

Revelation Chapter 14

An Interpretation

Charles Dailey © 2017 NASB

Revision of 11/2017 Printed 1/10/2026

Introduction:

1. In the previous chapter, we have seen the beast from the sea and the beast from the land. They had the same goal of persecuting and destroying the offspring of the woman. But Satan failed in the larger picture.
2. Now we will meet the 144,000 and hear of their successes. We meet a gigantic heavenly choir. We meet angels and learn of God's judgment on those who worship the beast.

(1) Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Verse 1: **Then I looked** usually introduces a new vision. In Revelation 13:11 a lamb appeared that was really the dragon. Here the true **Lamb** appears on **Mount Zion**. That term is used in Hebrews 12:22 to designate the church. Mt. Zion is in Jerusalem, so consider Galatians 4:26. John's readers (and listeners) would have made this connection.

The beast had marked the **foreheads** of his worshipers in 13:16 and now here we see a large number who had a different mark on their **forehead** because they worshiped Jesus the **Lamb** as well as the heavenly **Father**.

In Revelation 7:4, we understood the **144,000** to be a large, but countable, number from Israel. That fits here as well, whether from physical Israel or spiritual Israel. These were all safe from any further attacks of either beast.

Discussion: Is it possible that spiritual Israel is the church?
Ez. 47: 22-23.

(2) And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.



Verse 2: Verse 1 was what John **saw** and this verse is what he **heard**. It was a magnificent sound. John heard the sea all of the time from his residence on the little Island of Patmos. When a storm came, he heard the **thunder** crash. There was meaning in the sounds like a concert he may have attended before being confined to this tiny island by the Roman Government.

B.W. Johnson:

Always when great triumphs are achieved or about to be achieved, heaven rings with the praises of singers. Compare 5:8, 9; 7:10-12; 11:17.

(3) And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Verse 3: John heard **a new song** but he didn't know the words to it. Only the **144,000** that the Lord had **purchased** knew.

Hinds:

This means that none except the redeemed can fully appreciate the joys of salvation, and certainly we will not understand what heaven means until we reach it. We rejoice in pardon of sins and are made exceedingly happy in the anticipation of eternal life, but will have to wait for its realization till we meet our Redeemer over there. Only

those who have passed through a great sorrow can fully know what relief means; so only those who have been saved from a terrible misfortune can appreciate the blessing.

Discussion: What do we know about the song?

(4) These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. (5) And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

Verse 4: These privileged singers had stayed moral, had not followed the world, and had **followed the Lamb** carefully and had **been purchased** as the **firstfruits** of a coming harvest.

B.W Johnson:

This thought is always a symbol of purity of life; of refusing sinful intercourse with the world. Spiritual adultery or fornication is being wedded to the world and partaking of its sins.

Hinds:

They were not said to be redeemed because of their rank or station in life, but by the merits of Christ's blood. The Jews offered the first fruits of the harvests to the Lord. As the first fruits were also a guarantee of the full harvest later, so the great number that John saw were those who, as martyrs and other faithful ones, had been true to the Lord during the period when the saints were struggling against the two beasts mentioned in chapter 13, and their condition was a guarantee that all faithful followers of Christ will be saved finally.

Verse 5: These followers of **the Lamb** had not repeated any of the **lies** promoted by the beast. They had led pure lives.

(6) And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; (7) and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Verse 6: An **angel** appeared with the **eternal gospel** to preach to those on earth. John sees a time when Heaven's message flows freely. This may have started at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

Verse 7: The message was to **fear God**, and not Satan as in 13:4. This is not the final judgment at the throne of God, but a **judgment** on the beast at the end of the 1,260 years when the devil's power over men began to weaken. Next, we are shown the total downfall of Satan's cause:

Hinds:

In the symbol John heard the angel say that the everlasting gospel would be preached again; past history shows that it has been preached. This fact will be fully demonstrated by symbols yet to be studied. (Mr. Hinds is referring to the freedom from the beast as represented by Catholic and Protestant forces. The end of that period focuses just before the start of the 1800.)

(8) And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

Verse 8: A new figure of speech is introduced. These wicked forces are characterized as the ancient city of **Babylon** where God's people were held captive in the times of Daniel. Literal Babylon has long since fallen as a world power, so the use here is figurative. **Another angel** announced that this anti-type **Babylon** has **fallen**.

Hinds takes the view that **Babylon** is the Catholic church, but while it includes the Catholicism, it is even broader. We will develop this further in chapter 17.

Hinds:

Just as Jerusalem, the capital of God's ancient people and the place where the gospel was first preached, was typical of the church (Gal. 4:24-31), so Babylon that once captured Jerusalem was made a type of the apostate church. Literal Babylon took the city, destroyed the temple, removed the holy vessels, and put the people of God in bondage for seventy years.

The antitypical Babylon, the papal hierarchy, through a perversion of the church, took away the true worship of God, and put the people in spiritual bondage to papal authority for 1,260 years. The Reformation ended that bondage, but did not destroy the papal system any more than freeing Israel from Egyptian bondage destroyed Egypt.

. . . papal Babylon, made the nations drunk with her false doctrines. In due time God allowed Babylon to be punished and finally destroyed; he has already broken spiritual Babylon's strangle hold on the world and will destroy her at the Lord's coming. The "wrath" here mentioned refers to the punishment that would fall upon her and those she deceives or intoxicates with her false teachings.

(9) Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, (10) he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Verse 9-10: Not only did Babylon fall, but those who had the **forehead mark** will be **tormented** with punishment while **the holy angels** and the **Lamb** look on.

In verse 8 the wine was from Babylon. It was the wine of her passionate immorality. Here the **wine** is the **wrath of God** and

it is not diluted, but **full strength**. This **wine** has an opulence to it: **fire and brimstone**. That gives it a charcoal taste.

(11) "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Verse 11: This punishment was not limited by time and includes all **who worshiped the beast and his image**. God's indignation at sin requires that he allows wickedness to be properly punished. There is consciousness in this final state.

Discussion: Do these verses teach that there is consciousness beyond the grave?

(12) Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Verse 12: This punishment shows why **the saints** were right in the larger picture. They kept their **faith** and the **commandments of God**.

B.W. Johnson:

The thought that the enemies who oppress them and torture them will be finally utterly overcome gives the saints patience to endure.

(13) And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

Verse 13: A message from the **Spirit** is to be written. Instead of having "no rest day or night" (vs. 11), the saints will be able to **rest from their labors**. **The Lord** will notice their **deeds**.

B.W. Johnson:

Not all the dead, but those dead who die in the Lord. Only those die in the Lord who are in the Lord when they die. The Christian life, begun by faith and baptism into Christ (Rom. 6:3), is a life in Christ. To be assured of this blessed death one must live a Christian life.

Hinds:

The statement is that "their works follow with them." This implies that the good of righteous deeds does not remain alone on earth to affect others, but follows with the dead to the judgment. Paul declares that at the judgment each will receive "according to what he hath done." (2 Cor. 5:10)

Discussion: Will our works be recognized in heaven?

(14) Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.



Verse 14: The son of man appeared to begin the grain harvest of the ages.

Hinds:

Harvest is a common figure used to indicate the final separation of the two classes. "He will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire" are the words of John the Baptist. (Matt. 3:12.) "The harvest is the end of the world." (Matt. 13:39.)

That the symbol should represent him as coming on a cloud harmonizes with the plain language that describes his return. When he ascended "a cloud received him out of their sight," and two men (probably angels) told the apostles he would "so come in like manner" as they beheld

him going into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11.) Appearing upon a white cloud at the judgment is just what we would expect from what the Scriptures say of his return.

Sickle is the implement with which grain is cut, or vines are pruned. It is, therefore, an appropriate emblem to indicate the harvesting of the righteous or the cutting off of the wicked.

(15) And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." (16) Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Verse 15-16: A fourth angel ordered the reaping to begin and it did.

Hinds:

Using a great (loud) voice may indicate that it was designed for all to hear, for the judgment pertained to all.

The hour has come shows that the time God had in his own mind for the judgment and end of the work had arrived. It was fitting that the command to reap should be given to Christ, for he was the sower who scattered God's word as seed. He was the proper one to harvest it. All that will be saved will be through that word. The harvest being ripe means that everything is ready for gathering the saved into heaven's garner.

(17) And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

Verse 17: Yet another angel came from the temple in heaven with a sharp sickle.

(18) Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."



Verse 18: One more **angel** appeared to tell the **angel** of verse 17 to get to work. It is time to **gather the grapes**.

Hinds:

The point in the emblem is not the preservation of the clusters, but the pressing out of the juice which represents the condemnation of the wicked. This figure is thus applied by Joel. "Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great." (Joel 3:13.)

The work to be done was destructive in its nature, and the altar of burnt offerings was the appropriate place from which the angel should come.

(19) So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. (20) And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.



Verse 19: The harvest began in earnest and the grapes were thrown into the **great wine press** that is **the wrath of God**. Note that it is called a **wine press** where newly cut grapes were pressed. There was nothing fermented here, so the word **wine** is generic, meaning anything from the grape vine. Those who understand the word **wine** in the Scriptures to

always be fermented, take note.

Hinds:

In this symbol John saw the angel obeying the command and casting the clusters into the wine press. Crushing the grapes and the red juice flowing like streams of blood was a most striking emblem of destruction. It forcefully represented the overthrow and final rejection of the wicked. The vintage of the earth would be the wicked part of the earth. The wine press of God's wrath means that the wicked will be forced to feel the power of God's righteous indignation, when they find themselves rejected.

Verse 20: There was an unbelievable amount of **wine** in this harvest of **wrath**.

Hinds:

The wine press was called great because of the immense number of the lost. It was designed to encourage the saints in their trials by the assurance that in God's own time they would be finally relieved of their persecutions—their persecutors would depart from them forever. The ultimate happiness of the faithful in Christ is the especial lesson pictured in the symbols of this chapter.

Discussion: What is left to do on earth?