

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A0612 – March 19, 2006 – Rev 14:1-8 – The Victory Of The Godly

Chapters 12 and 13 have given us a tremendous picture of the campaign of the unholy Trinity. Satan, the dragon of chapter 12, is the god of this world and has ruled through six historic kingdoms; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Through these kingdoms his strategy was to destroy the Messiah at His birth. However, this strategy was unsuccessful and the Messiah was caught up to heaven to the right hand of the Father. At present he prowls about like a roaring lion leading us to our ruin. He then takes this information back to the heavenly supreme court and brings charges against us. His hopes are to show that God, the chief justice of the heavenly supreme court is unjust in His decisions so that he can take his seat on the bench and place God in the dock. But because Jesus Christ has paid for all sin once for all this strategy will fail. As such, a great war in heaven will break out as he tries to seize the throne of God and he and his fallen angels will be cast out of heaven to earth. With rage he will pursue Israel seeking to annihilate her. His first instrument of warfare will be the beast out of the sea, also known as the Antichrist. He will be a terrible monster of a man, having the brilliance of an Alexander the Great, the massive power of a Cyrus the Great, and the autocratic royalty of a Nebuchadnezzar. He will receive a death wound but will supernaturally be healed and the whole world will gather in a one world religion to worship the dragon and the beast whose wound was healed. He makes loud boasts and will exalt himself as being God even displaying himself in the Tribulation temple as being God. He is the second member of the unholy trinity, the counterfeit Christ. Then comes the beast out of the earth. He is terrible but not as terrible as the Antichrist. He is also called the false prophet. He appears as a gentle lamb but speaks as a dragon. His subtle and deceptive techniques will deceive the world as Satan deceived our first parents in the garden of Eden. He will operate under the supervision of the Antichrist and will do signs and wonders so great that they will almost deceive the elect. The earthdwellers will be thoroughly deceived into worshipping the Antichrist. These signs will be used to draw out the Israelites who are in hiding so he can annihilate them. But the believers will be keeping their eyes on Scripture. As such those who have wisdom will count out the

number of the beast before he reaches ultimate power and issues his mark which is either the name of the beast or the number of his name, both of which are equivalents and equal 666. This mark will be required to buy or sell anything. Thus, the Antichrist will be in control of the rules and regulations of all economic transactions. The required mark will be an engraving or branding upon the forehead or the right hand. It will be visible. It will signify that the person is owned by the Antichrist and protected by the Antichrist. All who are captured and refuse to take the mark of the beast will either be placed in concentration camps or beheaded. If one is destined for captivity he should go to captivity. If one is destined to be killed he should be killed. Here is the perseverance and faith of the saints.

With such massive political, economic, and religious power, what will come of the beast and those who take his mark? And with such forces mounted against the saints on earth, particularly the 144,000, what will happen to them? Chapter 14 answers these two basic questions. The events described here are in advance of their actual occurrence (proleptic).

1. The Victory of the Godly (14:1-8)
2. The Destruction of the Ungodly (14:9-20)

Revelation 14:1 And I saw, and behold the Lamb standing (perfect active participle) upon the mountain of Zion and with Him one hundred forty four thousands having His name and the name of His Father written upon their foreheads.

And I saw introduces the first of three scenes in this chapter (vv 1-5, vv 6-13, vv 14-20). ***and behold*** points out the greatness of the vision. What John sees is ***the Lamb standing*** (Rev 5:6). The ***Lamb*** is the central figure. A ***Lamb*** is gentle and stands in contrast to the fierce dragon and two beasts of chapters 12-13. The ***Lamb*** reminds us of the crucifixion. He was like a lamb led to slaughter but this ***Lamb*** is ***standing*** which reminds us of His conquering death through resurrection. The participle ***standing*** is perfect signifying that He began to stand on Mt Zion and He will remain standing on Mt Zion. He is immovable from His victorious stance. In real time this will be a Millennial scene. The whole picture here is that the gentle ***Lamb*** stands victorious on Mt Zion and not the fierce dragon or his beasts. Even the gentleness of the ***Lamb*** overcomes the fiercest opposition.

and with Him one hundred forty four thousand. Here standing with the ***Lamb*** are the ***144,000*** Jews sealed in chapter 7 with the “seal of the living God”. This seal protected them from the wrath of God in the Trumpet judgments (compare 7:1, 3 with 8:7-11) but it does not protect them from the wrath of the dragon and the beast. Thus, they are

protected from His wrath but not from their wrath. Since they will refuse the mark of the beast they will be persecuted by the dragon and the beast (Rev 12:17). Their final destiny will be martyrdom. They will be faithful to their appointed destiny (13:9-10). As a result they will be beheaded by the beast (Rev 13:15; 20:4) but by resurrection they will stand victorious with the resurrected Lamb on Mt Zion at the initiation of the Millennium.

The seal of the living God is here explicitly stated to be the Lamb's *name and the name of His Father written upon the forehead*. This stands in opposition to the mark of the beast which will be the beast's name or the number of his name (Rev 13:17).

Mt Zion is the high area where Jerusalem is located. It is this area and this city where Christ will rule from during the Millennium. It is the place where the King will be installed into office.

Psalm 2:6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

This will take place subsequent to the King's Second Coming which will culminate on the Mount of Olives

Zechariah 14:4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

The Mount of Olives is in the general vicinity of Mt Zion and is the same spot He ascended from in Acts 1:9-11.

Revelation 14:2 *And I heard a voice from the heaven like a sound of many waters and like a sound of great thunder, and the voice that I heard is like harpists playing with their harps.*

The voice roars like the *sound of many waters* of a waterfall (cf 1:15) and is as deafening as *great thunder* but at the same time is beautiful *like harpists playing their harps*. It is a magnificent chorus. Verse 13 says *they sing* and so this is a great company of singers yet they all sing in one voice, the emphasis in v 2. The singers are in *heaven* while the Lamb and the 144,000 are on the earthly Mt Zion. Thus, the voice cannot be Christ. It could be

God except for the plurality of singers in verse 3. Thus, the singers are probably the angels, excluding the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (v 3).

Revelation 14:3 And they sing [as] a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able (imperfect middle) to learn the song except the one hundred forty four thousands, having been redeemed (perfect passive participle, functions as a noun because of definite article) from the earth.

This great angelic chorus sings ***a new song***. The twenty-four elders, human representatives of all the redeemed, sang a new song in Rev 5:9-10. They sing this ***new song before the throne***. This is the heavenly ***throne*** described in Rev 4 and 5. ***the four living creatures*** (Rev 4:6) and the twenty four ***elders*** (Rev 4:4) are all located around this ***throne*** (see Rev 4). But they are not the singers. The great angelic chorus then teach this song to the ***144,000. and no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000***. Why no other creature is able to learn it is not revealed. Whatever song they learn it has deep significance to the 144,000 who underwent the stiffest persecution of the beast and suffered terrible deaths at his hand. New songs are sung in the Bible when God did some mighty deed for a people (e.g. Exod 15). Usually the song has to do with redemption (cf Exod 15 and Rev 5:9).

Revelation 14:4 These are those who have not been defiled with women (aorist passive), for they are virgins. These are the one's following the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed (purchased; aorist passive indicative) from mankind first-fruit to God and the Lamb,

The 144,000 are described by three phrases in verse 4. ***First, these are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins***. Thus, the 144,000 are all men. God made them male and female and each has a different constitution and is fitted for certain tasks. This task fits the male constitution for it involves imprisonment and brutal death during the reign of the beast. A pre-requisite for being chosen by God to be one of the 144,000 is that they be virgins (*parthenoi*). The Greek word used here is the same word used of Mary, mother of Jesus (Luke 1:27). These men will never have sexual intercourse. They are not married nor have they ever been. “The Tribulation will be a very special time in history, requiring an especially high degree of dedication. Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 7 the desirability of the unmarried state because of the nature of the times (1 Cor 7:26). The single can best render undistracted service for the Lord...Marriage is the norm for the Christian life during relative tranquil times, but this future reign of the beast will be anything but tranquil for the faithful.”²¹ Some of the true

discipleship passages in the NT are set in a Tribulation context (cf Matt 10:21-42) signaling that that time will demand extreme faithfulness to Christ. The most extreme forms of tortureⁱⁱ and brutality will be used by the beast but these 144,000 will endure them to the bitter end, never disowning Christ the King. *Second, these are the one's following the Lamb wherever He goes.* The word *following* is very closely related to the word disciples. All true disciples are followers of the Lamb. These 144,000 will *follow the Lamb's* will *wherever* it leads. Wherever the Lamb leads them during this time they will faithfully obey and go. There will never be another set of believers so devoted to God and the Lamb as these. *Third, these were redeemed from mankind as first-fruits to God and the Lamb.* They are worthy sacrifices to *God and the Lamb*. Their unwavering convictions and faithfulness establish these only as sacrifices to God and the Lamb. They have followed completely in the Lamb's footsteps. God gave the *Lamb* to be a sacrifice for us all; all of them will be sacrificed because of the *Lamb*. And all of them will stand victorious with the King on Mt Zion in this grand Millennial scene.

Revelation 14:5 and in their mouth no lie was found (aorist passive), they are without blemish.

Another of their qualities is that of truthfulness, *no lie was found in their mouth*. They are the truth-tellers in contrast to the dragon and the beasts who are the deceitful liars. Lying will be more prevalent than ever during the Tribulation but these will stand out as truth-tellers. Lastly, *they are without blemish* (they are faultless). The words *without blemish* have their background in the OT Jewish sacrifices. For the sacrifice to be accepted by God it had to be *without blemish*. You didn't bring the crippled or blemished animals but the best. Only these were accepted by God. Christ is described as having "precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless" (1 Pt 1:19). So, the meaning here is that the 144,000 are sacrificially perfect and their deaths on the Lamb's behalf are completely accepted by God.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another (allo) angel flying in midheaven, having a gospel eternal to preach to (in the presence of) those sitting down on the earth even to every nation and tribe and tongue and people,

Matthew 24:14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. cf Rev 14:6

another angel points back to another of the same kind that John had seen in his extended vision. This *angel* flies *in midheaven*. This is the first heaven, the area corresponding to

our atmosphere. It is where the clouds are and where the birds fly. In this area, an *angel* will fly around *having an eternal gospel to preach*. This is the same area that an “eagle” flew in 8:13 warning the earth dwellers of the three woes (5th, 6th, and 7th Trumpet judgments). This is the last offer of the gospel before the earthdwellers are destroyed by the bowl judgments. To be able to **preach the eternal gospel...to every nation and tribe and tongue and people** would require this *angel* to speak every human language in the world at that time. Such a feat is not impossible with God. At present there are about 6,700 languages. Social scientists predict that more than half of these will disappear in the next fifty years and another 2,000 are in danger of being lost if no effort is made to save them.ⁱⁱⁱ It appears that the world is heading toward a common language but this verse indicates there will still be multiple tongues at this time. Many Christians think that the world must be completely evangelized before Christ can come. That is true, only in one sense; it will be completely evangelized before the Second Coming of Christ to earth to set up His kingdom. However, it will not be completely evangelized by human missionaries before the Rapture. World evangelization will not occur until sometime during the great tribulation when this angel makes this worldwide proclamation of the eternal gospel. This is the earthdwellers (*kathemenous* = sit) last chance to hear the truth and for those who have yet to take the mark of the beast to make up their mind to believe in Christ.

What is the *eternal gospel*? It is the death and resurrection of Christ. Both are essential to the gospel message. If one does not preach the substitutionary death and the literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Christ on the third day then the gospel has not been preached. The historic evidence of the substitutionary death of Christ is the fact that He was buried. The historic evidence of the resurrection of Christ is the fact that He appeared to more than 500 (1 Cor 15:1-4). The human requirement to be justified is faith alone in Christ alone. Nothing else is in accordance with grace (Rom 4:16).

Revelation 14:7 saying with a great voice, "Be afraid the God and give Him glory, for has come the hour of His judgment, and worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water."

Further proclamation of the *angel* is that he will say *with a great voice, "Fear the God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come, and worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water."* First, they are to *fear God*. To *fear God* is to be in reverential awe of Him. They are not to be in reverential awe of the Antichrist but of the true God. Second, they are to *give Him glory*. The word *glory* is *doxa* and means “weight”. It refers to the weight of God’s character. Thus, to

give Him glory means to acknowledge His attributes. Acknowledge who and what God is in all of His dimensions. They are to turn from self-glorification or giving glory to the Antichrist to giving glory to God. The reason for fearing God and giving Him glory is given next. ***For the hour of His judgment has come***. This refers to the fixed hour, the final judgment which will be poured out in the seven bowls. ***has come*** is a dramatic aorist and means that this judgment is on the verge of taking place. This is their very last chance to change their allegiance from Antichrist and Satan to God. Lastly, they are to ***worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water***. This is a four-fold expression of God as creator of all (cf Rev 4:11). Since He created all things He deserves worship and He has the right to judge what He has created (Thomas, 204). Apparently, some will respond to this last announcement of the eternal gospel (Rev 15:4) and others will not (Rev 16:9, 11, 21).

Revelation 14:8 And another angel a second followed saying, "fallen, fallen Babylon the great which out of the wine of the wrath of her fornication has given to all the nations."

In this verse we have the first mention of ***Babylon*** in Revelation. This city is mentioned 288 times, second only to Jerusalem which is mentioned 808 times. The two cities contrast at every point. Babylon is representative of the Kingdom of Satan and Jerusalem of the Kingdom of God. Here, a great pronouncement is made by ***another angel*** concerning ***Babylon***. This announcement follows and is a result of the announcement in verse 7 concerning the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. Because the gospel will be rejected by many there are consequences for ***Babylon***.

The angel states emphatically, ***fallen fallen is Babylon the great***. This is anticipatory of the certain and final doom of ***Babylon***. ***Babylon*** is the focus of the 7th bowl judgment (16:17-18:24). There is a lot of disagreement and misunderstanding about ***Babylon*** and what it signifies.

1. Babylon is a code name for Jerusalem
2. Babylon symbolizes those who worship the beast
3. Babylon is a code name for Rome
4. Babylon refers to the papacy
5. Babylon is a city on the Euphrates River

The most popular interpretation is #3 that Babylon is a code name for Rome and its religious system, Roman Catholicism. Usually, this claim is supported by a symbolic view of the *Sibylline Oracles* (V. 143, 159, 434) and the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (11:1;

67:7). However, both of these works were not written until the 2nd century, quite a while after John wrote Revelation (95-96AD). Some appeal to 1 Pt 5:13

1 Peter 5:13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and *so does* my son, Mark.

A literal interpretation of this verse says nothing more than the fact that the elect in the city of Babylon sent greetings. There is no justification for saying this is any other than the elect in the ancient city of Babylon on the Euphrates River. Further, the epistles of Peter were written to sojourners of the dispersion (i.e. Israelites). Fruchtenbaum says, “At this point in time, Babylonia was the center of Judaism outside the Land; it is also the place where the *Babylonian Talmud* developed. And, since Peter was the Apostle to the Circumcision, it makes perfect sense that he would have traveled to *Babylon* after he left the Land. He literally wrote the letter from *Babylon*, the center of Judaism outside the Land.”^{iv} There is no evidence that Babylon was a code name for Rome in the 1st century. Thus, the literal interpretation of Babylon as a city on the Euphrates River in modern day Iraq is the best solution. The seven cities mentioned in Revelation 2-3 are all understood literally. When a figurative meaning is given for a city in 11:18 the interpretation is given so we don’t have to involve ourselves in guesswork. Finally, a city has political, economic, and religious avenues through which it pollutes the world. We often speak of cities as evil (e.g. New York, San Francisco, Amsterdam). We refer to these cities as the sources of moral filth and greed. The ultimate corrupt city is not Gotham but Babylon. Several OT prophecies regarding Babylon have never been fulfilled literally,

References to Babylon in Isaiah^v inform us that

1. Babylon’s destruction takes place in connection with “the day of the Lord” (Isaiah 13:6, 9), which is a term used for the Tribulation
2. Babylon’s destruction will be characterized by a black out (Isaiah 13:10)
3. Babylon will never again be inhabited (Isaiah 13:20)
4. All Israel will be saved *after* the complete and utter destruction of Babylon (Isaiah 14:1-8)
5. Antichrist’s death accompanies the destruction of Babylon and Israel’s restoration (Isaiah 14:9-11).

References to Babylon in Jeremiah teach

1. The destruction of Babylon is associated with Israel’s national repentance and the fulfillment of the everlasting New Covenant (Jer. 50:4-5)
2. Israel will flee out of Babylon (Jer. 50:8; 51:45; Rev. 18:4)

3. Babylon shall not be inhabited for she will be totally desolate (Jer. 50:13)
4. The land will be restored to Israel and no sin will be found in Israel (Jer. 50:19-20)
5. Babylon, the land of idolatry, will be destroyed to the extent that no one will dwell there (Jer. 50:39; 51:47)
6. Babylon will make the nations drunk on idolatry (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:2)
7. Babylon dwellest on many waters (Jer. 51:13; Rev. 17:1, 15) a reference to the aqueduct system of the Euphrates
8. Babylon is referenced as a “destroying mountain” (Jer. 51:25; Rev. 17:9)
9. The heavens and earth will sing for joy over the destruction of Babylon (Jer. 51:48; Rev. 19:1-4)

Prophetically speaking, both Isaiah and Jeremiah declare that when Babylon is destroyed she will no longer be inhabited ever again. The city has always had people living there. Certainly it cannot be said that the prophecy of it being “desolate forever” (Jer. 51:26) has been fulfilled. In fact, during Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein began rebuilding the ancient city of Babylon on its original site and restoring its original glory.^{vi}

CONCLUSION

After the campaigns of Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet have been revealed the question is, “What will happen to the 144,000”? Will they survive? The answer given is that they will be martyred but will stand victorious with the Lamb on Mt Zion. These have His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. A beautiful but terrifyingly loud voice will come from heaven singing in perfect unison, angels in heaven will sing a new song. Neither the four living creatures nor the twenty-four elders will be able to learn the song, only the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. The 144,000 have not only been redeemed from the earth, they are also men who have never been defiled with women. That is, they are virgins. This is a characteristic necessary for ministry during the Tribulation. They will encounter stiff persecution that will necessitate their total devotion and loyalty to the Lamb. They do whatever is necessary to carry out the Lamb’s will. They are special in that they have been redeemed from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. Sometimes this means there are more to follow but not in this case for there are no others like them. In distinction from the lies of the Antichrist and the False Prophet these 144,000 will be truth-tellers. They are blameless, a word and quality that makes them perfectly acceptable sacrifices to God and the Lamb. It has been said that the 144,000 will be comparable to 144,000 apostle Paul’s evangelizing the world in the future great tribulation.

During this time, world evangelization will take place by the mouth of an angel who flies in our atmosphere around the entire world preaching the eternal gospel to every nation

and tribe and tongue and people. As such, he will have to know every human language. This is their last chance before the wrath of God is unleashed and the white heat of His anger is unfurled. This angel will announce the terms of God's salvation in Jesus Christ who died a substitutionary death for our sins and was raised from the dead on the third day. He will announce that men should fear God and give Him glory rather than fearing the False Prophet and Beast and giving them glory. For the hour of judgment has come and the hour of mercy and grace has come to an end. They should also worship the One who created everything. The doom for not believing, fearing God, giving Him glory and worshipping him is the destruction of the worlds political, economic, and religious headquarters, the filthy city of Babylon. Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. She has influenced all the nations and they succumbed to her temptations to take of wine in great excess and exploit their bodies and engage in every form of immorality. If the headquarters of such filth is destroyed, no doubt those who worship her and give glory to her and engage in such behaviors unhindered will also be destroyed. Such is the lesson of the following announcements, the final destruction of the ungodly.

ⁱ Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 195.

ⁱⁱ The human race has developed some of the most hideous torture devices but they cannot compare with what is to come.

ⁱⁱⁱ http://english.people.com.cn/200511/10/eng20051110_220268.html

^{iv} Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Jewish Epistles*, 384.

^v The prophet Isaiah clearly uses the Law of Double Reference in Isaiah 13. Some verses are prophetic of Babylon's defeat by the Medes (a near prophecy) and other verses are prophetic of a complete and final destruction of eschatological Babylon in the future (a far prophecy). Very clearly not all of these prophecies have been fulfilled.

^{vi} Wallace, Daniel, *Lesson 25: Babylon as Seen in Scripture: An Introduction to Chapters 17-18* (<http://www.bible.org/docs/nt/books/rev/jhk3/rev-26.htm>)

[Back To The Top](#)

Click [Here](#) to return to other lessons.

[Return to Fredericksburg Bible Church Web Site](#)