

Revelation
Lesson IX
Revelation 14:1-20

The Triumphant Lamb

Introduction:

1. Chapters 12 and 13 identified the arch-enemies of Christ and his church.
 - a. The dragon represents Satan.
 - b. The two beasts represent his allies: the emperors of the empire and the cult of emperor worship.
2. Chapter 14 provides a guarantee that the persecuted saints will share in the victory of Christ over his enemies.
 - a. Chapter 12 showed that Satan could not defeat the Christ of God
 - b. Chapter 13 showed who would help Satan in his work of fighting the work of God in the world.
 - c. Chapter 14 will show the triumph which the Lamb and his followers will share over the dragon and his followers.
3. This section of Revelation is filled with confidence and hope.

Body of Lesson:

I. The Lamb and the 144,000: Rev. 14:1-5

A. The 144,000 here are the same persons seen already in chapter seven.

1. In the earlier scene, this great host represented the entire faithful church of Christ under duress.
2. Here the 144,000 stand on Mount Zion with glorious Lamb.
 - a. Mount Zion may be a reference in anticipation of heaven.
 - b. It is more likely intended to signify a status (i.e. victory, triumph, vindication) rather than a place.
3. They have the seal of God on their foreheads. Cf. Rev. 7:2

B. The song of celebration. Rev. 14:2-3

1. The combined voice of the 144,000 sang a new song before the throne.
 - a. Their voices were as melodious as the sounds of harpers.
 - b. Some have thought to use this verse as authorization for instrumental music in church.
 - c. Things as they are/will be in heaven do not constitute a standard for the church on earth; for example, there will be no marriage in heaven. Matt. 22:30
2. The song they sang could be learned and sung only by the 144,000.
 - a. It was a song about redemption.
 - b. Although the angels and living creatures before God's throne had witnessed certain features of human redemption they had not participated in the actual experience.
 - c. To be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb is the special prerogative of God's creatures on earth!

C. Another description of the 144,000. Rev. 14:4-5

1. Spiritual purity/impurity is regularly characterized in Scripture as chastity/adultery.
2. The 144,000 are those who have kept themselves from spiritual adultery.
3. The church will later be called Christ's bride in the Apocalypse (Rev. 21:9; cf. Eph. 5:27) and thus distinguished from the great harlot of Rev. 17:1.

II. **Three Angelic Announcements: Rev. 14:6-11**

A. **These verses announce judgment upon Rome by means of three angelic proclamations.**

B. **The First Angel: A bearer of good tidings.**

1. His message is to the effect that the hour of God's judgment of his enemies has come.
2. How can this be called "good tidings"?
 - a. Christians need to know that those who oppose God will not get off.
 - b. The wrath of God is as holy as his love.

C. **The Second Angel: The fate of Babylon.**

1. This angel announces the doom of Babylon
 - a. The Babylon of antiquity was a place of arrogance and rebellion against God.
 - b. Its name is attached symbolically to Rome in this book and in many other Christian writings of early centuries. Cf. 1 Pet. 5:13
2. The reason for her fall is that she has seduced all nations of earth to share in her evil ways.
 - a. By their concessions to idolatry and the worship of Rome's emperor, these nations had chosen to share in spiritual fornication.
 - b. They would also have to share in her awful fate of suffering divine wrath

D. **The Third Angel: The fate of those who worship the emperor.**

1. Those with the mark of the beast must drink the wine of God's wrath "unmixed" (i.e. undiluted).
2. They will suffer eternally from the torment of fire and brimstone.
3. Lest any Christian think that compromise with emperor worship would be the "easy way out" (as opposed to martyrdom), John is allowed to reveal the fate of those who worship the beast.

III. **The State of the Dead Saints: Rev. 14:12-13**

A. **The Christian's hope is not in finding some form of convenient compromise, but in remaining strong in faith and steadfast in loyalty.**

1. Keeping God's commandments amidst suffering is better than earthly ease followed by eternal torment.
2. How short-sighted some can be!

B. **Death "in the Lord" is better than life secured by denying the faith.**

1. To die "in the Lord" is to die in the faithful performance of one's duties to Christ.

2. Such a person is given rest from his labors, and his works follow into eternity as part of his reward.

IV. **The Overthrow of Rome: Rev. 14:14-20**

A. **The angel with a sickle.**

1. This is not a scene of the final Judgment but of the judgment that will occur when the announcements of the first three angels have been fulfilled.
2. At the signal from another angel from the temple of God, the first angel cast his sharp sickle to the earth.
3. No details of the reaping of the earth are given, for these details follow in later visions of the Apocalypse.

B. **A second angel of judgment and wrath.**

1. A second angel joins in the judgment scene.
2. He gathers the clusters to be cast into the winepress of the Almighty.
 - a. That this angel “came out from the altar” likely means that his action is a final response to the prayers of those under the altar. Rev. 6:9; 8:3-5
 - b. God’s actions against Rome are partially in response to the prayers of the martyrs.
3. The scene of the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God is at once both graphic and frightening.
 - a. It is not wine but blood which flows from the press as God’s just judgments come upon Rome.
 - b. The “1600 furlongs” may be the product of 16 (i.e. the square of 4 = the number of the earth) and 100 (i.e. the square of 10 = the number of completeness); divine judgment “extends to all men everywhere who find themselves beyond the pale of divine protection”. (Mounce)

Conclusion:

1. Those who stand with the Lamb through the difficult times will stand with him also in the day of his triumph.
2. This is “the patience and faith of the saints.”

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT LESSON:

Read chapters 15 and 16. These tell of the final judgments of God against Rome and record the last series of sevens in the book.