

The Church of the Servant King

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PROPHECY SERIES

(Proph21P_Revelation_chp14_Proclamations from Heaven)

In chapter 12, we are informed of Satan's expulsion from heaven which is followed by Satan's intensified efforts to eliminate the Jews and Israel. In chapter 13, we gain understanding of two of Satan's human agents (the two beasts – one from the sea and one from the land) through which Satan executes his strategy. In chapter 14, we are provided a proleptic view of the Lord's victory over the forces of Satan – a victory that will not occur until chapter 19.

Chapter 14 is designed to assure readers of the triumph of believers and the judgment of unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation. Chapter 14 briefly answers two pressing questions:

- What becomes of those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast and are killed (vv. 1-5)?
- What happens to the beast and his servants (vv. 6-20)?¹

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 (REV 14:1-5)

And I looked and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. 4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

Verse	Phrase	Notes
1	"...the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion..."	John sees the victorious Lamb standing on "Mt. Zion" – the name for Jerusalem in the Messianic Kingdom. ² The contrast of the gentle Lamb standing (14:1) and the fierce dragon pursuing (12:13-17) and the evil beasts arising (13:1, 11) is noteworthy and striking.
1	"...and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads..."	The 144,000 that John sees here with the Lamb are the 144,000 Jewish believers of Revelation 7:1-8 (cf. Zech 14:4-5). These 144,000 are seen in heaven. The name of Jesus Christ and the name of God the Father written upon their

¹ Dr. Thomas Constable, "Notes on Revelation," www.soniclight.com

² The name "Mt. Zion" frequently refers to Jerusalem in the Messianic Kingdom (cf. 2 Sam 5:7; Psa 48:1-2; Isa 2:3; 24:23; Joel 2:32; Obad 17, 21; Mic 4:1, 7; Zech 14:10). Some interpreters associate "Mt. Zion" with the "new Jerusalem" of the eternal state (Rev 21:1-22:5). In my observation and opinion, to the Jewish believer, there was little difference between the Jerusalem of the Messianic Kingdom and the heavenly "new Jerusalem" of the eternal state. I base this opinion on the fact that there is no indication in Scripture of the duration of the Messianic Kingdom until we read that it will be 1000 years (Rev 20:3-4).

		foreheads represents their sealing unto God. As we have discussed previously, they are evidently protected from God's wrath but not from the wrath of the dragon and the beasts (cf. 12:12, 17). Some of them will evidently die as martyrs (13:15). The seal is the earnest of their ultimate victory (cf. 22:4).
2	"...a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps..."	Evidently, this "voice" was the voice of more than one speaker since John uses the word "they" in verse 3. The "voice" was probably the unified voices of the angels of heaven (cf. 5:8, 11; 7:11; 19:6).
3	"And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth."	A "new song" is frequently mentioned in Scripture (e.g. Psa 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa 42:10) in association with a recent display of God's mercy, deliverance or provision. The impact of the "new song" was especially noteworthy among the 144,000 Jewish evangelist believers who are now seen to be in heaven. They were the ones among all of God's creatures pictured here who could fully grasp the meaning of the "new song."
4	"These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste."	Primarily, there are two different interpretations of this verse: 1) Literal – these 144,000 are all males who are virgins; and 2) Figurative – these 144,000 have remained faithful to the Lord and not succumbed to the idolatry that will characterize those who worship the Beast in the Tribulation. In the absence of contextual evidence to the contrary, I believe that a combined view is entirely reasonable. ³
4	"These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb."	Probably the firstfruits figure represents them as a special gift to God. This is the idea behind two-thirds of the references to firstfruits in the Old Testament.
5	"And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless."	In contrast to the deception practiced by Satan and the Antichrist during this period, these 144,000 will not lie.

THE PROCLAMATIONS OF SIX ANGELS (REV 14:6-20)

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE FIRST OF SIX ANGELS (REV 14:6-7) – THE ETERNAL GOSPEL

And I saw **another angel** flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Verse	Phrase	Notes
6	"And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven..."	This angel was probably "another" like Michael (12:7), the nearest specific angel in the context. This is the <u>first of six</u> specific angels mentioned in this chapter (vv. 8, 9, 15, 17, 18). The significance of the angel flying in mid-heaven is that nothing hindered people on earth from hearing his words.
6	"...having an eternal gospel to	This is the last chance for unbelievers to repent. An angel

³ Paul advised the Corinthians to remain unmarried because of the nature of the distressing times in which they lived (1 Cor. 7:26; cf. Matt. 19:12). So, there is precedent in Scripture for believers remain unmarried (i.e. to not be involved sexually) during times of distress.

	preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people...	<p>proclaims the “good news” (gospel) just prior to Jesus’ 2nd Advent. This gospel is broadcast to “every nation and tribe and tongue and people.”</p> <p>Remember that at this point in the Tribulation, over one-half or perhaps even two-thirds of the world’s unbelieving population has been killed by the various judgments described thus far in the book of Revelation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “wars” mentioned when the 2nd Seal is opened (6:4) • The “famine” mentioned when the 3rd Seal is opened (6:5-6) • One-fourth of the world’s population when the 4th Seal is opened (6:7-8) • One-third of sea creatures & ships when the 2nd Trumpet is sounded (8:9) • The “many” who die from the fresh water that is turned “bitter” when the 3rd Trumpet is sounded (8:11) • The one-third of mankind who are killed and who did not repent when the 6th Trumpet is sounded (9:15, 18, 20-21) <p>All unbelievers who die as a result of the judgments of the Tribulation period will have had ample opportunity to repent (i.e. <i>change their minds from</i> continuing to worship the Antichrist and accepting Satan’s lies <i>to</i> accepting the Gospel associated with eternal life).</p>
7	“Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”	<p>To “fear God” means to acknowledge the result of one’s failure to accept the fact that His attribute of absolute, perfect righteousness must be satisfied, i.e. eternal separation from the Source of life, eternal “death.” (See Lu 12:5)</p> <p>To “give Him glory” means to accept His provision to satisfy His Own righteousness as a provision made of grace and a provision that man cannot accomplish of his own accord.</p> <p>To “worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and springs of waters” is especially poignant in the context of the many adverse judgments that have wrecked havoc upon the earth and environment during the Tribulation. The God who created the earth has the sovereign prerogative to wrest it from the dominion of the usurper, Satan – the revolutionary created being who obtained dominion of the earth when man ceded his dominion at his fall in the Garden. The worship of one of God’s creatures achieves its most blatant manifestation in the Tribulation period (cf. Rom 1:25; Acts 14:15-17).</p> <p>The positive response to this invitation appears in Revelation 15:4 and the negative response in Revelation 16:9, 11 and 21.</p>

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE SECOND OF SIX ANGELS (REV 14:8) – THE FALL OF BABYLON

8 And **another angel**, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”

Verse	Phrase	Notes
8	“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the	This is another proleptic announcement. It anticipates the occurrence of the event prior to its actual occurrence (Rev 18).

passion of her immorality.”	<p>There are various views regarding the identity of “Babylon” in Revelation. We will examine this item when we arrive at Revelation 18 in our study; however, suffice it to say for now that a literal interpretation of Babylon as the city on the Euphrates River is probably the most tenable interpretation. There are several literal locations named in the book of Revelation (cf. 1:9; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) and others described figuratively (cf. 11:8 – Jerusalem described as “Sodom and Egypt”).</p> <p>Viewing this place as literal Babylon does not exclude implications of the religious and political systems that will arise during the Tribulation – religious and political systems that are sourced from this future Babylon (chps. 17, 18).</p> <p>Wine or alcohol lowers one’s natural inhibitions. During the Tribulation (as has been demonstrated throughout human history to perhaps lesser degrees), the vacuum or <i>mataiotēs</i> (Rom 1:21; Eph 4:17-18) that is present in the souls of reversionistic unbelievers will serve as a willing repository for the lies, deceptive logic, philosophy and miracles performed by Satan. The reversionistic state of these unbelievers has lowered whatever natural inhibitions may have been present (Rom 1:19-20) to accept such deceit.</p>
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THE PROCLAMATION OF THE THIRD OF SIX ANGELS (REV 14:9-11) – THE FATE OF BEAST WORSHIPPERS

9 And **another angel**, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “if anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will 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 goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Even though the beast and his forces will seek to kill those who do not accept him and his false “gospel,” those who follow the beast will experience a worse fate. Frequently, water was mixed with wine in order to dilute it and to extend its use. However, the “wine of the wrath of God” will not be diluted, but full strength. The first half of verse 10 may refer to temporal judgment vs. eternal judgment as is the case with the last half of verse 10. Ultimately, the torment of the unbelieving beast-worshippers who refuse to repent will be excruciating and eternal.

In contrast to the over-comer of the Tribulation who is acknowledged personally by the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of the heavenly Father and the angels of heaven (Rev 3:5), the beast-worshipper who refuses to repent will spend an eternity removed from the presence of the Lamb and the angels of heaven (Rev 19:20; 20:10; 21:8, 27; 22:14-15; cf. Matt 25:41; Mk 9:43; 2 Thess 1:8-9).

The ceaseless praise of the Lamb by the living creatures is eternal (Rev 4:8). In contrast, the punishment of these unbelievers is eternal since the same phrase, “forever and ever,” describes both. Their state of eternal punishment is described here in terms of an endless pyre of smoke rising from the fires that torment them. This is no doubt the most horrible portrayal in Scripture of the fate of unbelievers.

THE PROCLAMATION FROM HEAVEN REGARDING BELIEVERS WHO DIE IN THE LORD (REV 14:12-13) – A CONTRAST OF FATES WITH BEAST WORSHIPPERS

12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

Verse 12 is not saying that if believers of the Tribulation period apostatize and worship the beast, they will lose their salvation and suffer eternal punishment. (Note the fact that in verse 11, the present participle is used for the word "worship" which is better translated "worshipping"). However, throughout Scripture, we find the principle that believers who abandon their faith (or who never develop a vibrant phase 2 faith) suffer temporal effects that have close resemblance to the unbeliever. This temporal punishment is only the first phase of the punishment that unbelievers will experience (v. 10a cf. v. 10b-11), but it is the only phase that believers will experience (cf. Rom. 8:31-39).

It is also significant to note that believers of the Tribulation period (like believers of the present dispensation) will experience reward based upon the quality and production of their phase 2 life. This is strongly implied by the phrase – "their deeds follow with them."

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE FOURTH OF SIX ANGELS (REV 14:14-16) – REAPING THE EARTH'S HARVEST

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. 15 And **another angel** came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.

The fact that the "Son of Man," the "Lamb," or Jesus Christ in His Glorified and exalted state receives a command from an angel is not problematic as it may seem at first. We know from previous sessions that Jesus Christ is under the authority of God the Father. For the benefit of John, an angel is seen as relaying the command from God the Father to the Son.

The phrase "Son of Man" is a messianic title of Jesus Christ in Scripture (cf. Rev 1:13; Dan 7:13-14; Matt 8:20; 24:30; 26:64; Jn 5:27). The description in this passage of the coming of Jesus Christ at His Second Advent is very similar to Daniel's prophecy of the Messiah's second coming (Dan. 7:13-14). The cloud probably represents the *shekinah* glory of God – the visible manifestation of God's presence among His people as exemplified in the pillar of a cloud by day when the Israelites made their Exodus from Egypt and as was manifested in the Temple.

When Jesus was on earth during His humiliation as a Servant-Leader and propitiatory sacrifice, He had no where to lay His head at times (Matt 8:20). However, here, on the day of judgment at the end of the Tribulation, He has a crown of gold on His head (Psa 21:3).

The harvest is an OT figure used for divine judgment (Hos 6:11; Joel 3:13), especially in regards to Babylon (Jer 51:33). Jesus also likens the final judgment to the harvest of the earth (Matt 13:30, 39). The judgment at the end of the Tribulation is described in Revelation 19:17-21. Paul refers to this judgment in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8.

At the end of the Tribulation, the time will have come for the Lord to establish His kingdom on earth and to purge from it the "tares" and "all stumbling blocks" and retain the true

wheat (Matt 13:24-30, 34-43). The numbers of believers at the end of the Tribulation will be insignificant in the eyes of the world (Matt 13:31-32).

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE FIFTH AND SIXTH OF SIX ANGELS (REV 14:17-20) – REAPING THE GRAPES OF WRATH

17 And **another angel** came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18 And **another angel**, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.” 19 And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

In this passage, we read a fore-announcement of the judgments associated with the sixth bowl or vial judgment (Rev 16:12-16). Joel 3:12-15 refers to this scene (cf. Zeph 3:8; Isa 34:1-8; 63:1-4).

Verse	Phrase	Notes
17	“...the temple which is in heaven...”	Here is yet another reference to those we have previously noted that mentions the fact that heaven has a throne room and a temple. The writer to the Hebrews teaches us that the earthly temple is a shadow of the heavenly temple (Heb 8:5; 9:23).
17	“...he also had a sharp sickle...”	This angel is obviously sent by God to also execute judgment upon the earth (cf. Matt 13:30, 39-42, 49-50).
18	“And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar...”	This is a reference to the altar of incense in heaven (Rev 8:3) and the response to the prayers of the persecuted and martyred saints of the Tribulation (Rev 6:9-10).
20	“And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.”	<p>This is to say the least a problematic passage. If we are to interpret this literally, then blood at a depth of about 4 to 4 ½ feet for 200 miles will be created by this slaughter. Also, questions are raised regarding which “city” is being referenced here.</p> <p>Regarding the problem of blood up to the bridle of a horse for 200 miles – it is possible for blood to reach that height when found in a concentrated area, but 200 miles of 4 ½ feet of blood seems virtually impossible. What may be possible is that if a horse were to traverse the 200 mile stretch of land where this battle will be executed, the horse would have blood splattered up to its bridle due to the unavoidable amount of dead bodies that will cover the landscape.</p> <p>Since the city itself is not the subject of judgment apparently, then the “city” is not Babylon. Most likely, the city here is Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, we find predictions of the final battle during this period that will take place in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (a.k.a. the Kidron Valley) just to the east of Jerusalem (Joel 3:12-14; Zech 14:4; cf. Rev 11:2).</p> <p>Scripture mentions another valley that is the location of the final battle of the Tribulation – the valley of Jezreel in northern Israel (the battle of Armageddon mentioned in Rev 19:17-19). Vast numbers of people will die in this battle (Isa 63:1-6).</p> <p>So, this battle will most likely engulf the entire central and northern region of modern-day Israel. The blood from this</p>

		battle will drain out of the Jezreel Valley to the east into the Harod Valley and eventually into the Jordan Valley, the Jordan River and into the Dead Sea.
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