

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 14:1-5: 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:

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- 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.
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.

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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