

The Grapes of Wrath



Revelation 14
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The Lamb and the 144,000

Revelation 14:1-5

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.

v1 – Who is seen standing with Jesus (the Lamb) on Mount Zion?

The 144,000 specially anointed Jews who served as the Tribulation evangelists. These are those who were sealed by God in Chapter 7.

When does this vision occur?

Mount Zion is another term for Jerusalem. This vision has to be after the Tribulation period during the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus rules on earth. This is a flash forward.

What is written on the foreheads of the 144,000?

The name of Father God is on their foreheads. This identifies them as being one of the 144,000.

What happens to the 144,000?

They will not suffer death; all these individuals will enter the millennium at the end of the tribulation period...

Rev 7:3 – “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

v2-3 – What is heard in heaven?

The voice of God the Father. Also harp playing and a new song sang by the 144,000.

Why is God's voice described as many waters and loud thunder?

It has penetrating depth and clarity. It is described as being the voice of many waters because all people will understand it despite their language.

What do the harpists and harps represent?

They are expressions of creativity that praise God.

Why is it only the 144,000 could learn the song that was heard?

The 144,000 were specially anointed citizens of heaven who were gifted with heavenly knowledge.

How is it that the 144,000 were redeemed from the earth?

The 144,000 were saved from the fate of the earth and the earth-dwellers who would die for their sins.

v4-5 – How else were the 144,000 described?

- They are single males who are only married to God.
- They follow Jesus wherever He goes.
- They only speak what is pleasing God.
- Their sins have been forgiven and are without fault before God

How is it that women defile men?

It actually goes both ways... the close personal relationship of marriage keeps men and women from being fully devoted to the Lord. Paul addressed this issue...

1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 8-9 – It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband... But I say to the unmarried and the widows: It is good for them to remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

But often times a man and a woman are more useful to the Lord together as a married couple than they would be separately. Paul also addressed this in context...

1 Corinthians 7:7 – *But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and the other in that.*

warning people not to listen to the propaganda of the "bad" aliens.

How are the 144,000 the firstfruits to God and the Lamb?

- They are the first of the Jews to be resurrected. from the Tribulation period.
- Based on this “first-fruits” terminology, it may be that they are supernaturally translated to their glorified bodies at or soon after the Rapture but kept on earth to perform their evangelistic mission.

The Proclamations of Three Angels Revelation 14:6-12

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.”*

v6-7 – What is heard flying in the midst of heaven?

- An angel proclaiming the good news of Christ to all inhabitants of the earth: "Fear God, and give Him glory because His judgment is coming"
- He stands with his pulpit in the firmament of the sky and his voice reaches to the extremities of the earth
- Some have said it may be satellite communications but it could also be supernatural and explained away by agents of Satan claiming to be "friendly" aliens

What prophecy does this passage fulfill?

That the gospel will be preached to the whole earth before the Lord returns...

Matthew 24:14 — this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come

How is God described by the angel?

God is described as the Creator which will resonate with some but since most earth dwellers are conditioned to be naturalists, they will be predisposed to embrace the message of the "friendly" aliens.

Why would most people rather believe demons representing themselves as friendly aliens rather than God?

- Pride... they want to hold on to their naturalistic beliefs; it is too painful to admit they are wrong and that their human institutions have let them down.
- You'd think the consequences of being wrong is so great that they'd repent (Pascal's Wager) but pride is a powerful emotion that blinds people to the truth.

v8 – What does the second angel proclaim?

The second angel announces the destruction of Babylon... It is a warning; those who have put their trust in the “Babylon” world system will suffer.

What does Babylon symbolize?

This "Babylon" is both the Political System and the False Religious System of the Antichrist.

- It was inspired by Satan and first implemented by Nimrod at the Tower of Babel... it offers a way to God on mankind's own terms
- These "Babylon" systems have permeated the world to this day

v9-11 – What does the third angel proclaim?

The third angel announces eternal torment for those who worship the Beast (damnation to hell).

Who are those who worship the Beast?

Those who declare the allegiance to the Antichrist by taking his Mark have sealed their fate...

Matthew 6:24 – No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

How are the consequences of worshiping the Beast described?

- Wrath of God – punishment for rejecting Him being tormented with fire and brimstone...burning in the lake of fire (Rev 20:14)
- No rest day or night – suffering all the time tormented forever and ever (eternal punishment)

How is this fair to suffer eternally for a few years of miss-directed worship?

- God determines what is fair... it is His creation, so His rules and He takes sin very seriously.
- The black and whiteness of the events during the Tribulation make it clear what people are doing by worshiping the Antichrist... they know the choice they are making by their decision.
- Life in this world is a very important test... people know that in their heart of hearts but still chose to reject God.

How does this passage argue against hell being annihilation?

- They are tormented in the presence of the holy angels and Christ... hell is in the spiritual realm, outside the confines of time
- The smoke of their torment is a continuous burning that continues forever and ever.
- Also... All people are made in the image of God (eternal beings) so they cannot cease to exist thus separation from God must be eternal.

Why do Christians embrace annihilation as an explanation for hell?

It reduces the guilt for not taking the Great Commission seriously enough.

v12 – What is the patience of the saints?

Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus during the Tribulation have great patience exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit.

v13 – Who are the blessed?

Those who die knowing Jesus as their Savior from the time of the three-angel proclamation till the end of the Tribulation.

Who makes this promise of blessing to the Tribulation Saints?

A voice from heaven... God the Father and this is reinforced by God the Holy Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit describe the blessing of the Tribulation Saints?

They will have rest from their labors... there will be eternal rewards for their good works of standing for Christ during the Tribulation.

Does rest mean they'll not be doing anything in heaven, the ultimate retirement?

The word "rest" (Greek: anapauo) does not mean inactivity, it means "refreshment", "rejuvenation."

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

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.

v14 – What does John see on a cloud?

One like the Son of Man (Christ Himself)... you'd think this was an angel except for the crown and:

Daniel 7:13-14 – 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. 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.

What does the crown symbolize?

It is an emblem of royalty

Why is the Lord sitting here?

He sits because he comes in judgment.

What is the sickle symbolize?

The Lord is preparing to reap a harvest.

V15-16 - What does the angel say?

He declares that it is time for the Lord to reap His harvest.

Why would an angel be instructing Jesus when to reap His harvest?

Note that the angel came out of the temple suggesting that the angel is simply bearing a message from the Father to the Son... this is for the benefit of those who are observing.

What does the Lord reap?

He is taking for Himself the souls of those who the Father gave Him...

Matthew 13:24-30 – Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 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?' 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?' he said, 'But 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 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."

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

Revelation 14:17-20

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.

v17-19 – What do these two angels do?

One also has a sickle for reaping the vine of the earth; the other has power over fire. (I can identify with this having once been a Brigade Fire Support Officer).

What does the fire support angel tell the angel with the sickle?

That it is time to reap the vine of the earth

What is the vine of the earth?

The grapes on the "vine of the earth" is the product of the earth... earth-dwellers; lost souls, those who rejected Christ.

How is it that the grapes of the vine of the earth are fully ripe?

The time for the harvest (or Judgment) of the lost has come.

What becomes of the grapes of the vine of the earth?

They are thrown into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

v20 – What does the great winepress of the wrath of God do?

It produces blood... takes the lives of those who have been reaped during the Tribulation.

How much blood is produced by the great winepress of the wrath of God?

It produces a river of blood 3 feet deep for 180 miles... a lot of people will be dying.

When does all this bloody death happen?

This mass kill-off occurs at the end of the Tribulation to conclude the battle of Armageddon...

Revelation 19:15 – Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

How should we see comfort in these events?

God is in control, justice will be done, and we are on the side that wins with great rewards.