

Revelation 14:1-13

Chapter 14 - Two questions are answered:

- 1 – What becomes of those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast and are killed?
- 2 – What happens to the beast and his servants?
It appears that the whole of Chapter 14 is Proleptic (seeing the events as accomplished before they actually happen), not chronological.

Verse 1

And I looked – This phrase (*kai eidon*) occurs three times in chapter 14 (1, 6, 14) and introduces three scenes.
Behold the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion – Zechariah 14:1-5 describes the Messiah coming to the earth.
And with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads – In contrast to those who receive the mark of the beast, the 144,000 are sealed by the name of the Son and the Father. The Father's seal indicates they are redeemed Jews while the Son's seal indicates their faith in Him.

Verse 2

And I heard a loud voice from heaven... -like the sound of many waters – Ezekiel 1:14, 43:2, *-like the sound of loud thunder* – Job 37:5, Psalm 18:13, *-like the sound of harpists playing on their harps* - Psalm 144:9. This is most likely the voice of Christ.

Verse 3

And they sang a new song before the throne... - "They" could be referring to the 144,000, the martyred saints of the tribulation (6:9, 7:14-15), or an angelic host. The song was "new" because it was a praise for new mercies (Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 98:1, 149:1)
No one could learn the song except the 144,000... - Learn in the sense that they were the only ones who could appreciate what it expressed.

Verse 4

These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste - This for word "defiled" only occurs three times in the New Testament. It literally means to soil or smear with dirt. Spiritually it carries the idea of being ritually impure or unfit for service. Note 1 Cor. 8:7, Rev. 3:4. It seems the 144,000 are specifically required to be celibate because of their mission and the difficult circumstances of the tribulation. The principle is similar to Paul's commands in 1 Corinthians 7. Note 7:24-26.
These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes – They have complete devotion to Jesus.
These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and the Lamb – The 144,000 are the godly nucleus of Israel which are the firstfruits of the coming national redemption in the kingdom.

Verse 5

And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless – They faithfully spoke the truth about God and the Lamb and were acceptable to God as firstfruit sacrifices.

Verses 6-7 – The eternal gospel

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth... – His flying in midheaven meant everyone could hear his voice. The "good news" of this gospel is revealed in verse 7. This is not the gospel of grace preached during the present (church) age. *The eternal gospel is: -Fear God and give Him glory... -Worship Him as creator...*

Verse 8 – The fall of Babylon

Another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great..." – This is proleptic, as the actual fall of Babylon is described in chapters 17 and 18. Babylon is both a physical location and a religious and political system. Sometimes it is used as a code word for Rome (1 Peter 5:12).

Verses 9-12 – The fate of the beast-worshippers

And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice... -If anyone worships the beast... -He will drink of the wine of the wrath of God... mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger – God's undiluted wrath!

He will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb – This is not a reference to their eternal torment. Their final torment will be in the lake of fire removed from the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night... The temporal punishment during the tribulation will give forth to eternal punishment (19:3, 20, 20:10).

Verse 12

Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. - The preceding verses which foretell the fate of the beast and his worshippers are given to strengthen believers in their faith and perseverance.

Verse 13

And I heard a voice from heaven – Most likely the voice of the Lamb but perhaps the Holy Spirit.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on – Those who are martyred during the tribulation will receive a unique blessing reserved for no one else. This is the second of seven beatitudes in Revelation.

"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them." - The promise of rest and eternal reward are an encouragement to faithfulness. Works do not justify a person but they do follow him to the judgement seat of Christ. The "Spirit" may refer back to the "voice" or may be in addition to the voice.