

60. The Book of Revelation—14:1-4

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(11-3-21)

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Tonight, we come to Chapter 14 which is a breath of fresh air when compared with Chapter 13.

In Chapter 13 we saw Satan (the dragon), Antichrist, the False Prophet—we saw unprecedented worldwide deception, we saw people lining up to take the mark of the beast and to worship his image—very dark stuff!

But then we come to Chapter 14 which describes the Lamb, angels, redeemed saints, genuine worship, and those sealed by God.

In Chapter 13 there is falsehood, wickedness, corruption, and blasphemy—in Chapter 14 there is truth, righteousness, purity, and praise.

Folks—that will ultimately be the testimony of this fallen world we are currently living in—falsehood, wickedness, corruption, and blasphemy—will eventually be replaced with—truth, righteousness, purity, and praise when Jesus returns and establishes His Kingdom upon the earth!

Now I will warn you, Chapter 14 is a little different and therefore difficult to make sense out of leaving many commentators somewhat baffled as what to make of it. It only begins to make sense when you realize that it seems to be a “*preview of coming attractions*” or a “*table of contents*” highlighting the things that will take place in Chapters 15-19.

If you don't understand that and keep it in mind, Chapter 14 is going to puzzle you in that you're going to read things that haven't happened yet—as though they had already taken place.

In the Greek, if something that hasn't happened yet is talked about in the past tense—it communicates the absolute certainty of it happening even though it hasn't taken place yet—

Romans 8:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Revelation 14:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

We were first introduced to these **144,000 Jewish Christians** back in Chapter 7 when they were sealed on their foreheads with the seal of God to protect them from the judgments that were about to be unleashed when the Seventh Seal was opened (8:1).

We were told at that time that twelve thousand from each of the 12 tribes were sealed (144,000 in total). Here we are told the seal these Jewish believers in Jesus were sealed with was the name of God the Father—a mark of identification of ownership.

Contrast this picture to the one described in Revelation 13—where the followers of “the beast” were sealed with his mark on their foreheads (Revelation 13:16).

God always has His faithful remnant no matter how wicked the world may become. (1 Kings 19:11-18)

So we see the 144,000 are *standing* with Jesus on Mount Zion—but *which* Mount Zion: the heavenly Mount Zion or the earthly Mount Zion?

I personally believe that this is the *heavenly* Mount Zion—

Galatians 4:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Hebrews 12:22 (NKJV)

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels...

This scene in Chapter 14 anticipates Christ’s coronation and the establishment of His Kingdom where He will reign on the earth from earthly Mount Zion when He returns—

Zechariah 14:4 (NKJV)

⁴ And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *Making* a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.

Right now, Jesus is enthroned in the heavenly Mount Zion—

Psalms 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion."

Many commentators interpret the Mount Zion in Revelation 14:1 to be the *literal* Mount Zion in Israel because to place the 144,000 on heavenly Mount Zion means that they were martyred by the Antichrist and that can’t be, they say—because they were sealed by God in Chapter 7 which means they had to be “indestructible.”

Well, first of all God sealed these 144,000 Jewish evangelists to protect them from the judgments of God that were going to be poured out on the earth (‘earth-dwellers’)—because God won’t punish the righteous with the wicked. (2 Peter 2:9)

Yet even though God sealed them to protect them from *His* judgments—it doesn’t mean that they were immune from the murderous wrath of the *Antichrist*.

Now, I do believe that they were indestructible from the Antichrist *until* they finished their ministry—just like the Two Witnesses were indestructible until their testimony (ministry) was finished (Revelation 11:5-6)—

Revelation 11:7 (NKJV)

⁷ **When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.**

Then in Chapter 13 we read—

Revelation 13:7 (NKJV)

⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. (This would include the nation of Israel)

Chapter 14 opens up with the 144,000 standing in heaven after having finished their ministry—

Revelation 14:3 (NKJV)

³ **They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.** (Greek is 'apo')

One Greek scholar says of this word 'apo'—

"Apó indicates the separation of a person or an object from another person or an object with which it was formerly united but is now separated. (See Luke 16:18 which speaks of a separation as when a husband and wife are separated in divorce)"

These 144,000 who were at one time *together* with all the other people on the earth—have now been *separated* from them (through death) and are standing with Jesus on heavenly Mount Zion.

The fact that Jesus is referred to as "*a Lamb*" (*verse 1*) standing on Mount Zion tells me this *is* heavenly Mount Zion and not earthly Mount Zion because—when Jesus comes back to the earth He is pictured as "*a Lion*" not a Lamb.

Look, I bring this out to say this—just because we're saved and belong to God with His seal upon us (Ephesians 1:13)—doesn't mean we are immune from the persecution of the enemy—which could even lead to our martyrdom at some point.

Revelation 14:2 (NKJV)

² **And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.**

The voice "**like the voice of many waters**" and "**like the voice of loud thunder**" is the voice of God (Revelation 1:15; 4:5).

Perhaps this is God proclaiming His approval of these 144,000 faithful servants in the spirit of Matthew 25:21 — "*Well done, good and faithful servant!*"

Revelation 14:3 (NKJV)

³ **They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.**

Why could no one else sing the song of the 144,000?—Because they went through the Great Tribulation and remained faithful in their ministry by the grace of God.

This will be a horrific period where God's incredible grace and strength will be upon these Jewish/Christian evangelists and will bring them through it—and yes, they were martyred but their witness wasn't tarnished nor compromised while on earth.

This is a **song of the redeemed**—a song of praise and thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness in seeing them through this period of great tribulation. Thus, they alone could sing of how God put a song in their mouth proclaiming His faithfulness to them in bringing them through this period of time and testing.

Psalms 40:3 (NKJV)

³ He has put a new song in my mouth-- Praise to our God; Many will see *it* and fear, and will trust in the Lord.

I believe that God wants to put a new song in mouths of all of His people—a song that only *we* can sing.

Just like no one but the 144,000 could sing *their* song—we all have a ‘song’ that only *we* can sing describing God’s faithfulness in our own lives. But that will only happen if we trust Him to bring us through our own personal “tribulation periods” and not lose heart and faith.

As the 144,000 are singing their song in heaven—they are accompanied by heavenly harps and other heavenly voices—it is encouraging to know that one day our sorrows will be transformed into symphonies in heaven!

Revelation 14:4 (NKJV)

⁴These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

“**These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins...**”—what does that mean?

It can have a literal or spiritual meaning—I think both are in view here.

LITERAL INTERPRETATION

The phrase “**defiled with women**” does not imply that sex within marriage is evil, because it is not (Hebrews 13:4)— it merely indicates that these 144,000 Jewish/Christian men were *unmarried*.

During the Great Tribulation Period the times are going to be so incredibly difficult and dangerous for these men as they serve God that—it will not be wise to bring a wife and children into a ministry so fraught with peril and persecution as they will be experiencing at that time.

You may remember that the prophet Jeremiah also lived in a dangerous period—the time preceding the Babylonian captivity. Because those days were so difficult and required Jeremiah’s full and undivided attention and commitment in his service to God—God forbade him to marry:

Jeremiah 16:1-4 (NKJV)

¹The word of the Lord also came to me, saying, ²"You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place." ³For thus says the Lord concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: ⁴"They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, *but* they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth."

In 1 Corinthians 7:25-35, Paul recommended celibacy in those days because the people of God were undergoing great persecution for their faith in Jesus. And Jesus also pronounced woes in Matthew 24:19 upon those with children and families living in and around Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation Period.

So, it isn't hard to see that God would call these 144,000 to a life of literal celibacy for the Kingdom's sake during this period.

SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION

As I said, nowhere in the Bible does it say that a woman *defiles* a man—unless it is due to sex involved in pagan worship.

As we come to Revelation 14, the 144,000 have finished their ministry, and have kept themselves pure from false doctrine and the sexual practices that went along with it during the Tribulation Period.

One author put it this way—

“The worship of Antichrist during the Tribulation will be unspeakably vile and perverse. As it was in the fertility cults of ancient times—sexual sin will apparently run rampant. Even in the current grossly immoral day, we can hardly imagine what the deviant sexual perversion of the Tribulation will be like. With all divine restraint removed (2 Thess. 2:6–7) and the unbelieving world judgmentally abandoned by God (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28), sin will be released like a flood, inundating the world. And fanning the hellish flames of wickedness will be Satan and his demon hosts—both those cast from heaven with him (12:9) and those vile demons newly released from imprisonment (9:1–11, 14–19). [However] In the midst of the darkness of the Tribulation period, the 144,000 will shine forth like beacons of purity. Despite the rampant sexual sin that surrounds them—they will not be defiled with women but will keep themselves chaste.”

So, in a spiritual sense, the idea of being “*defiled with women*” could be a reference to participating in the deviant sexual practices of the false religious system of the antichrist and his followers.

In Revelation 2:20 Jesus talked about Jezebel (“that woman”) “*who seduced (and defiled) My people...*”—but in that context He was talking about a ‘*religious system*’—a false, pagan religious system.

By this time the one-world false religious system of the Antichrist and False Prophet has taken hold which the Bible calls the “great harlot” (Revelation 17).

We read how these 144,000 remained pure and did not committed spiritual (and sexual) fornication with the ‘great harlot’— These 144,000 have stayed spiritually true and faithful to Jesus throughout their time on the earth.

Those who would serve God effectively must lead holy, pure lives—sexually and doctrinally.

The godly nineteenth-century Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne gave the following words of advice to an aspiring young minister:

“Do not forget the culture of the inner man—I mean of the heart. How diligently the cavalry officer keeps his saber clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember you are God’s sword, His instrument—I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.”

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