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REVELATION 14:1-20

We continue our study of the *Book of Revelation*.

Let me just remind you of something about this book. **First of all, there are parts of it that are chronological**, one event following another event following another event. And then, **there are parts of this book that go back to the beginning and there are also parts of it that go forward to the end.**

Sometimes it's difficult to know exactly where you are and what time frame you're in. In the first five verses of the chapter we have before us today, we're going to be in the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has already come again and has established His earthly headquarters of Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

Verses 1-5...

As *chapter 14* opens, we see first of all **the Lamb of God!**

If we study the *Book of Revelation* and we get all the seals and all the trumpets and all the bowls down pat, but we miss **the Lamb of God**, if we miss the **Lord Jesus Christ**, then we will have missed the most important truth of the whole book. When compared with Jesus Christ, all else is insignificant!

We read about the Tribulation, but the *Book of Revelation* isn't about the Tribulation. It's about Jesus. We read about the Antichrist and the false prophet and Satan and his demons, but the *Book of Revelation* isn't about Satan and his counterfeit deity and his demons. It's about Jesus. We read about the breaking of the seals and the blowing of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls of God's wrath, but the *Book of Revelation* isn't about seals and trumpets and bowls. The *Book of Revelation* is about the Lord Jesus Christ.

God never lets us get very far away from the Lord Jesus. The best way to allow us to really comprehend the glory of Jesus is to allow us to see the evil of Satan. In *Chapter 13*, we saw some horrible personalities, but *Chapter 14* begins by showing us the Lamb of God standing on Mt. Zion.

When we go into a fine jewelry store and the salesman brings out a piece of jewelry to show us, what does he do? He usually lays that piece of jewelry on a piece of black or dark green or dark blue velvet...**because we can appreciate that piece of jewelry so much more if we see it against a dark background, can't we?** The same is true of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we see Him in sharp contrast to the evil that Satan is capable of, **we appreciate so much more the goodness and glory of God!!**

As *chapter 14* opens, we also see the 144,000. We first saw these in *chapter 7*. Remember when we saw them before, they were "sealed" with the seal of the living God! Nothing Satan could throw at these men could harm them. **They were protected because of their seal!**

The 144,000 have come through the Tribulation like the three Hebrew children had come through the fiery furnace.

Remember when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace? Nebuchadnezzar's men were instructed to heat that furnace seven times hotter than normal.

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But, the Bible tells us they came through that fire with no effect on their bodies. **The hair on their head was not even singed. Their clothes were not burned. They didn't even smell like smoke...**even though they had walked through intense heat...

Well, the Tribulation Period will be a time of **intense persecution**.

Jesus said: **"...for there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be..."**

In **chapter 7**, 144,000 Jewish evangelists were sealed, and in **chapter 14**, these same 144,000 Jewish evangelists are standing on Mt. Zion with the Lord Jesus Christ!

1) The 144,000 preserved!

How many? Not 143,000. Not 143,550. Not even 143, 999...but 144,000!! The fire of the Antichrist could not harm these Hebrew children!!

Let me ask you a question...

Did you know that if you are a Christian, that you, too, are sealed?

Ephesians 1:13-14: "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise...** who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, (guarantee)

with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."

What I want us to see is that just as the seal on the 144,000 was the guarantee of their being preserved during the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance.

Beloved we don't do the saving! We don't do the guaranteeing! We don't do the keeping! (My friend has an ongoing discussion at work with a couple of Pentecostals as well as an uncle who is also a Pentecostal...all of them are trying to convince her that she can be lost and be saved and lost and saved again and again. Thank God, she is being grounded in sound doctrine and she knows better!!)

John 10:28-30: "...I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are One."

By the way, the "never" in this verse is a triple negative. It's literally "never, not never". That's not good English, but it's good Greek.

Aren't you glad we don't do the saving...or the guaranteeing...or the keeping? Man, it would scare me to death if I knew I had to do any of these things...The bottom line is that you and I never could!!

Major Ian Thomas, the great British evangelist said:

"I can't, You never said I could. You can, You always said You would!!"

Let me share with you a simple illustration that I know I've shared with you before...

Has your wife ever done any canning? If she has, you know that

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it's imperative that the seal on the jars seal!! (That's why they're called "seals"...☺)
Well, many years ago, before she knew better, My friend canned some soup mix by a "new and quick and easy short cut", and when she took the jars out of the canner, all the lids were sealed!

Then, one day, she walked into the kitchen and she heard a "hissing" sound. She thought to herself, "I need to get my husband right away, because I believe a snake is in one of my cabinets..."

Of course, you who have heard this little illustration before already know, and you who are hearing it for the first time have already guessed that the hissing sound she heard wasn't a snake at all but it was coming from her beautiful jars of soup mix!! They had come unsealed because she had taken a quick and easy short cut!!

Let me ask you...

Aren't you glad God doesn't take short cuts with us? His sealing of us is perfect, and we don't ever have to worry about becoming unsealed!!

Listen, if we could be unsealed...wouldn't you always be wondering which sin you would commit that would unseal you? We sin every day, don't we?

If Satan could get through that seal, don't you think he would?

Just as ALL 144,000 of these Jewish evangelists will be there, all those who name the name of Christ Jesus will be there!! Jesus won't lose one of us!!

In **John 17**, as Jesus prayed His "high priestly prayer", He told the Father that He had not lost a one of the disciples whom God had given...except the one who had never belonged to Him anyway.

Not only do we see the 144,000 preserved, we also see

2) The 144,000 praising!

One of my favorite books is **Psalms** and **Psalm 96** continually tells me that He put a new song in my mouth! I believe each of us has a "new song"...a song that is uniquely our song. Each of us has gone through unique experiences, and each of us has been brought out of unique miry pits and He gives each of us a "new song."

But, let's look at the song of the 144,000...Have you ever heard a 144,000 voice choir? They sang "a new song" that **no one else can learn**.

I believe this means they'll sing a song in heaven that no one else is able to sing because they will have endured what no one else has ever endured, and yet...they are triumphant!!

Not only do we the 144,000 preserved and praising...we also see that yes, we were sealed when we were saved and we have a new song for our lives to sing.

3) The 144,000's purity!

These men were totally dedicated to sharing the Gospel and winning souls to the Lord Jesus Christ... **"They followed the Lamb wherever He goes..."**

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Theologians differ about the meaning of **verse 4**. Some say this is to be taken literally and some say it's to be taken symbolically. So, these men may have been literal celibates, but it may mean that they were kept from the worship of false religion.

Verse 5...No deceit and no fault...so shall we be as God will change us into His holiness when we arrive in Heaven.

You know, if we would follow the Lamb wherever He goes...wouldn't we be so much better off? We would never stray if we just followed the Lamb wherever He goes!

They are His firstfruits...They are blameless!

Let me ask you...Are you going through difficulty right now? Maybe in your family? On your job? In your relationships? In your finances? In your health? **I know some of you are!**

Let me just remind you who has called you to be His child...

And how much He loves you,
And how He provides for you,
And how He seals you and keeps you...

I know right now it may be difficult...but remember that there was a fourth man in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew children and He is also in your fiery furnace with you, and one day the fiery ordeal will be over for you!

Verses 6-7...

Here we see something old and something new...

The "something old" is the **everlasting Gospel!**

The "something new" is the **one who is preaching it!**

We see the judgments that have fallen on the earth, yet God still offers the people a way out, but can you imagine not accepting His grace after all they've been through?

Angels don't preach the Gospel now...during the Church Age. But in that day, this angel will... Both the 144,000 and this angel are actually fulfilling the prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, when He said that the Gospel must be preached to all the world and then the end shall come. (**Matthew 24:14**)

This angel is preaching God's Gospel for the last time and it's still the old, old story that we have loved so long! This is man's "last chance" to be saved! What is the Gospel? It is the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the Gospel...that's the **only** Gospel...that's the **full** Gospel...that's the **true** Gospel! That's the **everlasting** Gospel!! **Jesus died for our sins, Jesus was buried and Jesus was raised from the dead!!**

A simpler definition of the word "gospel" is "good news"...but we don't usually think of someone's death as "good news", do we? But, the death of Jesus Christ is good news! **WHY?** Because He died for our sins!

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God..."

And the **judgment** and **penalty** and **payment** for my sin and your sin fell upon our Lord Jesus as He hung on Calvary!

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Have you shared this precious Gospel with anyone lately? We need to remind ourselves that evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread...

1) "Fear God"

What is the beginning of wisdom? The fear of the Lord is. The psalmist said the ungodly have "no fear of God before their eyes." But the unsaved will fear God when they stand before Him.

2) "Glorify God"...give God the glory!

All glory is due the Father! There's a beautiful hymn that's entitled "Touch Not the Glory". So often we're tempted to take glory that belongs only to God! But, **God said He will not share His glory with anyone.** The unsaved will bow their knee and confess Jesus is Lord.

3) "Worship God"

He alone is worthy of our worship. The unsaved will have all eternity to regret that they did not worship God.

Verse 8...

Another angel "Babylon the great is fallen"
We're not going to look at Babylon in detail this morning
because we're going to see her more in depth when we
get to **chapters 17 and 18.**

Let me just say that Babylon is called "the mother of harlots" in **chapter 17**, and she's called that because she seduces men.

Babylon stands for an **evil religious, political and economic system** and this system will be dominant during the Tribulation Period, and it will dominate until God says "enough" and **then** it will fail!!

Verses 9-11...

Let's see four things about this mark...

1) What *is* the mark of the beast? Well, we saw last week that the mark of the beast will be "666."

The Antichrist will cause all people who worship him to have his mark. Satan loves to counterfeit and imitate all that God does...during the Tribulation Period God will seal His followers with a seal in their foreheads and here we see the Antichrist marking his followers, too.

I believe this will be a literal mark. It could be a tattoo. It could be a micro-chip. I don't know how it will be applied, but it **will** be applied.

2) What is the purpose of this mark?

Well, Satan thinks he has thought of everything. This mark enables folks to buy and to sell. This mark enables folks to eat or to starve.

Listen, there won't be any "fence sitters" during the Tribulation Period. Folks will either be for Jesus or they'll be against Him.

3) What will happen to those who receive the mark?

Verses 9-11...This is not a pretty picture, is it? Jesus drank this cup for us...but those who reject Jesus must drink this cup themselves.

I believe this is some of the saddest verses in Scripture. We love to think of God as a God of love, don't we? But the wrath of God makes us uncomfortable, doesn't it? The love of God doesn't cancel out the wrath and the justice of Almighty God!!

How often have you heard...

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“How can a loving God send someone to hell?”

But wouldn't the more appropriate question be...

“How can a holy God allow **anyone, any sinner...**you and me included...into His heaven?”

Not one of us deserves to go to Heaven...not one!!

These folks are going to hell because they've made a choice...they have chosen not to believe the everlasting Gospel...that Jesus died for our sins, that Jesus was buried, and that Jesus was raised from the dead!

4) What happens to those who do not take the mark?

Verses 12-13...

These are God's saints who refuse the mark of the beast. Many of these will be martyred for their faith. Many will starve to death because they can't buy food.

But, don't you think death for these folks will be a welcome relief? I believe God has given each of us a strong instinct to survive. I believe things have to get pretty bad for us to desire death.

I'll never forget one day after my friend had found out how serious her prognosis was, she said, “I've always wanted to go to heaven, but I didn't want to go on the next bus!”

If a busload were going this afternoon, would you want to be on it? We want to stay with our families, don't we? We want to finish the work here, don't we?

But, these saints finally rested from their labors...

Listen, dying for the Christian is not losing...it's winning!

Elisabeth Eliot: “If we knew what God knows about death, we would clap our listless hands.”

“...for their deeds will follow them...” We're not saved by our deeds, we all know that, but...

Paul tells us in **Ephesians** that we were “created in Christ Jesus for good works” and that “God prepared these good works beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

1 Corinthians 15:58 tells us that our labor is not in vain. The church has been given gifts by the Holy Spirit...but always the question is “do we know them and if we know them, do we use them?”

Verse 14-20...

This harvest will be a harvest of judgment. The world has planted seeds of sin and rebellion and unbelief, and there is coming a time when what has been sown must be reaped.

Galatians 6:7: “Be not deceived, God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

This world has sown rejection **of** God, and will ultimately reap rejection **by** God.

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Let's look at...

1) The Lord of the Harvest

To better understand the harvest that is being described here, we need to look at **Matthew 13** where Jesus tells the parable of the wheat and the tares.

Matthew 13:24-30...

Tares looked like wheat. They grew amongst the wheat, but they were not wheat. Jesus goes on to explain down in **verses 37-43** that the One who sows the good seed, the wheat, is Jesus Himself...and the field is the world...and the wheat is the true believer and the tare is the unbeliever. He says He sows the seed that grows the wheat and the devil sows the seed that grows the tare. Jesus goes on to explain in this chapter that at the end of the age, He will send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all these tares and they shall be cast into a furnace of fire.

Now, Beloved, only the Lord of the Harvest is able to tell the wheat from the tares. **The tare was and is a noxious weed called a "darnel". The wheat and the tares look alike.** God hasn't called you and me to be in the weed killing business. He hasn't called us to go around deciding who is and who isn't a true believer. Only the Lord of the Harvest is qualified to do that. Who has the sickle in **verse 14**? JESUS!! At the end of the age, He will sort them out.

2) The Law of the Harvest

There are basically three aspects to the law of the harvest...

a) you reap what you sow...

"whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap..."

If a man sows to the flesh, he will reap destruction. If a man sows to the Spirit, he will reap life...**Galatians 6:8**

b) you reap later than you sow...

"thrust in the sickle, **for the time is come...**"

It may seem to us as though the wicked are getting by with their wickedness, but God is waiting for exactly the right moment, and then He will make all things right. Don't think that God's watch is broken. Don't think for a minute that He has lost track of time!!

3) you reap more than you sow...

Indeed, God has put off this judgment for a very long time, but one day, Jesus will put forth His sharp sickle for the harvest of the tares who pretend to be Christians and the angel of **verse 17** will put forth his sharp sickle and gather in the vine of the earth...the ungodly ones who never pretended to be a Christian.

Verse 20 tells us of the Battle of Armageddon. At the end of the 7 year Tribulation Period, the Antichrist will gather all of the armies of the world to a great valley in Israel called Armageddon. They will be assembling for the final assault on Jerusalem, and at just the last moment, Jesus Christ will return with His saints (you and me) to do battle with them. We're not going to go into that in detail this morning, because we're going to see more about this in **chapters 17 and 18...**

But let me just say this...this world has sown the wind and will reap the whirlwind. They have sown to the flesh and they will reap corruption. What they have sown is terrible, but what they will reap will be even more terrible.

Well, let's see one more thing and we'll be through...

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3) The Lessons of the Harvest

One lesson from this harvest is that we should not get discouraged when we see evil intensify. Recognize that the time of the harvest is drawing near, and just trust God to the right thing at the right time. Keep your eyes on the Lord Jesus!!

The psalmist said he didn't understand how folks could ridicule the things of God and could question God's sovereignty and authority...just as the world does today...and the psalmist goes on to say... "I couldn't understand that until I went into the sanctuary of the Lord and then I perceived their end, and then I knew that those who are far from God will perish..."

See, we need to remember that our God is still in control. His timing is perfect. Back in Genesis, when God is telling Abraham that there would come a time when the nation of Israel would spend 400 years in Egypt and the figure 400 was not just a number of years that God pulled out of the air, Beloved. He said it would be 400 years because "the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

God has a limit that He is not willing to go beyond. He is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance, but when the iniquity of the world is complete...then He will send forth His Son to judge the world.

Another lesson of this harvest is that we should test the spirits. We're not to go around with our bottle of Roundup killing weeds, but **we are to be discerning and know our Bible and know sound doctrine and not let anyone deceive us with their false doctrine.**

The last lesson we see in the harvest is that we must be urgent in our witness. I truly believe we're living in the last days. I truly believe that it's almost harvest time...that the earth is ripe for harvest.

Our world is destined for destruction and it's our responsibility to lead as many folks as we can out of that destruction.

So, I want to close with these questions...

**Do you have a burden for lost souls?
Are you praying for someone?
Are you sharing your faith with them?
Are you longing for someone to come to know Jesus?**

The greatest joy you will ever have is to lead someone to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God give all of us a burden to see as many folks as possible miss the events we have seen in these verses.