

The Last Days

An In-Depth Study of Biblical Eschatology **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**

“Write ... what will take place later” – Revelation 4-22

Revelation 14 *A Glimpse of Future Events*

The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion (14:1-5)

14:1 John saw the Lamb ^{Revelation 5:6,8,12-13} triumphantly standing with God’s “servants” (the 144,000 ^{Revelation 7:4-8} Jewish evangelists) who had God’s seal ^{Revelation 3:12, 7:3, 22:4} (contrasting the mark of the beast ^{Revelation 13:16-18}) on Mount Zion (also referred to as the “City of David” ^{2 Samuel 5:7}, God’s “holy mountain” ^{Psalms 2:6, 48:1-2} and Jerusalem: the ruling center during the Millennium ^{Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 4:1-3}).

In this view of the Glorious Appearing, all 144,000 are seen as having made it through the Tribulation.

14:2-3 John heard God’s unmistakable voice ^{Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2, Revelation 1:15b} from heaven. The 144,000 sang a “new song” of praise ^{Revelation 5:9} before the throne ^{Revelation 4:2-5}, the four living creatures ^{Revelation 4:6-8} and the elders ^{Revelation 7:9-11} (the church). They alone knew the “new song” (a song of redemption ^{Psalms 33:1-3, 96:1-3, 144:9-10, 149:1, Luke 15:10}), because their salvation experiences were unique gifts from God.

14:4 The evangelists were morally and spiritually pure. Man’s eternal righteousness is provided by Jesus ^{Romans 3:21-26}, but following salvation, believers are expected to live lives worthy of their calling ^{Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 1:9-14, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12}, because they will be presented to God as spiritual virgins ^{2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-27} (unlike the “inhabitants of the earth” ^{Revelation 6:10, 13:8} who were completely immoral ^{Revelation 17:1-8}). The 144,000 followed the Lamb (the shepherd ^{Revelation 7:17}). All people who follow Christ into heaven are considered firstfruits ^{Jeremiah 2:3, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, James 1:18}.

14:5 Following in the footsteps of Jesus ^{Isaiah 53:9, 1 Peter 1:19, 2:22}, the Jewish evangelists maintained pure tongues/lives ^{Psalms 32:2, Malachi 2:6, John 1:47} in the worst of times (fulfilling prophecy ^{Zephaniah 3:13}). However, they were not perfect, but sanctified ^{Colossians 1:22}.

Three Angels (14:6-13)

14:6-7 John saw "another angel" bringing the eternal gospel ^{Romans 16:25, 1 Corinthians 15:1-7} to every people group on earth for the final time, thus fulfilling prophecy ^{Matthew 24:14}. The angel's message focused on a plea for them to "Fear God" ^{Psalm 34:9, Proverbs 9:10} (and not fear Satan or his Antichrist ^{1 John 4:4}, even though they are sometimes "given" temporary control ^{Daniel 7:21, Revelation 11:7, 13:7}), because the Lord's judgements were coming very soon ^{Revelation 10:6}. The angel commanded everyone to worship the Creator (Jesus ^{John 1:3, Colossians 1:15-17}), whose "glory" is seen in His Creation ^{Psalm 19:1, Acts 14:14-17}. This last effort to reach people is another example of God's patience & love ^{Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9}.

14:8 To the people who still did not respond positively to the message of the first angel, a second angel announced the prophesied judgement of Babylon ^{Isaiah 21:9, Jeremiah 51:8}. This was in reference to God's destruction of the religious ^{Revelation 17} as well as the political/economic ^{Revelation 18} world systems (the kingdom of the Antichrist) symbolized by Babylon (starting with ancient Babylon's idolatry at the Tower of Babel ^{Genesis 11:1-9}). The "wine of her adulteries" referred to the world's attraction to the intoxication of both physical ^{Matthew 5:27-28} and spiritual ^{Leviticus 20:6-8} immoral relationships ^{Revelation 2:20-23}.

14:9-11 A third angel spoke to those who chose the mark of the beast ^{Revelation 13:12-17} over God's seal. By choosing Satan over God (at any time in human history), people bring God's wrath ^{Revelation 19:15} upon themselves (God's wrath is commonly pictured as a cup to be drunk ^{Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15-16, Revelation 16:19}). These souls will suffer by fire ^{Revelation 19:20} (actually, burning sulfur ^{Isaiah 34:8-10, Ezekiel 38:18-23} just like at the judgements of Sodom and Gomorrah ^{Genesis 19:24-25,28}) in front of Jesus and the angels ^{Mark 8:38}. The torment ^{Matthew 13:41-42} will be eternal ^{Matthew 3:12, 25:41, Revelation 19:3} and without any rest ^{Isaiah 66:24, Revelation 20:10} for those who reject God during their life, in contrast to promised rest ^{Matthew 11:28} for those who "die in the Lord" ^{v.13}. Mankind is given a glimpse of hell on Earth during the Tribulation ^{Revelation 9:1-6}, but the eternal Hell is an absolute reality ^{Matthew 13:36-42, Revelation 20:11-15}, whether people believe in it or not.

The Last Days: 15 Revelation 14-15

Notice in these verses, the emphasis on choice ("worships") and on the fact that there is no going back once a person ("anyone") makes a definitive choice of the beast over God ^{v.9-10}.

14:12 This verse speaks of believers who exhibit patience and endurance ^{Revelation 13:10} to maintain their faith and obedience in living a Christian life ^{John 14:15, 2 Timothy 3:10-17}, even when it means facing persecution ^{John 16:33} or the agony of observing people (especially loved ones) who make the eternal decision to choose Satan over God.

This verse refers to the 'doctrine of perseverance'. The Bible makes it clear God will provide the ability to persevere ^{Deuteronomy 32:36-40, John 6:35-40, 10:27-30, Romans 8:31-39, Philippians 1:4-6, 1 John 5:1-5, 11-13} for anyone who has accepted Jesus as Lord & Savior: a powerful proof of eternal security.

14:13 The believers who are martyred in the Tribulation (the dead "who die in Christ from now on" ^{1 Thessalonians 4:16}) were promised rest from their labor ^{Hebrews 4:9-10} of serving the Lord, especially in the face of persecution. Man's "deeds" are important: for His followers (at the Judgement Seat of Christ ^{2 Corinthians 5:9-10}) and for those who reject Jesus (at the Great White Throne Judgement ^{Revelation 20:11-15}).

This verse includes the second of the 7 Revelation beatitudes ^{1:3, 14:13, 15:5, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 14}.

The Harvest of the Earth (14:14-20)

14:14-16 John saw Jesus ^{Mark 2:10, Luke 6:5, John 5:27} (one "like a son of man" ^{Revelation 1:13}) on a cloud ^{Daniel 7:13-14, Matthew 17:5, 24:30, 26:64} (great majesty) and a gold crown ^{Psalms 21:3} (symbol of sovereignty), preparing to reap ^{Jeremiah 51:33}. Another angel brought this message from the Father: the time was right for the harvest ^{Joel 3:13}. Jesus swung His sickle ^{Mark 4:29} to indicate the start, but He sent the angels to reap ^{Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43}.

14:17-18 Another angel with a sharp sickle came out of the heavenly dwelling place (Temple) of God ^{Psalms 11:4, Revelation 11:19, 15:5}. Then another angel in charge of the fire (the altar of incense ^{Revelation 6:9-11, 8:3-5}) commanded the previous angel to harvest the "clusters of grapes" (fire and judgement are frequently associated ^{Matthew 18:8, Luke 9:54}).

The Last Days: 15 Revelation 14-15

The "harvest" season is the time symbolizing ultimate judgement, and grapes symbolize people.

14:19-20 Vivid symbols: grapes as people and a winepress as God's wrath ^{Isaiah 63:2-3}. The incredible abundant bloodshed from the prophesied ^{Joel 3:11-16} "battle" ^{Revelation 16:14} of Armageddon ^{Revelation 16:16, 19:11-21}, centered in the Valley of Megiddo (OT: Valley of Jezreel ^{Hosea 1:5}), resulted in blood flowing 4 feet deep for over 180 miles!

Isaiah's description of the judgement of Edom ^{Isaiah 63:1-4} (representing the God-hating world) is similar to and a foreshadowing of Jesus' bloody judgement of the wicked at Armageddon.

This judgement and Jesus' sacrifice ^{Hebrews 13:12} were both "outside the city" ^{Zechariah 14:1-5}.

Revelation 15 *Preparing for God's Final Wrath*

The Coming of the Seven Angels with Seven Last Plagues (15:1-8)

This chapter is an introduction to the Bowl Judgements, which will be presented in Chapter 16.

15:1 John saw "another great sign" in heaven ^{Revelation 12:1,3}: seven angels with the seven last (*eschatos*: last things) plagues that mark the end of the Tribulation and the completion of the wrath of God ^{Romans 1:18-21, Revelation 11:18, 14:9-10, 16:19, 19:15}.

The term "plagues" was used as an equivalent to the worst of God's Tribulation "judgements".

God's "wrath" is punishment multiplied seven times ^{Leviticus 26:21} for relentless hostility to Him.

15:2 Next John saw a sea of glass ^{Exodus 24:9-10}, like around God's throne ^{Revelation 4:6}, along with the Refiner's fire ^{Zechariah 13:7-9, Malachi 3:2-4}. Those who overcame the beast, his image and his mark, by (1) the blood of the Lamb ^{1 John 5:3-5, Revelation 12:11a} and by (2) their great love of the Word of God (both Jesus ^{John 1:1,14} and the Scripture) more than their lives ^{Revelation 12:11b}, were standing 'on' (not "next to") the sea ^{Revelation 10:2}. Tribulation saints had harps (like Christians ^{Revelation 5:8} and the 144,000 ^{Revelation 14:2}).

15:3-4 The Tribulation saints sang two songs: (1) one song of Moses: the song after the deliverance of the Jews at the Red Sea ^{Exodus 15:1-18} (Pharaoh ⇒ Antichrist) sung by

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The Last Days: 15 Revelation 14-15

Jews on Sabbath evenings and (2) the song of the Lamb ^{here & Revelation 5:8-14}: a song of deliverance of sinners from sin by God through Jesus. The song greatly praised the "marvelous deeds" ^{Psalm 86:8,10, 111:2-9, 139:14} and the "righteous acts" ^{Psalm 145:17}, as well as glorify the name ^{Psalm 86:9, Philippians 2:9-11}, of the Lord God Almighty ^{Amos 4:13} and the eternal, all-powerful King ^{Jeremiah 10:6-7,10, Daniel 4:3, 1 Timothy 1:17}. The song also addresses the return of Jesus ^{Revelation 19:11-16}, when He will set up His Millennial kingdom, and He will be worshiped by ^{Psalm 66:4, Isaiah 66:23} and reign over the entire earth ^{Revelation 20:4-6}.

15:5 John then saw in heaven the Most Holy Place ^{Exodus 26:33-34} in the heavenly Temple. This was the place of God's dwelling that held the Ark of the Covenant ^{Revelation 11:19} (the "ark of the Testimony" ^{Exodus 25:10-22}), which held the Ten Commandments (the "two tablets of the Testimony" ^{Exodus 31:18, 32:15, 34:29}).

15:6 The seven angels with the seven final plagues ^{v.1} (the bowl judgements ^{Revelation 16}) came out from the Temple wearing shining linen (representing purity ^{Revelation 19:8}) and gold sashes (indicating a priest or priestly duty ^{Leviticus 16:1-4, Revelation 1:12-13}). Many hundreds of years earlier, Daniel had a similar visitor ^{Daniel 10:4-5}.

15:7 Then one of the four living creatures (angels) around the throne ^{Revelation 4:6-8} (called Cherubim ^{Ezekiel 1:4-14, 10:1}) gave each of the seven angels ^{v.1} a golden bowl (Temple implement: a shallow saucer, also called a vial or a censer, used to sprinkle/splatter blood ^{Exodus 24:6,8, 2 Kings 25:15} in sacrificial ceremonies and to remove coals from the altar of incense ^{Revelation 8:3}). Each of the bowls was filled with the most intense wrath ^{2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, Leviticus 26:21} of the eternal God ^{Revelation 1:18}.

15:8 The Temple was filled with smoke coming from "the glory of God and his power" (God's *Shekinah* [presence] glory ^{Exodus 40:34-35, 1 Kings 8:10-11, 2 Chronicles 5:13-14, Isaiah 6:1-4} and His power and judgement ^{Exodus 19:16-19}). As a result, no one was allowed into the Lord's presence until His righteous judgements were complete ^{Revelation 16:17}.