

The Ultimate Triumph of Christ and the Judgment of the Wicked

Revelation 14:1-20

The events in this chapter, as well as those of the previous two, are not chronological. Much of this chapter points to events that will take place at the end of the Tribulation, although John saw these visions, in time, before the final 7 vials of the wrath of God. It also covers some events that took place earlier in the time-line of events in the book of Revelation.

Some consider this another “parenthetical,” where John is given a step away from the horrifying events that he has seen. Although that may bear some truth, he is not spared much on the issue of being given a reprieve from the horrifying events, other than the first portion dealing with the 144,000.

There is an interesting sort of side note to this chapter. At the end of the last vision is the number of man given – 6. In this chapter, to bring the judgment of the wicked to John’s mind in these visions are 6 angels. Not seven as previous, or yet to follow with the vials, but 6 – the number of man, the number that the antichrist takes. Coincidence? Maybe.

I. VISION OF THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 – vs. 1-5

A. We find the 144,000 mentioned here again, as they were in chapter 7 – this is the same group, it’s just the vision here brings John back to them

- B. The first thing mentioned is the "Lamb" that "stood on the mount Sion" – this is, of course, our Saviour, and it has in view a prophetic notion of the King at His second coming when He sets up His kingdom on earth**
- C. Then, the 144,000 are seen with Him, apparently having come through the Great Tribulation, as they were given to do, without dying**
- D. They are seen as having their Father's name "written in their foreheads" – this would be the seal that was given to them as recorded in 7:4 – it's no coincidence this is what immediately follows the vision of the mark of the beast**

Revelation 7:4

(4) And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

- E. Vs. 2 – A voice is then heard from heaven and its description would lead us to consider it being the voice of the Father (we have seen these descriptions before in the book as they relate to the Father, the One on the throne, seen in vs. 3)**

Revelation 1:15

(15) And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

(From notes on that verse - Again, the voice of God is heard, but this time as of

rushing, thundering water, to show His power and authority.)

F. Then there is heard harps being played, and in vs. 3, the song of the 144,000. This song is described as one that only they can sing – some call this the song of the redeemed, but it's pretty clear the only ones singing it are the 144,000, although it is still the "song of the redeemed" (see next verse), so it is a song we may be singing, as well.

G. They are then described for us in vs. 4-5

1. Vs. 4a – "Not defiled with women; for they are virgins"
 - a) "Not defiled" is pointing to their purity, not that all women are defiled. This is speaking of these not being "guilty of illicit sexual intercourse with women" (Barnes). It is not, as some say, pointing to sex within marriage as being sinful – then or now.
 - b) "They are virgins" – self-explanatory
2. Vs. 4b – "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth"
 - a) Wherever the Spirit of the Lamb led them, they went. This seems to be pointing to the mission work they did while on earth during the Tribulation, where they took the gospel to the world, seen in chapter 7.

[Revelation 7:9](#)

(9) After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number,

of all nations, and kindreds, and people,
and tongues, stood before the throne,
and before the Lamb, clothed with white
robes, and palms in their hands;

- b) It also has an application for the believer today – we are to follow Him wherever He leads us, as well as we are to follow Him in purity and holiness, just as they did there (seen in the first part of the verse)

John 10:27

(27) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

- 3. Vs. 4c – “These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb”

- a) “These were redeemed from among men” – very clearly, these 144,000 that were sealed for the purpose of mission work were saved just like we are today, through faith in the redemptive work of Christ (the Lamb)

- b) The mention of the “firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” in this passage is pointing to the fact that the 144,000 represent the saved of the Tribulation, being the first ones that were redeemed as the rapture took place.

- c) Although we cannot be certain and dogmatic, it would be safe to consider these 144,000 are saved right before the rapture takes place and are sealed from harm as the events of the Tribulation unfold (chapter 7). As such, they represent both the saved of this age, as well as the “firstfruits” of the Tribulation period (this is

seen in the reference to the “Lamb,” a term mostly unique to the book of Revelation, with the exception of the Gospel of John where “the Lamb of God” is referenced in 1:29 and 36).

4. Vs. 5 – points, again, to their purity, and their sole purpose of pointing people to the Lamb
 - a) “In their mouth was found no guile” – there was “no deceit, fraud, hypocrisy” (Barnes) in their speech – what they said was truth from the Word of God
 - b) “For they are without fault before the throne of God” – they stood redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and as such, they are without spot, as covered by the blood, and justified by the work of Christ. As they stand, like we all will, before the throne, we will all stand there redeemed, without blemish, without fault, spotless.

H. A point to be made here is this glorious vision was for John – in the midst of all the horribleness of the previous visions, and the ones about to unfold, John is given this glimpse into some of the wonder that will take place at the end of the Tribulation

II. VISION OF THE ANGEL WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL – VS. 6-7

A. Angel #1 of this chapter

B. This is not to be viewed the same as the gospel of grace that is preached today.

The everlasting Gospel given here is the message of the judgment that was coming – vs. 7.

C. Grace in the work of Christ on the cross is still the means of salvation then, but the presentation of the message is different

1. It's seen here as being carried by an angel
2. It is not to be seen as the angel delivering the message to all the people for that is what the 144,000 were sealed to do
3. The angel was delivering the everlasting gospel to the 144,000

D. It's considered the "gospel" – good news – because it spells the end of the Tribulation and that hope was coming to those that had not received the mark of the beast

III. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FALL OF BABYLON – VS. 8

A. Angel #2

B. This appears to be the rebuilt city of Babylon (this is the first time the word "Babylon" is found in the book of Revelation)

C. This isn't the same as what is described in chapter 17-18

D. Considering the book of Revelation literally, there is no reason for us to think this anything other than the ancient city of Babylon. Since it was destroyed long ago, it would appear that it will be rebuilt to its former luster (in large degree), seen in the fact it is called "that great city" again.

E. There are two passages in the Prophetical books that point to the destruction of Babylon, and as is the case with many of the prophecies in those books, there was a near and far fulfillment (called dual-fulfillment) of those prophecies. The near was when Babylon was defeated by the Medio-Persian Empire somewhere around 556 BC under Darius the Median (Dan. 5), and the far is seen here. This is where the prophecy found in Isaiah comes in. There are some that say this "Babylon" is Rome during the Tribulation period, but that doesn't really fit the events described in Revelation. They say this because Isaiah prophesied that once destroyed, Babylon would never be a city again. At issue in that text is the dual-fulfillment (similar to the Bible saying that there would be a King on the throne of David "forever" – that doesn't mean perpetually, just forever into the future).

Isaiah 13:19-22

(19) And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

(20) It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

(21) But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

(22) And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

Jeremiah 51:7-8

(7) Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

(8) Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.

Jeremiah 51:64

(64) And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

F. Considering the content of chapter 13 and the beast and his dominance, it would be safe to consider that he rules from Babylon, and the fall defined here is the end of that reign at the end of the Tribulation

IV. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DESTINY OF THOSE THAT FOLLOW THE BEAST – VS. 9-12

A. Angel #3

B. Vs. 10 – they are seen as drinking “of the wine of the wrath of God” – that is the seven vials, specifically, the seventh – 16:19

Revelation 16:19

(19) And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

C. Vs. 11 does not describe the end of verse 10 (as some show interpret it) where the “presence of the holy angels” and the “presence of the Lamb” are mentioned

1. The torment (defined as torture, to afflict pain) in vs. 10 begins at the point they are cast into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne judgment, as well as those that will endure the great tribulations on earth leading up to that event
2. The “for ever and ever” part in vs. 11 is not to be viewed as being done in the presence of the holy angels and the Saviour for all eternity – once they are cast from His presence, the memory of them is erased and they are forgotten. The phrase “ascendeth up” points to the fact it will never end – it “continually rises from that world of woe” (Barnes).

D. This point ends in a peculiar way – in vs. 12 it mentions again the “patience of the

saints” as being “here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” The patience is the endurance of the trials because they refuse the mark of the beast, and they are going to be blessed forever for NOT being with those that endure the wrath of God forever.

V. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE THAT FOLLOW THE LORD – VS. 13

A. Some put verse 12 with this verse but it is a separate paragraph – vs. 12 is with the previous paragraph, and so with the previous point. Of course, we can apply it here because the one point leads to the next.

B. I believe that this part of the vision John was to take as happening at the very beginning of the Tribulation, before any had died for their faith – this can be understood by the first phrase, “and I heard a voice from heaven” – indicates a change in time and application

C. Three things are mentioned in this verse regarding those that die:

1. They die “in the Lord” – that is to be considered as in 1 Thess. 4:16 where it says the “dead in Christ” – here it is those that die as believers during the Tribulation period – both those that are martyred and those that die of natural causes (although there won’t be many of them)

2. "They may rest from their labours" – Their labors are that which they do for the Lamb, the good in following the Saviour and in not taking the mark of the beast, the extreme turmoil and physical calamity that this causes them
3. "Their works do follow them" – that is, the result of their good works here, the souls that they lead to Christ by their testimony – the same things that will follow us to heaven

Matthew 6:20-21

(20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

(21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

(19) For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

(20) For ye are our glory and joy.

D. This verse is the second "beatitude" (blessing) in the book of Revelation – the first was in 1:3 – there are five more (seven in all)

Revelation 1:3

(3) Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

Revelation 16:15

(15) Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Revelation 19:9

(9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 20:6

(6) Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 22:7

(7) Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:14

(14) Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE JUDGMENT OF THE SON OF MAN – VS. 14-16

A. Angel #4

B. *The Son of man, the Lord Jesus, is seen with a golden crown on His head and a "sharp sickle" in his hand*

C. Another angel comes from out of the temple and with the message from the Throne to thrust in the sickle for the "harvest of the earth is ripe" – that is, it is just about time to end the Tribulation – a reference pointing to the battle of Armageddon

1. The sickle could be seen as the Word of God, although it is called the Sword in chapter 19
2. The word "ripe" means dried, and is referring to the fact that the time is almost past – the harvest is past due

VII. VISION OF THE ANGEL WITH THE SHARP SICKLE – VS. 17-20

A. Angels #5 and #6

B. Another angel is seen also having a sharp sickle – vs. 17

1. Seems the two coming with the same weapon would be for the same purpose, and that would be for the reaping at the Battle of Armageddon
2. This, given twice, would show the enormity of the task – the awfulness of the Battle

C. Another angel yet is seen coming "from the altar" – he is coming with the cleansing fire

D. There is a reference in vs. 18 to the grapes being "fully ripe" – that is different than in verse 15 – here the reference is to the fact that the grapes are at the point of harvesting, not past due – here the reference is to the enemy of the Throne of God and how the Lord will take His vengeance on them at the battle of Armageddon. (We will look at this battle in more detail in our study of chapter 19.)

E. There is a reference in vs. 20 to the horse's bridle and how the blood will be, in depth, with all the bodies of both man and animal, "by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" – about 200 miles, which would cover virtually the entire are of Israel (and them some).

1. There is no reason to believe this is not a literal representation of the battle. Some say it is just symbolic of the awfulness of the battle, but the detail is too specific for that to make sense.
2. One thing it doesn't say is that the blood was flowing, or in lake form, at this point – if you take the displacement all the bodies will make, the idea that the blood will be that deep is much more plausible. One writer, doing the math, based upon a literal interpretation, puts the death toll needed, with all things considered in the equation, at around 120 million. Keep in mind that all will be gathered there to battle the armies of heaven – many more

people than 120 million, and they are all killed. (this is taken from a comment by "Gordon" on a blog found at the following website:

<http://www.ecalpepos.org/2006/09/how-many-people-will-die-at-battle-of.html>)

3. Something to keep in mind – although we know what that area looks like now, by the time the battle takes place, that whole landscape will be changed, so it is difficult to say what it will be, other than how far it stretches. We don't know how wide this area is, so it is difficult to determine the amount of blood there would have been, but to say this could not happen is simply not accurate.
4. It says that this took place "without the city" – most likely the valley of Jehoshaphat.
5. Joel 3:2, 12-15

Joel 3:2

(2) I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Joel 3:12-15

(12) Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

(13) Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is

full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness *is* great.

(14) Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.

(15) The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

This battle, the biggest, boldest, bloodiest, and most brazen of all time, will stretch from the city of Megiddo on the north (Zech. 12:11; Rev. 16:16), to Edom on the south (Isa. 34:5, 6; 63:1), a distance of some 200 miles. It will reach from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the hills of Moab on the east, a distance of 100 miles. Thus, the total fighting area will exceed twenty thousand square miles. The center of the action will apparently be the Valley of Jehoshaphat, located just east of Jerusalem, between the Holy City and the Mount of Olives. It is also known as the Kidron Valley.





F. It will be an awful event, no matter how it is interpreted

Conclusion: Again, these events cover a good deal of time, but they are to show us today that God has provided a way out of being under His wrath. Not just for today, but there will be a way then too. The question is, do we believe?