

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles to Revelation 14

For the past two studies that we have done on Wednesday nights – we have looked at three different individuals who are going to be prominent during the seven year period known as the Great Tribulation period.

In chapter twelve, John provided us with a description of the dragon – which is Satan.

And then last week, in chapter thirteen, John described the two beasts – one coming out of the sea and the other one coming up from the land – one of them is the antichrist – the political leader during the tribulation period and the other one is the false prophet – the one who is going to point people to follow and worship the antichrist.

And one of the ways that this is going to happen is by having people take the mark of the beast – either on their right hand or on their foreheads – and if someone doesn't have the mark – they will not be able to partake of any financial transactions.

Something else we learned was that the antichrist was going to wage war on the Jews and those that accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior during the Tribulation Period.

However, what we are going to see tonight beginning in chapter 14 is that God doesn't want to leave John with the impression that the antichrist will be victorious.

Let's pray...

[Rev 14:1-20 NKJV] 1 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.**

I had you make a note of the 144,000 – because we have seen these individuals before.

Back in chapter seven, John described these 144,000 as Jewish believers (These are Jews that accept Jesus Christ after the rapture) – there are going to be 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel = 144000

John tells us in Revelation 7:3 that these were servants of God

God is going to protect these individuals from the judgments and from the antichrist and use them to lead countless others to the faith.

So that was toward the beginning of the Tribulation Period, here in chapter 14, John gets a vision of an event that happens at the End of the Tribulation Period and we see God's faithfulness in that He has protected the 144,000 just like He said He would.

Mt. Zion is used repeatedly in Scripture to refer to Jerusalem & the center of the Messiah's Earthly kingdom during the Thousand Years where satan is going to be bound and we are going to rule alongside Christ.

Notice that these 144,000 had our Heavenly Father's name written on their foreheads.

Some people believe that it will be the name Yahweh or the letters YHWH – or even the phrase, "I AM"

Remember what God told Moses back in the book of Exodus –

God tells Moses that He is going to use him to deliver the people out of Egypt

And Moses asks God, "When I get back to Egypt and tell them that you have sent me to them – What happens if they ask, "What is His name? What shall I say to them?"

And God responds to Moses -

Ex 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

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.

These 144,000 individuals are going to sing this song before the throne of God – and they will be the only ones that will be able to sing it –

Why?

Because they alone went through the testing and tribulation – yet they maintained their integrity.

Thus, they alone could sing of what they were able to see God do on their behalf during the time of Tribulation.

This song was unique to these individuals.

Church, each and every one of us has a song that is unique to us.

It is a song of who we are, it's a song about the experiences we have had, it's our strengths and weaknesses that we bring to the table, it's our gifting, our personality our calling.

Only we can sing our song –

John then provides a further detail on the 144,000

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.

A few weeks ago, when we studied chapter seven, I have mentioned that the JW's believe that they are the 144,000

As we have seen already, the 144,000 come from Jewish ancestry

Here John tells us that the 144,000 are all men.

Not only are they all men – they are all virgins. They're identified as not having defiled themselves w / women.

Now, Heb 13:4 says marital sexual intimacy is a holy thing before God. It is not the sexual intimacy that defiles someone it is the intimacy that takes place outside the boundaries of marriage.

So the virginity of these 144,000 means they were sexually pure.

I had you make a note - They follow the Lamb where ever He goes, meaning, wherever the Spirit of the Lord has taken them around the world, they've gone proclaiming the Gospel.

So not only were they pure and honest, they also were devoted to serving the Lord.

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."

I had you make a note of midst of heaven – because the word that is used here is the word for middle heaven.

There is a sense in which there are “three heavens”.

The first heaven is the atmosphere, where the birds fly.

The second heaven is where the stars are – space.

The third heaven is where God dwells.

So this angel is going to broadcast the gospel to the world from somewhere in space.

The significance of this is that this is the only time in the NT where God allows an angel to preach the gospel.

Up to this time, God has the responsibility to you and me.

And so the angel preaches the gospel and gives one last warning to those that are living during this time.

And the message, “chose who you are going to worship – God the Creator or the antichrist.”

Once again, we see God's grace – as He is giving the people one more chance before it is too late.

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."

Now, we all know Babylon as the ancient city in modern day Iraq –

The name Babylon is synonymous with rebellion against God.

Babylon was where the people attempted to build the tower of Babel

And it was also the capital of the Babylonian Empire – this is where Nebuchadnezzar lived and where they took Daniel and his friends.

Babylon, as we will see over the few weeks – especially chapters 17 and 18 – refers to the worldwide economic system that is going to be in place during the Tribulation Period as well as the worldwide religion system – remember, there will be religion – people will be worshipping the antichrist.

So, even though the collapse of Babylon doesn't happen until the end of chapter 18, the angel here is warning the people on earth that this world system is about to come crashing down.

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."

Here we have the message of the third angel –

“If someone receives the mark – they have chosen to worship the antichrist”

Remember I said last week – no one will be able to say they were tricked into taking the mark.

The act of taking the mark will be connected to the worship of the antichrist.

Therefore, God’s **full** judgment will be upon them.

Notice that this torment is done in the presence of Jesus and the angels –

Why?

The holy angels are witnesses to the justice of the punishment.

Jesus the Lamb is the one who died to pay for the sins of these people.

Yet they have rejected His offer of forgiveness.

Church, hell is a real place.

There are many groups that teach that there is no literal hell.

It's real.

Hell is a place of torment

Hell is a place without rest – there is no break time in hell.

Hell is forever

If one refuses God's way of escape, then one day that individual will find themselves in hell.

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."

At this point in history, believers will be telling each other that it's a good thing to die.

Life will be getting harder and harder for them.

The antichrist will be out to kill them.

But those believers who are killed will find rest. Unlike those in hell – who made the decision to take the mark of the beast.

The true believer will not take the mark because they know it's the easy way out – they know that it leads to hell.

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.

Who is this individual riding on a white cloud?

Jesus.

And why does He have a sharp sickle in His hand?

Because it is harvest time.

And Jesus provides a parable that speaks about this harvest –

Turn with me to Matt 13 –

Let's look at the parable of the wheat and the tares.

Now to help you out a little -

Tares are weeds that look just like wheat, at least until the time of harvest. During the harvest time, the ears of real wheat turn brown, while tares turn black.

[Mat 13:24-30 NKJV] 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." ' ' "

Go ahead and skip to verse 36 – because Jesus explains it.

[Mat 13:36-43 NKJV] 36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 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!

This judgment is against the false believers that infiltrate the church.

The tares that grow alongside the wheat.

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.**"

This is another judgment – here we have the harvest of grapes.

Now, wheat is harvested when it is dry – but grapes are harvested when they are at their juiciest – keep that in mind.

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.**

During the grape harvest, they would put the grapes in a wine press and then they would use a heavy stone or person(s) to squeeze out the juice from the grapes.

John is using the symbolism of a wine press to God's judgment upon the earth.

The only difference is that in the winepress that God uses to execute His judgment, He is not using grapes – He is crushing man.

And the amount of blood that will come out of the judgment will fill an area 182 miles long (1 Furlong is 600 ft) and the blood will be 4' deep (the height of a horses bridle)

[Rev 15:1-8 NKJV] 1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

So far in our study through the Book of Revelation, we have seen three groups of seven angels.

There were the seven angels over the seven churches (chapters 1-3).

There were the seven angels that blew the seven trumpets (chapters 8-11).

These seven angels will have seven bowls – God's final judgment on an unbelieving world.

2 And I saw [something] like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark [and] over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

These are the Tribulation Saints – those that became believers after the rapture that were persecuted and killed by the antichrist.

Yes, they were killed by the antichrist – but they were still victorious because they didn't take the mark and worship the antichrist.

Therefore, they are in heaven.

3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous [are] Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true [are] Your ways, O King of the saints! 4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For [You] alone [are] holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

Notice the content of their worship – it's about God! They sing His praises!

Their attention is on Him; on His person, on His righteous acts.

5 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.

What John is describing here is the doors to the throne room in heaven swinging open – as God's final judgment comes to the earth.

This is the day that believers have been praying for – the day when evil is defeated and God establishes His kingdom upon the earth,

So John knows that heaven is now going to invade earth and the age old rebellion of satan and mankind will be brought to an end.

Take careful note of where these angels come from – they come out of the temple.

If the earthly temple was a model of heaven's temple, and we know that in the earthly temple the throne of God was the ark of the covenant, then that means these angels come forth from the presence of God.

They are agents of His throne – executing His judgments under His authority.

They don't act as spiritual vigilantes; they're only carrying out the will of God.

7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. 8 The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

From the moment that the living creature hands the bowls of God's judgment to the seven angels – until the bowls are finished being poured out upon the earth – heaven comes to a stop.

This means that the judgement is irreversible.

It will be too late to ask for mercy and no more prayers are answered.

And we will see how horrible the contents of these seven bowls will be next week.

Let's pray...

