

The Book of Revelation

Session 19: Prelude to the Bowls

Revelation Chapter 14

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1] And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Not 143,999: *none are missing!* "I have lost none." They have come through the Tribulation miraculously, just like the three Hebrews in Daniel 3—by the way, where was Daniel?

Note: They are standing, with Him, on Mt. Zion. We think of heaven as remote; it seems more likely that it is another dimension of present existence—not necessarily removed from ours. [Boehm et al.]

Who preserves (even us) today? Jesus Christ. Not methods or programs: the person. When was the last time you told Him you loved Him?

Zion

- David Captured from Jebusites (2 Sam 5).
- "A cup of trembling; a burdensome stone..." (Zech 12:2,3).
 - Even now, Satan's focus.
 - Even Islam ignored it; until Israel regained it...
- "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2:6).

"Zion": this is the only mention in Revelation. It's the Father's intention to place Jesus upon the throne of David—not the Palestinians—in Jerusalem; specifically, on Mt. Zion. [Cf. Luke 1:32.]

30 Psalms of Zion

- 20 Deliverance (of 144,000?).
- 48 Kings of earth gathered (woman in travail).
- 74 "Purchased" singers.
- 76 Cutting off kings of earth.
- 102 "Set time" is come.
- 110 Melchizedek; rod to rule; at right hand.
- 132 13, 14, 17, 18 The Lord has chosen Zion.
- 133 Israel united (Hermon, N + Zion).
- 137 Babylon to be destroyed (14:8).
- 146 Trust not in princes; Son of man.
- 149 Vengeance upon nations.

Summarized: Isa 2:2-4 = Micah 4:1-4. Both names: Father + Son (Jn 14:23, "we").

- 2] And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:
- 3] And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

New Song: Ps 3:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 107:1,2; 144:9; 149:1

- 4] These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

"Virgins?"

- Is this literal? Jeremiah forbidden to marry (Jer 16:1-4); Jesus' warning (Mt 24:19).
- Or figurative? Idolatry = spiritual fornication (Ezek 16); Church: "Chaste virgin to Christ" (Eph 5:26,27) vs. Jezebel (2 Cor 11:2).

Probably both. They kept themselves for the Lord alone. Jeremiah, on the threshold of the Babylonian captivity, was forbidden to marry; also note Jesus' warning: "woe to those giving suck..." Idolatry was labeled as (spiritual) fornication (Ezek 16). [Church: chaste virgin to Christ (Eph 5:26, 27); chaste (vs. Jezebel) in 2 Cor 11:2.]

"Firstfruits": the very finest, from an expected harvest (cf. Rom 11:15-16). Israel will enjoy a unique role in the Millennial Kingdom. These may well be the "brethren" in Matthew 25.

- 5] And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

They were not taken by “The Lie” (2 Thess 2:11). “Without fault or blemish” since they are clothed with the righteousness of the Lamb.

- 6] And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Angel #1: Today, the Gospel of Grace, proclaimed by men. Then, proclaimed by angels, who are indestructible (even the two witnesses are killed by the World Leader).

- 7] Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The Final Call: This one is “good news” for God’s people—but bad news for the rebellious “earth dwellers”: “Fear God...” “Judgment is come.”

Other “Gospels”

- False gospels (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6);
- Gabriel announcing birth of John the Baptist (Lk 1:19);
- Angelic hosts to shepherds (Lk 2:10);
- News of the spiritual growth of the Thessalonian church (1 Thess 3:6);
- 7th angel: Mystery of God will be finished (Rev 10:7);
- Preaching of the Kingdom (Mt 24:14, etc.).

[There is difficulty finding the true Gospel in many of our modern “mega” pulpits...]

Creation Oriented

- Arrogance of anti-God “science” (Col 2:8 vs. Ps 19, Rom 1).
- Johannes Kepler (1571-1630): “Divine Mathematician” whose mind could be discovered in the precise mechanics of the universe.”
- Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727): “Divine Presence” who set the universe in motion: “This most beautiful system of the Sun, planet and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of the intelligent and powerful Being.”

(Newton also wrote over a million words of Biblical commentary, regarding it all literally.)

- 8] And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Angel #2: First mention of Babylon: it will take enter stage in Chapters 17 & 18. Babylon has been Satan’s Headquarters from the beginning. The worship of Semiramis—and the female principal in the deity; the fountainhead of false religions.

“Is fallen, fallen”: Cf. Jer 51:6-9; Gen 41:32; *aurist tense*: “It’s history,” as we might say. Babylon is yet to be destroyed as the Bible predicts; thus, yet to emerge again (Jer 51:7; Isa 13:11; Jer 25:15-26; Isa 13:19). Re: Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, Briefing Package, *The Mystery of Babylon*, etc.)

- 9] And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,
- 10] The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

Angel #3. A fatal choice. This does not involve the Church, which has been redeemed. [“Enduring to the end” (Mt 24:13) was addressed to those in this period. Next slide...]

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Matthew 24:13,14

- 11] And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Punishment is eternal: “ages of ages” 12X in book: 8X, glory of Father & Christ; 3X duration of punishment of Devil and his; 1X (here) people who insist on following him.

“Fire”: symbolic? Mt 13:36-42 implies that it is literal. The literalness of “hell” is a serious issue (which we tend to avoid addressing). God will not mix mercy with this judgment (Ps 75:8; Hab 3:2). The Seven Bowls are coming. We may not like the concept of torment, but we are dealing with holy love—both words are paramount. True righteousness is also the issue. The time to deal with this is now, not then. “Then” is too late.

- 12] Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.
- 13] And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

(Voice = 4th Angel?) Strange assurance—“from now on.” This reassurance is only relevant *if they feel they have missed the resurrection!* (This was the anxiety of the Thessalonians when the Roman persecutions under Nero began, and led to Paul’s disclosures in 1 Thess 4:13ff.) cf. Phil 1:23-26.

- 14] And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.
- 15] And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

Sickle: 12X in the Scriptures: 7X in this section. “Sharp” occurs 7X in Revelation (4X in this chapter).

Angel #5: Overripe = withered (Jas 1:11; cf. Mt 21:19-20; Mk 3:1,3; Jn 15:6). [Some would argue that we are not called to *harvest* today: this harvest is the end of the world (Lk 3:8-17; Mt 13:24-30, 36-43; also Joel 3:13-14). We are called to *sow*: to sow the Word of God.]

Shekinah: Old Testament

- Wilderness Ex 13:21,22; 14:19-24
- Manna Ex 16:10
- Giving of law Ex 19:9, 16, 18; 24:15-18
- 2nd time Ex 34:1-5
- Tabernacle Ex 40:34, 35
- Mercy Seat Num 9:16-22
- 70 elders chosen Num 11:25
- Filled Temple 1 Kgs 8:10, 11
- Departs Ezek 9:3; 10:4, 18, 19; 11:22, 23

Shekinah: New Testament

- Overshadows Mary Lk 1:35
- Flocks of Shepherds Lk 2:9
- Transfiguration Mt 17:5; 1 Pet 1:17-19
- Ascension Acts 1:9
- Rapture 1 Thess 4:17
- Return Mt 24:30; 26:64; Rev 1:7; Lk 21:27

- 16] And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.
- 17] And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Angel #6.

- 18] And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.
- 19] And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Angel # 7. Note this harvest of vv.17-20 is of grapes, not wheat, as in vv.14-16. There, the angels separate the tares from the wheat, etc.

Gathering of unrighteous: Joel 3:1, 2, 9-17; Isa 63:1-6; Zech 14:1-3. Isa 34:1-3, 6. I don’t believe this is for the Church. There are several vine idioms—the grape harvest is often the idiom for the Day of the Lord (Joel 3:13ff). Israel was God’s vine, planted in the land to bear fruit for God’s glory, but failed and had to be cut down (Ps 80:8-16; Isa 5:1-7; Mt 21:3-46). [Christ is the True Vine and the believers are branches in Him (Ps 80:8; Jn 15). Also, the Menorah appears to portray this light bearing.]

Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth..

Jeremiah 25:30

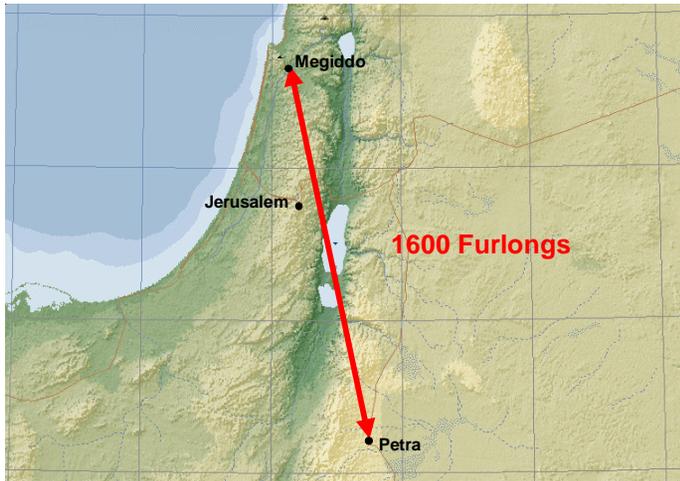
- 20] And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

Four feet deep. 1,600 furlongs = 180 miles (Megiddo to Bozrah, which is 20 mi SE Dead Sea). We will explore this in more detail when we get to Chapter 19. (1 furlong = 600 feet.)

We tend to think of nuclear weapons. The 70,000 extinguished at Hiroshima pales before the 125,000 killed by firearms and bayonets at Iwo Jima earlier that same year. We also forget our own bloody Civil War, which was so vast and terrible that it consumed more American lives than World War I and II, Korea, and Vietnam *combined*—all with merely bayonets, firearms, and cannonballs. [Richardson: *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*: now applies to terrorism.]

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Isaiah 63:1-6



This winepressing is a judgment for apostasy, which Jeremiah 30 calls “the time of Jacob’s Trouble”: denying the God of the Old Testament, and the relevance of the Scriptures to their own destiny. We need make no apology for this judgment. Sin is an awful thing. Sin is in the world. You and I are sinners. Christ is the only remedy for us. This judgment will inevitably come upon Christ-rejecters.

Those who think that the Church is going through the Great Tribulation (The Great Day of God’s Wrath) understand neither the nature of the Church, nor the nature of the Tribulation. They underestimate both. Before that morning dawns, the long night of the human race will grow darker. Much darker. This chapter was just a prelude to the bowls that are coming in the next two chapters.

- 1] And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

The Doctrine of Endless Punishment

Salvation supposes a prior damnation. In order to escape danger, one must believe in it. No error is more fatal than that of Universalism. It blots out the attribute of retributive justice; transmutes sin into misfortune; turns all suffering into chastisement; relegates the sacrifice of Christ into simply moral influence; and, makes it a debt due to man, instead of an unmerited boon from God. Throughout the Bible, we see God’s love and grace freely available to all who will accept it. The entire Bible is a record of the extremes *He* has gone to in order to allow us to avoid the destiny of our fallen state.

People’s response: “No, God, I do not want to love you”; “I want to run things my own way.”

God’s Three Alternatives

- He can indulge it and allow it to go on forever, but in that case all the cruelty, injustice, hatred, pain, and death that now prevails on the earth will go on forever, too. God does not want that and neither does man.
- He can force man into automata, However, removing our free will would also take away our capacity to give our love to God freely. Love cannot be forced. Or...
- He can withdraw Himself from those who refuse His love. He must let them have their own way forever. Since God is necessary for our existence, the decision to reject God is a decision to plunge ourselves into the most terrible sense of loneliness and isolation a human being can know—and to endure this eternally, without any hope.

Two Deaths

- Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body
- Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from the Spirit of God Himself (Jude 1:12; Rev 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8).

Ultimately it is *we ourselves* who choose whether God will judge us. It is *we ourselves* who decide either to accept or refuse His grace, love, and forgiveness. It is *we ourselves* who choose everlasting life—or everlasting death.

Next Session

Read Chapters 15-16: The Seven Bowls of Wrath...and make sure of your own destiny...