

The scene in chapter fourteen depicts the future triumphant harmony sounding from Mount Zion. In the Book of Revelation this is inserted between the last of the seven trumpets and prior to the outpouring of the seven vials of God's wrath. Although it is in the present tense, it anticipates the future time of the end, as referred to previously, *Rev. 10:7* But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. The visions which are about to be given to John follow the narrative concerning the Antichrist, the False Prophet (ch. 13) and their wicked reign. This vision in *Rev. 14:1-5* now presents the Lamb with the 144,000 on Mount Zion in anticipation of the enemy's future defeat and judgment.

The technical term for how this chapter is presented is 'proleptic', which means it describes events as taking place *before* they actually have. It is the *anticipation* of future events as if they have already happened. Although the events are described as in the present, they have yet to take place in the future. They are for the encouragement of the 144,000 as confirmation from the Lord they will be as more than conquerors (*Rom. 8:37*)

In chapter seven the 144,000 are described as *all the tribes of the children of Israel (7:4 ... v.5-8)*. They are sealed on their foreheads, indicating they are the servants of God (7:3). We are not told specifically where they are standing, although verse nine does describe the location of 'a great multitude', *7:9* 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. However, in chapter fourteen we *are* told the full number of 144,000 are standing on Mount Zion in the company of the Lamb, Who is the victorious Lord Jesus Christ. At this point it is perhaps feasible to understand the 144,000 Redeemed as consisting of both Jew and Gentile (cf. *Rev. 5* and *7*, and also *Eph. 2:13-15*) who are poised to enter the great tribulation period, in which they will faithfully endure the most horrendous adversity God's people have ever known.

Those unbelievers in the previous chapter had received *13:16* a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead ... *17* ... the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here, in chapter fourteen, the 144,000 have the name of the Father of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus, written in their foreheads (*Rev. 14:1*). The 144,000 belong to God, and John is being shown how, - in the future, - *after* the wickedness and persecution they must endure, they *will* stand victorious with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Though they *will* fall victims to the beast because they refuse to worship him, their victory ultimately will be rewarded in the presence of Jesus.

It is a glorious occasion when John heard the sound of a great voice from Heaven [*from God*], as the voice of many waters [*cf. Ezek. 43:2; Rev. 1:15; 19:61*], and as the voice

of a great thunder [*cf. Job 37:4; 40:9; Ps. 18:13*]: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps [*harps were the instrument of celebration, e.g. Ex. 15:20-21; Num. 27:27; II Sam. 6:5*] (Rev. 14:2). And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth (Rev. 14:3). They were singing their redemption song before the throne of God (Rev. 14:3). It had never been performed before because this was the occasion celebrating the victory of the saints who came through the Tribulation, for no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were *redeemed* from the earth. ...⁴ These are they which were *not defiled* which *follow* the Lamb whithersoever he goeth ... *redeemed* from among men ... unto God and to the Lamb.⁵ And in their mouth was found *no guile* [*they did not propagate the message of the beast*]: for they are *without fault* before the throne of God ... It was a song only the Redeemed who bravely and faithfully stood out from the world's inhabitants during the Great Tribulation could sing.

The chapter's second vision describes another [*the first*] angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting *Γαίωvιoς* gospel [*Εὐαγγέλιον*] to preach [*Εὐαγγελίζω*] unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (v.6). He *bellows out* in a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come. and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (v.7). ... It is not yet too late ... repent, turn to God, and believe while the opportunity remains ... but they would not. ... In spite of their ongoing rebellion, God's offer of grace continued to be extended. And the angel from the heavens reminds the people *God*, - not the beast or the false prophet, - *but God* is *the* all-powerful One and the One to Whom they must eventually answer!

Yet another announcement in another vision is given by a second angel. Obviously, the message of the first angel was rejected for the message of the second angel warns of the coming judgment. The future fall of Babylon is described as if it had already taken place ('proleptic'),⁸ Babylon [*the great enemy of God's people*] is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because *she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*. This is dealt with in greater detail in chapters seventeen and eighteen.

The third angel roared (v.9) so that all will hear and understand his dire warning,⁹ If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb *i.e. 'the cup of God's wrath'*. ... The angel tells it as it is ...¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever [*cf. Mt. 25:46*]: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. ... For those who ignore the warning, *Jn. 3:18* he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that

light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. ... How good is God to keep sending warnings to a people intent on not listening!

So, these three angels deliver God's final call to repentance before the last series of judgments are unleashed, prior to Christ's return.

Meanwhile, John inserts a word of encouragement to these believers who are about to be martyred at the hands of the beast. They consist of both Jew (Rev. 12:17) and Gentile (7:9), ¹³ Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of *lin*Jesus. Even facing death, they are assured of victory, ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, *Blessed* are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit *[He agrees with the 'voice from heaven']*, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

There then follows two further visions, - the first relating to the harvest of the grain which symbolises the gathering of the righteous into salvation (v.14-16), and the second referring to the vintage of God's wrath which pictures the judgment of the wicked and their condemnation (v.17-20). Both these visions are fulfilled in chapters 19-20, and also previously described by Jesus in Mt. 25, ³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ... ⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ... ⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

In the first of these two visions, John observes the returning Messiah, ^{14:14} And I looked, and behold a white cloud *[reminiscent of the white cloud appearances over the tabernacle and the temple]*, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown *[στέφανος, the victor's crown]*, and in his hand a sharp sickle. *[ref. Dan. 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.]*

It is followed by the picture of the Lord Jesus as the reaper being given the instruction to thrash His way through His enemies like the harvester mowing *the grain*, ¹⁵ And *another angel [the fourth] came out of the temple*, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to

reap; for *the harvest of the earth is ripe*.¹⁶ And *he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped*. This harvest was prophesied by Joel (3:12-13,21), Isaiah (63:1-6), and the Lord Jesus (Mt. 13:30,39-42).

The angel came out of the temple, the Father's inner sanctuary, with instructions from the Father to command His Son to begin the most fearsome judgment the world has ever known. The devastation will be unparalleled as Divine punishment rains down upon the earth ... and the world will be powerless to defend itself,¹⁷ And *another angel [the fifth] came out of the temple* which is in heaven, he *also* having a sharp sickle.¹⁸ And *another angel [the sixth] came out from the altar [the altar of incense from where the prayers of the saints were offered, 6:9ff; 8:3f. ... the efficacy of the prayers of God's people for their prayers are about to be answered]*, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust [*wield*] in thy sharp sickle, and gather *the clusters of the vine* of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe [*for judgment*].¹⁹ And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God [*catastrophic judgment!*].²⁰ And the winepress was trodden without the city [*where the people of God dwell*], and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [*approximately 184 miles, the length of the land of Israel, with a depth of blood about four feet*]. ... The final fury of Heaven is unleashed upon the unbelieving world, and the consequences defy description. ... It is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31).