

God's Just Response – Part 1

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Revelation 14:1-5

I. Communion

II. Introduction

1. Chapter 14 marks a clear shift as God responds to evil's plans and efforts we saw unfolding in chapter 13.

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III. **Revelation 13:1-5: Faithfulness Declared, Holiness Exhibited**

1. From the language here, it seems clear that John is offering an earthly view of the happenings and not a heavenly view.
2. John, as he has done many times before in the book of Revelation, looked and saw a marvelous sight. **The Lamb, Jesus Christ, had come and was standing on Mount Zion.** Along with Him were 144,000 soldiers of the cross.
3. This is a good place to again remind you that we study the Bible with a literal hermeneutic. **That does not mean everything in the Bible is literal, but that it is there to present a literal truth.** The words of the Bible are meant to reveal Jesus and His plan for mankind so we follow what is often referred to as the "golden rule of interpretation" – **"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense."**
 - A. I raise up this "golden rule" here because there is great disagreement regarding the interpretation of the verses we have just read, **including, but certainly NOT limited to (1) whether Zion is physical Mt. Zion in the hills overlooking Jerusalem, (2) whether the 144,000 are the same 144,000 we read of in chapter 7 of Revelation; made up of 12k each from the 12 tribes of Israel, (3) just who was singing the song and where was it actually being sung from, (4) whether the virgins**

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are spiritual or real people AND what exactly their virginity relates to, and (5) what is meant by the virgins being yet another first-fruit found in Scripture.

4. Some things of note in verse 1 include:

A. Many expositors have a view that this Zion is a spiritual Zion and not the literal Mt. Zion in the hills overlooking the literal city of Jerusalem. Those spiritualizing the text will see Mt. Zion as the victorious church or something similar.

However, the plain reading of the text indicates this as literal Mt. Zion and applying a literal hermeneutic does not conflict with the rest of the Bible so we will faithfully remain with it. I suspect many of you that have been to Israel have stood on this very spot. No worries if you haven't, because one day we will be joining Jesus there at His second coming.

B. Some spiritualizing this passage suggest the 144,000 are glorified saints and are therein a different group than the 144,000 in **Revelation 7**. Again, as I look at the text I see no reason to veer away from a literal hermeneutic and many reasons to stay with it.

Some of the reasons for staying with the literal hermeneutic include **Revelation 7** clearly identifies them as Jews as does **Revelation 14**. Further, while the Jews are under such great attack from the Antichrist, it is consistent with God's purpose for them as witnesses (**Rev. 7:9-10**) to be bringing the hope of Messiah to Israel. Finally, and more on this as we get to the end of the chapter, it seems reasonable that the 144,000 may well be used by God in keeping the Antichrist from trampling the city of Jerusalem as described in verse 20. A few more things about the 144,000.

- i. This number is made up of 12,000 Jews from each of Israel's 12 tribes;

- ii. As we just read, it seems the mystery of just what the seal was they received in **Revelation 7** has been solved. *It was the Father's name written on their foreheads; and*
- iii. The Lord gave them a seal of protection from the Antichrist as noted in **Rev. 7**. *The purpose of the seal was to allow them to testify of Jesus throughout the persecution and warfare of the Antichrist – day in and day out they were to be pointing people to Jesus as their hope along with the consequences of not receiving Him.*

That the 144,000 are here speaks of a central truth of Scripture...God is faithful! *He not only has infinitely more power than Satan, we again see that He is trustworthy to fulfill His promises whether in that day or today.* Since a thorough review of His promises would take us far more time than we have today, I just want to point you to a few:

- He promises salvation to all who believe in Jesus (**Romans 1:16-17**);
- He promises an abundant life (**John 10:10**) and comfort in our trials (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**);
- He promises to finish the work He starts in you (**Philippians 1:6**);
- He promises to be with us (**Isaiah 41:10**) and to return for us (**John 14:2-3**), and this list goes on and on.

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- 5. Verses 2-3 blur the heavenly and earthly realm as John hears a distinctive voice from heaven; *a surreal voice with a complex depth and of great, crashing volume possibly representing judgment.* It seems that this voice was joined by many harpists playing the soothing sounds of their harps offering peace and rest from God's pending judgment.

- A. As would be expected, those having a spiritual view of the 144,000 tend to apply a spiritual view to the song being sung here in verse 3; [often suggesting it is actually being sung on Spiritual Zion in heaven](#). Once again, I believe the plain reading of the text ([both this verse and in the context of the chapter and the entire book of Revelation](#)) indicates it was the 144,000 literal men literally singing a song from the literal Mt. Zion.
- B. Since there are numerous new songs noted in Scripture (**Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; and 149:1; Isaiah 42:10**), including one sung by the church in **Revelation 5:9**, [there is every reason to accept the uniquely called and situated 144,000 men may well have their own song of worship to share with all of heaven](#). Can I just say, this will rank up there as one of the most memorable concerts in history.
6. Verses 4-5 serve to offer additional details both raising questions and, ultimately, further cementing these men as being the 144,000 from **chapter 7**. [Let's take a bit of a closer look at the four major details in view here:](#)
- A. First, they have not defiled themselves with women – they are virgins. [Those spiritualizing this passage will often say these are spiritual virgins and not, literal physical virgins](#). Along with the plain reading of the text, Paul's words in several places in **1 Corinthians, including 7:32-33**, and Jesus words in **Matthew 19:12** all provide Scriptural support for this passage being taken literally.
- B. Next, they were redeemed by Jesus and faithfully follow and obey Him. [I will stop here to point out two things that apply as much to you and I as to these men](#). First, these are real people living out their duties and responsibilities to the One that saved them through the Gospel. [Second, they counted Jesus as worthy to follow no matter what they \(and their families\) endured](#). This also acts as the foundation for the third detail.

C. Third, they will be first-fruits to the Father and Son. I believe the suggestion here is that these men, because of the details already discussed, were the first-fruit of Israel in their age – the time of the tribulation period.

D. Finally, they lived lives marked by truth and holiness. In an age where both were under constant attack, these men stood for righteousness. This could only be done with God's ever-present power and goodness alive in their lives. Just as Jesus promises to do for us as we face attacks in our cancel culture day, He had given new hearts to those tribulation saints and brought them on the journey of being more and more holy as He is and calls us to be. As with the last detail (see **Rev 5:12; He 13:15; Phil 2:9-11**), this detail is one of those areas we could spend a great deal more time on (**see Col 1:22-23; Phil 2:15, 4:4-9; He 12:14**)! *In the outline for tonight's teaching, I have included some Scripture references for those interested in going further.*

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IV. Closing: Examining Oneself

1. I pray that this passage and the chapter at large cause us to examine ourselves in light of God's faithfulness and trustworthiness with the 144,000 reminding us that as redeemed children of the Living God, our lives should be:

- A. Worshipful;
- B. Faithful;
- C. Obedient;
- D. Honest;
- E. Trustworthy; and
- F. Holy

Revelation 14:1-5

Discussion Prompts

Don't be shy or embarrassed, this is a safe place to talk, learn, and grow. All of us should walk with an attitude of grace and Godly love in encouraging one another to contribute to our shared growth in the Lord.

For more discussion questions helping your faith to grow, please download the sermon documents typically posted the day after each sermon on the watch tab of our App or website.

1. You have just been translated into hearing range of one of the 144,000 witnesses. You hear their testimony yet you know the horrors of the Antichrist's reign. What could the witnesses possibly say to convince people to endure persecution and death by rejecting the Antichrist as their lord?
2. As a group, come up with a list of the ten (10) most important promises God offers (a) non-believers, and (b) believers.
3. Hard questions follow: Do you ever doubt your faith? How has God answered your doubting? Come up with a list of 5-10 ways you can speak into a doubting Christian's life.

Revelation 14:1-5

God's Just Response – Part 1

I. Introduction:

- God's response to evil's plans that unfolded in chapter 13.

II. Revelation 13:1-5: Faithfulness Declared, Holiness Exhibited

- The Golden Rule: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense."
- Know and appropriate the promises of God.
- Know and live out your duties and responsibilities to Christ, for He is worthy!

Additional Scripture References: Re 7, 9-10; Ro 1:16-17; Jn 10:10; 2 Co 1:3-4; Phil 1:6; Is 41:10; Jn 14:2-3; Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; and 149:1; Isaiah 42:10; Re 5:9; 1 Co 7:32-33; Mt 19:12; Re 5:12; He 13:15; Phi; 2:9-11; Col 1:22-23; Phil 2:15, 4:4-9; He 12:14

III. Closing: Examining Oneself

5-Day Devotional Revelation 14:1-5 God's Just Response – Part 1

Day 1: God's Faithful Presence

Reading: Re 14:1-5, Ps 33:1-5

Devotional: In Revelation 14, we see a powerful image of God's faithful remnant standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. This vision reminds us that even in the midst of tribulation and spiritual warfare, God's presence remains constant with His people.

Today, reflect on how God has been faithful in your life, especially during challenging times. How can you cultivate a deeper awareness of His presence? Consider writing a new song of praise, as mentioned in Psalm 33, to express your gratitude for God's unwavering love and protection.

Day 2: Living in Holiness

Reading: Phil 2:12-18, He 12:14-17

Devotional: The call to holiness is a central theme in Scripture, echoed in the devotion of the 144,000 in Revelation 14. As believers, we are called to live lives that reflect Christ's purity and love.

Today, examine your heart and actions. Are there areas where you need to pursue holiness more earnestly? Remember, holiness isn't about perfection, but about continual surrender to God's transforming work in our lives. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in living a life that shines brightly for Christ in a dark world.

Day 3: The Power of God's Word

Reading: Ro 1:16-17, 2 Co 1:3-7

Devotional: The "Golden Rule" mentioned in the sermon reminds us of the importance of taking Scripture at face value. God's Word is powerful and life-changing when we approach it with open hearts and minds.

As you read today's passages, consider how the gospel has been a source of power and comfort in your life. How has God's Word sustained you during difficult times? Take a moment to thank God for the strength and consolation found in Scripture, and ask Him to deepen your understanding and love for His Word.

Day 4: Faithful in the Face of Opposition**Reading: Re13:1-10, Is 41:10**

Devotional: Revelation 13 paints a sobering picture of the opposition faced by believers. Yet, even in the face of such challenges, we are called to remain faithful to Christ.

Reflect on times when your faith has been tested. How did God's presence and promises sustain you? Isaiah 41:10 reminds us that God strengthens and upholds us with His righteous right hand. Today, meditate on this promise and ask God for the courage to stand firm in your faith, no matter what challenges you may face.

Day 5: Living with Eternal Perspective**Reading: Jn 14:1-6, Phil 4:4-9**

Devotional: The hope of eternal life with Christ is a powerful motivator for living faithfully in the present. Jesus' words in John 14 remind us that He is preparing a place for us and will come again to take us to be with Him. This promise should shape our priorities and perspective on earthly life.

As you reflect on Philippians 4:4-9, consider how you can cultivate a mindset focused on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. How might living with an eternal perspective change your daily choices and attitudes? Pray for God's help in fixing your eyes on Jesus and the hope of eternity, even as you navigate the challenges of this present life.

Small Group Guide

Revelation 14:1-5

God's Just Response – Part 1

Opening Prayer: Begin your session with a prayer, asking for God's guidance and wisdom as you discuss His Word.

Key Takeaways: *Query the group for takeaways first; you may stay with one or more of those:*

1. God's response to evil is just and purposeful.
2. Faithfulness to God is crucial in times of spiritual warfare.
3. Understanding and living out God's promises is essential for Christian life.
4. Our duty and responsibility to Christ stem from His worthiness.

Ice Breaker Question: Share a time when you felt challenged to remain faithful to God in a difficult situation. How did you respond?

Discussion Questions: *Start with any questions prompted by the Holy Spirit. Then consider the following:*

1. The sermon mentions the "Golden Rule" of Scripture interpretation: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense." How does this principle help us understand God's Word better? Can you think of examples where this rule is particularly useful?
2. Revelation 14:1-5 describes faithful believers. What characteristics of these faithful followers stand out to you, and why?
3. The sermon emphasizes knowing and appropriating God's promises. What are some of God's promises that have been particularly meaningful in your life? How have they strengthened your faith?
4. How does understanding our duties and responsibilities to Christ impact our daily lives? In what areas do you find it challenging to live out these responsibilities?
5. The sermon references several Psalms about singing a new song to the Lord. What do you think it means to "sing a new song" to God in our current context?

6. How can we maintain our faithfulness and exhibit holiness in a world that often opposes Christian values?

Practical Applications: *Query the group for personal applications first; then explore one or more of the following:*

1. Scripture Memorization: Choose one of the additional Scripture references mentioned in the sermon to memorize this week. Share with the group next time how it impacted your week.
2. Promise Journal: Start a journal where you write down God's promises from Scripture. Reflect on how these promises apply to your life.
3. Holiness Check: Take time this week to examine an area of your life where you struggle with holiness. Pray for God's strength and devise a practical step to grow in that area.
4. New Song Challenge: Write a short poem or song of praise to God, focusing on His faithfulness and worthiness. Share it with the group if you're comfortable.
5. Faithful Witness: Identify one situation in your daily life where you can be a more faithful witness for Christ. Commit to taking action in that area this week.

Closing Prayer: End your session by praying for each other, asking God to help you remain faithful, grow in holiness, and live out your responsibilities to Christ in your daily lives.

Discussion Questions
Revelation 14:1-5
God's Just Response – Part 1

1. How does understanding God's just response to evil in Revelation 14:1-5 impact your faith and daily life?
2. What does it mean to you personally to 'know and appropriate the promises of God,' and how can we practically apply this in our lives?
3. In what ways can we actively demonstrate our faithfulness and holiness to Christ in today's world?
4. How does the concept of the 'Golden Rule' in biblical interpretation influence your understanding of Scripture, particularly in complex books like Revelation?
5. Reflecting on John 10:10, how does the promise of abundant life in Christ contrast with the plans of evil described in Revelation 13?
6. How can we balance our earthly responsibilities with our spiritual duties to Christ, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:32-33?
7. What does it mean to you to 'live out your duties and responsibilities to Christ,' and how does this shape your daily decisions?
8. How do the Psalms' calls for 'new songs' (as referenced in the sermon) inspire you to worship God in fresh and meaningful ways?
9. In light of Philippians 2:15 and 4:4-9, how can believers shine as lights in the world while maintaining joy and peace in challenging times?
10. How does the promise in Philippians 1:6 of God completing His good work in us encourage you in your spiritual journey, especially when facing difficulties?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Revelation 14:1-5

God's Just Response – Part 1

1. Understanding God's Response

The sermon refers to Revelation 14:1-5 as God's response to the plans of evil described in chapter 13. How do you think understanding how God responds to evil can impact our daily lives and decisions as a family?

2. Scriptural Insights

The sermon mentions the "Golden Rule" of understanding Scripture: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense." How can this approach guide us in interpreting biblical passages, and can you think of a time when this perspective has helped us as a family?

3. Living Out Our Faith

The sermon emphasizes knowing and living out our duties to Christ because He is worthy. Can we brainstorm ways we can express our faith and responsibilities more actively in our community or within our family?

4. Promised Reassurance

Many additional scripture references were provided, such as Isaiah 41:10 and Philippians 1:6, which assure us of God's promises. How can we remind ourselves of these promises, especially during challenging times?

5. Self-Examination and Growth

The closing part of the sermon focuses on examining oneself. What are some ways we can encourage each other to engage in self-reflection and spiritual growth while supporting one another in this journey?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Revelation 14:1-5

God's Just Response – Part 1

AGES 5-7

1. Simplicity in Scripture

Principle: Understanding simple truths from the Bible and applying them to daily life.

Discussion Question: "What is your favorite Bible story, and what simple lesson do you think it teaches us about being good or kind?"

2. Listening to God

Principle: Developing the habit of listening for God's guidance through prayer and stories.

Discussion Question: "When we pray or read a Bible story, how do you think God talks to us? How can we be better listeners?"

3. Being Kind Like Jesus

Principle: Practice kindness and love as Jesus taught, especially in playtime and sharing.

Discussion Question: "How can we show kindness when playing with friends, especially if someone gets upset?"

AGES 8-12

1. Understanding Scripture's Meaning

Principle: Exploring the 'Golden Rule' of scripture interpretation and sharing thoughtful questions.

Discussion Question: "When reading a Bible story, what questions do you think are important to ask to understand it better?"

2. Living Faith in School or Groups

Principle: Recognizing and enacting their duty to exhibit good character in a group setting.

Discussion Question: "How can you show your faith and values at school, whether by helping others or being honest?"

3. Digital Kindness

Principle: Discussing online behavior that aligns with biblical teachings about love and respect.

Discussion Question: "When you're online, what are some ways you can be kind and show respect, just like Jesus would want us to?"

AGES 11-15

1. Discerning Good and Evil

Principle: Understanding God's response to evil and making discerning choices in friend groups and social situations.

Discussion Question: "How can you tell if a certain action or choice is good or not, and when should you stand against something wrong even if others are doing it?"

2. Faithfulness in Relationships

Principle: Building faithful and supportive friendships that reflect Christ's teachings.

Discussion Question: "What qualities make a friendship strong and positive, and how can you contribute to that?"

3. Ethical Digital Presence

Principle: Applying the principles of examining one's actions to their online interactions and choices.

Discussion Question: "In what ways can you reflect your values and faith in the way you communicate and present yourself on social media?"

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for GenZ

Revelation 14:1-5

God's Just Response – Part 1

1. Group Settings: Leading with Integrity

Principle: Embodying faith and integrity in group decisions and dynamics in line with Revelation 14:1-5.

Scenario: During a group project, there is pressure to take shortcuts that compromise the quality of the work.

Application: Instead of following the crowd, stand firm in advocating for honesty and hard work, reflecting God's response to integrity over evil.

Discussion Question: "How can you encourage your group to choose integrity, even when it might be easier not to?"

2. Relationships: Faithfulness in Friendships

Principle: Building relationships rooted in love and respect, reflecting faithfulness to Christ.

Scenario: A friend confides in you about feeling left out or bullied.

Application: Be a faithful and supportive friend by actively listening and offering reassurance grounded in biblical values, standing up if needed.

Discussion Question: "In what ways can you demonstrate Christ-like love to friends who are going through difficult times?"

3. Digital Spaces: Positive and Respectful Digital Interaction

Principle: Ensuring digital interactions uphold respect and kindness, echoing one's duty to live out Christ-like behaviors.

Scenario: You come across a heated and disrespectful debate online about a topic you care about deeply.

Application: Participate by sharing your viewpoint with kindness and respect, aiming to bring light and understanding rather than adding to conflict.

Discussion Question: "How can your digital presence reflect your commitment to following Christ's teachings in how you engage with others online?"

These application points aim to help Gen Z navigate their daily environments while faithfully following Jesus' teachings with Biblical integrity and living out the gospel.