In v. 8 we are asked the question about the generation of Jesus.
We will look up the Bible reference to answer this question.
However, I am going to read it in the **King James version** of the Bible.
This is the oldest translation that is still in use today.

Matthew Chapter 2: v. 13-18. In the King James version of 1611.

¹³ And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. ¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: ¹⁵ And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. ¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ¹⁸ In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

We are told in all Bible versions that every child from 2 years old was killed. The area mentioned was in Bethlehem and all its districts.

However, the King James version makes the districts much clearer. It says in "**All the coasts**".

These words connect the killed babies with the entire coast of Israel.

If you know your Old Testament history, you will know that every tribe of Israel was given land that had access to the coast.

Some of the tribes didn't have direct access, but others did.

In those days if you said "All the coasts of Israel" then you would be including all the tribes of Israel.

Herod was such a cruel King that if he was going to make 100% sure that he had killed Jesus, he would need to kill all the Jewish babies from the whole land of Israel.

This phrase "All the coasts" is definitely important when we come to identifying the 144,000 people.

In Matthew 2: v. 17-18 we discovered that the killing of all these babies at the time Jesus was born was actually a fulfilment of prophecy.

In order to understand this prophecy fully we need to go back and read this prophecy from Jeremiah.

Jeremiah Chapter 31: v. 15.

¹⁵ Thus says the LORD: "A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation *and* bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted for her children,
Because they *are* no more."

We now need to focus upon Jeremiah 31: v. 16-17.

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD: "Refrain your voice from weeping,
And your eyes from tears;
For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD,
And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

¹⁷ There is hope in your future, says the LORD,
That **your children shall come back to their own border.**

Jeremiah is making a prophecy, not just about the babies that would be killed, but also about the fact that these babies would return to their own land one day.

Most of us know the prophecy in Jeremiah about the babies that were killed, but not many of us go back to that prophecy and read on in the next two verses.

So we have Biblical evidence to suggest that the 144,000 Jews mentioned in revelation Chapter 14 and chapter 7 might well be the babies who were killed by Herod at the time of the birth of Jesus. All Christians are trusting in their own personal resurrection so it is not too difficult for us to believe that God would do such a thing as raise the souls of these babies from the dead and give them a new body. Before we close this section on the identity of the 144,000 I would like us to look at one more chapter from the old Testament.

Before we do this I would like us to notice Revelation Chapter 7: v. 1.

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

Notice the use of the words "**four winds** "

Is there anywhere else in the Bible where these "**four winds**" are mentioned.? One of them is in Ezekiel. Turn with me to Ezekiel Chapter 37: v. 1-14.

The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it *was* full of bones. ² Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry. ³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know." ⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!' ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD." ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them. ⁹ **Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.""** ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD."

Ezekiel is giving a prophecy about dead people coming to life and he is including the words "four winds."

So in conclusion we have plenty of evidence to suggest that these 144,000 mentioned in Revelation chapter 14 might be the raised to life babies that were killed by Herod at the time of the birth of Jesus.

If this is the case it is very encouraging for us that God is able to put right a mass murder of 144,000 babies that was part of the generation of Jesus.

Q. What else does the chapter tell us about these 144,000 people?

They had the name of God written on their foreheads.

They were identified as God's servants.

Remember that the anti-Christ and False prophet forced people to have the mark of the name of the beast on their foreheads.

These people were special to God and had His name clearly written on their foreheads.

We are also told that these 144,000 were singing a new song that nobody else could learn.

Singing is a wonderful way of expressing ourselves from the heart.

It is also very difficult to sing when you are sad or depressed.

There was definitely a "Joy" about these 144,000 that nobody else had.

An English poet once said "**We learned in suffering what we teach in song.**"

In other words, the poet was saying that there is a depth of maturity and wisdom learnt during suffering that can't be learnt in any other way.

So you can't sing the song, unless you have suffered.

There is something about "singing" that God appreciates and also anoints.

During the last "Revival" in Scotland, on the island of Lewis, which was in 1949, a young lady became a Christian.

She experienced first-hand, all that God did during that Revival.

I had the joy of meeting and knowing this lady for many years.

She said something to me that I have never forgotten.

"God was closer to us as a people, during the SINGING of the Psalms than at any other time during the Revival."

One thing is for sure and that is that there will be lots of singing in Heaven. But the singing will be really special.

Application to us about the 144,000

If the 144,000 were in fact the babies killed by Herod at the time of Jesus's birth, then we have a wonderful example of how God can turn around a very tragic situation and make it so wonderful and beautiful.

Only God can do this.

Perhaps you have had an injustice in your life and wondered why God did not put this wrong right.

God has a different schedule and timetable than we have.

He is able to put wrongs right in His time.

As the song goes

"In His time, In His time

He makes all things beautiful in His time

Lord, please show me every day

As you're teaching me your way

And I'll do just what you say

In your time.'

I have personally experienced things done against me that have been very wrong and hurtful.

However, I have also experienced God putting those wrong things right in His time.

As King Solomon said ...

"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." (Eccl. 3: v.1)

Be encouraged today that God will put wrong things right in your life, even if you are not here on this earth to appreciate them.

The Bible says that we are ALL going to stand before the judgement seat of Christ.(Romans 14: v.10)

We now move on to the proclamations of the three Angels from v. 6-13.

1. The Gospel Angel – v.6-8.

In v. 6-8 we are introduced to a flying Angel whose task was to preach the gospel to everybody in the world.

As Angels were not actually preachers of the Gospel, it is likely that this Angel made an announcement about the preaching of the Gospel worldwide.

This gospel preaching no doubt was connected to the 144,000 Jews, who had God's mark on their foreheads.

As we are moving towards the "Bowl judgements" in chapter 16, God is giving the world one last opportunity to respond to the "Gospel Message."

There is going to be a world-wide preaching of the gospel before the final judgements.

I believe that this will be done by the 144,000 Jews.

The judgements that are coming in chapter 16 are so severe, nobody would want to go through this period.

The Gospel is the only hope for the people left on the earth and the Gospel is the only hope for us who live on the earth today.

Paul says in Romans Chapter 1: v. 16 that he was not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to Salvation for everyone who believes.....

We need to be sure what we understand by the "Gospel Message".

At this time in Revelation, people will be worshipping a false god. They will be deceived by the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet.

So the first thing that the Angel would need to declare to these people was the truth about who the real God is. (v.7)

⁷ saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

- a) God is the maker of this world and everything in it. He made the earth, the stars, the sun, the moon and everything in space. Everything about nature, even the Cherry Blossom season, reflects the work of God's hands.
- b) God is 100% Holy and He can't look upon sin. In fact, God will always punish sin. He can't deny Himself. It is part of who He is.
- c) God created mankind for a personal relationship.
He created man with a free will. Man was not created like a "Robot", he was free to make choices for himself.
- d) Sadly, the first man and woman made wrong choices. They chose to disobey instruction from their creator God and as a result the consequences were "death" and "separation from God." Man was cursed with a life of hard work, which eventually led to death. He would be separated from His creator forever.
- e) However, God loved His created mankind and provided a way that their sin of disobedience could be forgiven. The only way initially was the death of an animal. The animal's death provided a substitute punishment for man or woman. The animal would die in the place of the sinful person. This was a temporary situation until the arrival of God's Son Jesus Christ.
- f) God sent His Son Jesus Christ into this world to provide a permanent solution for mankind and his separation from God. Jesus would die on a cross and take the punishment that mankind deserves for their sin.
- g) When a person is really convicted about their sin and are really seeking forgiveness in their heart, they can ask Jesus to forgive them.

It is a deep feeling in the heart and needs to be real and sincere.

- h) If you are not a Christian yet you need to realise that if you take this step, then you are committed to obedience to God and His word. You no longer live your own life as you please, you seek to follow Jesus and be His disciple.

Jesus said in Mark's Gospel Chapter 8 v. 34-37 (in the N.K.J)

³⁴ When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

It is in this last stage that many people fail.

You must be willing to give up your life to follow Jesus. If you don't it is not the gospel of Jesus. You can't make up the rules as you go along. Jesus has the same conditions for discipleship that He had 2,000 years ago.

2. The Angel announcing the fall of Babylon – v. 8.

We will be dealing with the fall of Babylon in Chapter 18.

There are various views as to whether Babylon is an actual city or the apostate Church, we will discuss these in a few weeks.

The Angel is just here to make an announcement as to its destruction. I don't think we need to comment further at this stage.

3. The Third Angel announces judgement upon those who worship the beast and have his mark on their forehead or hand.

In Chapter 13 we discovered the power of the beast and the mark that the beast will seek to put upon all people. Here we have a warning to all those people who fail in this trial.

It is interesting to note that this is the strongest warning of all the warnings in Revelation.

The Apostate Church has the worst judgement.

Perhaps one of the reasons is that at this time in history, the Church will be struggling for survival.

If individual Christians yielded to the mark of the beast, then the Church would die.

The individual Christian is of great importance to God.

God works through His people, and His people are the channel for the Gospel.

The judgement of those people who receive the mark of the beast is set forth before us with dramatic pictures.

- a) Tormented with fire and brimstone - If we turn to Genesis 19: v. 24 we read "Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah out of the heavens."

The same judgement that God poured out upon Sodom and Gomorrah was going to be poured out upon those who had the mark of the beast.

- b) There will be no rest, day and night from God's wrath. From this we discover that punishment from God, to those who reject His offer of Grace and Forgiveness, is actually eternal in nature.

Many Non- Christian believers think that when they die that they are totally destroyed, but God's word the Bible says something different.

John 5: v.28-29.(N.K.J.)

²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Finally, in this section, v.12-13, the faithful believers are encouraged from Heaven.

The voice from Heaven said;

“ Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.... AND IT GOES ON TO SAY - that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.”

After the terrible prophecies of the terrors to come and the warnings to those who are false, there is a gracious promise from Heaven.

Several times in the New Testament we come across the phrase **“Dying in the Lord”**. What does it actually mean?

(1 Thess. 4:16, 1 Cor.15:18)

In the Original Greek translation the meaning of this phrase is **“ those who come to the end, still one with Christ”**

In other words, the people who are faithful to the end will be rewarded with God’s blessing. They will rest from their labours and their works will follow them.

It is important what we understand by “works” in this verse.

By using the word “works” John means **“Character”**

He is in effect saying:

When you leave this earth, all that you can take with you is yourself, nothing else.

If you come to the end of this life still one with Jesus Christ, you will take with you a character that has been tried and tested like gold.

You will take with you something in your character that resembles Jesus Christ, in order to meet Jesus someday.

The final section of Chapter 14 deals with a “Harvest of Judgement.” – v.14-20.

The final vision of this chapter is of judgement portrayed in pictures which were very familiar to Jewish thinking.

It begins with the picture of a person on a white cloud like the “Son of Man”.

He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

This picture is similar to the vision that Daniel had.

Daniel 7: v. 13-14.

¹³ “I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.

The picture of judgement is two- fold.

It is given to us in the terms of **“harvesting”** and **“winepresses”**

These two illustrations would be very familiar to Jewish people.

In the Old and New Testaments judgement from God was often referred to in terms of harvesting.

Joel 3: v. 13.

¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.

Come, go down;

For the winepress is full,

The vats overflow—
For their wickedness *is* great.”

Mark 4: v.29

²⁹ But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

Matthew 13: v.24-30

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

Matthew 13:37-43.

³⁷ He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The picture of judgement is also illustrated from the wine press.

At this time a wine press consisted of an upper and a lower trough which was connected by a channel.

The troughs might be hollowed out in the rock or they might be built of mud bricks.

The grapes were put into the upper trough which was on a slightly higher level.

The grapes were then trampled with the feet of people and the juice flowed down the connecting channel into the lower trough.

Often in the Old Testament, God’s judgement is likened to the trampling of grapes.

Lamentations 1: v. 15. (N.K.J.)

¹⁵ “The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty *men* in my midst;
He has called an assembly against me
To crush my young men;
The Lord trampled *as* in a winepress
The virgin daughter of Judah.

In v. 20 we are told that the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to horses bridles for 1,600 furlongs.

Although there are many interpretations about this, what I can tell you is that the length of Israel is 1,600 furlongs, which is about 184 miles.

Whatever interpretation we might make of that, it is clear that God’s judgement was severe and complete.

Application

Before we close I would like to make one important application for us here today and also for our internet listeners around the world.

This is the application.

The only way that you are going to avoid God's judgement in the future is to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your own personal saviour.

You may not yet be convinced by the awfulness of your own personal sin, but you could ask God to show you how bad it is compared to His standard of holiness.

When Isaiah saw the Holiness of God, he became deeply convicted of his sin. We need to do the same, we need to know more about the Holiness of God.

If God has spoken to your heart today, then you need to ask Jesus for the forgiveness of your sin.

This is the only way to avoid the judgement of God.