

10-02-2016

**Message: Christ's Gracious Call to Receive His Blessing**

**Text: Revelation 14:6-13**

### **Introduction**

- A. As we reminded ourselves last week, Revelation chapters 12-14 is a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of visions giving a view of world history from the birth of Christ in humility to His Second Coming in glorious power and victory.
1. Revelation 12 reveals the source of the conflict - the devil and his angels. We are at war.
  2. Revelation 13 is a call to wisdom. We are to understand that the devil's weapons include the state and its surrogate institutions.
  3. Revelation 14 reveals the outcome of the conflict - Christ returns, preserving His own and destroying all who do not belong to Him.
- B. Last week we saw a vision of the church in 14:1-5 as a victorious army of holy warriors standing in the presence of Christ on Mt. Zion, having suffered no eternal fatalities in God's war against the devil, singing a new song of Christ's final victory over Satan and this world's kingdom.

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, **the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.** ...<sup>3</sup> **And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders;**

Revelation 4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, **a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.** ...<sup>4</sup> **Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders** sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.<sup>6</sup> ...; and in the center and **around the throne, four living creatures** full of eyes in front and behind.

- C. Next week, Lord willing, we will see in the last two visions in chapter 14 Christ's future Second Coming to destroy all who have rejected Him, the final defeat of His and His church's enemies.
- D. But now, in between these visions of the future, final triumph of Christ and His people (14:1-5 & 14:14-20), we see in 14:6-13 in 3 related visions of the present world, 3 angelic messengers commending to all the world the grace of God's eternal gospel.

### **I. 14:6-7 The grace of God's eternal gospel**

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having **an eternal gospel**

to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;<sup>7</sup> and he said with a loud voice, "**Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.**"

A. We presently live in a world ...

1. ... that lies under the power of the evil one,

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and that **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

2. ... where the nations rage against God and His Messiah, rebelling against His authority.

Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,<sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"

3. ... where even after God, through intermediate judgments gives them warning of the final judgment to come, people blaspheme God and refuse to repent.

Revelation 9:20 **The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands,** so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;<sup>21</sup> and **they did not repent** of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Revelation 16:9 Men were scorched with fierce heat; and **they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues,** and **they did not repent so as to give Him glory.**

B. Even so, God in His grace and mercy sends His eternal gospel (good news) throughout the whole world, a message by which He will save people from every nation, tribe, language, people through His Son before His final judgment of the world through His Son, Jesus Messiah.

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.**

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having **an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;**

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and

to break its seals; for **You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

- C. As this saving message reaches all nations and peoples, God's gracious promise made to Abraham that all peoples would be blessed in his seed/descendent (Christ) is fulfilled.

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**"

- D. While no single passage in the Bible defining the gospel contains every element and detail of the gospel, several important elements are listed here.

Revelation 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, "**Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him** who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

1. "Fear God" is used almost interchangeably in the OT with the idea of saving faith/trust in God.

Genesis 22:12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for **now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.**"

Hebrews 11:17 **By faith Abraham**, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac**, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*;

Psalms 85:9 Surely **His salvation is near to those who fear Him**, that glory may dwell in our land.

2. "Give Him glory" - that is, assign to Him the worth due to Him, and therefore, to His divine Son by demonstrating that He is worth giving all that we are, have, and hope to be to all that He is and promises to be.

John 5:22 "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,<sup>23</sup> **so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father** who sent Him.

John 15:8 "**My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.**

3. "Worship Him" - as the only God of all creation. Worship will continue through all eternity by all those who respond to the gospel.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on

the sea of glass, holding harps of God.<sup>3</sup> And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!<sup>4</sup> "Who will not **fear**, O Lord, and **glorify** Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND **WORSHIP** BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

4. Avoid the destruction of His final judgment. Warning of God's coming judgment and how to escape it is part of God's eternal gospel, revealing His grace. We are all already guilty before Him. He would be just to destroy us without ever warning us and giving us a way to escape.

Revelation 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, **because the hour of His judgment has come**; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Acts 17:30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should **repent**,<sup>31</sup> **because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world** in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Romans 2:16 on the day when, **according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus**.

- E. The next 2 angels will unpack the gospel's warnings of God's coming judgment of the world so the hearers will take them seriously.

## II. 14:8 "Babylon the great" will fall.

- A. The second angel announces the fall of Babylon the great as though it were a feat already accomplished by God.

Revelation 14:8 And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great**, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

- B. 600 years before Christ Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was the pagan empire that oppressed the people of God, demanding worship of Nebuchadnezzar's image.
- C. "Babylon" in John's day became a code word and a metaphor for the capitol city, Rome, which ruled over the kingdoms of this world, oppressed the people of God, and demanded worship of its emperors.
  1. Peter, imprisoned in Rome, conveys greetings from the church in "Babylon" (Rome).

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

2. The harlot, Babylon the great, sits on many waters (rules over many peoples), sits on the beast (the Roman empire), and is the capitol city of the empire, Rome, which sits on 7 hills.

Revelation 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "**I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters**, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and **I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns**. 4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, 5 and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "**BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH**."

Revelation 17:9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. **The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits**, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.

- D. While in succeeding generations and eras the capitals, countries, and empires might change, the kingdom of this world and the configuration of world governments still lies in the power of the evil one. The nations and their capitol cities still seduce the nations today, be it Pyongyang, which calls upon North Korea to worship Kim Jong-un as a god, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia requiring the god of Islam to be worshiped, or Washington, D.C., which wars against the Creator's design for marriage, human sexuality and identity. None of these seducing harlots will survive God's judgment at Christ's return, so don't listen to their lies, don't embrace their values, promises, self-indulgent, immoral lifestyles. Do not worship what they worship. Listen to the grace-filled warnings of God's eternal gospel!

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 **The world is passing away, and also its lusts**; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

- E. Jose Fernandez incident as an example of failure to listen to friends' warnings (show crash slides).

**III. 14:9-11 Compromisers with the kingdom of this world will suffer God's judgment eternally.**

- A. 14:9 The objects of judgment are those who entrust themselves to the pleasure of anyone or anything other than Christ. The mark of the beast symbolizes ownership.

Revelation 14:9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> **he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.** <sup>11</sup> "And **the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night,** those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

- B. 14:10,11 The nature of the judgment will be to experience God's wrath in full strength.

1. 14:10 tormented with suffering (fire and brimstone), the absence of all common and saving grace.
2. 14:11 no rest day and night - no relief or end to the suffering.
3. 14:11 forever and ever, because they can never finish making restitution with their lives to the infinite value of God which they devalued by their rejection of Him and His Christ.

#### IV. 14:12-13 A call to wisdom and blessing

Revelation 14:12 **Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.** <sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, **'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'**" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that **they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.**"

- A. The "here is" formula links 13:10,18; 14:12, calling us to the wisdom of persevering faith in Christ.
- B. "Blessed" - a beatitude is a statement of fact of God's blessing that serves as an invitation to share in God's blessing.
- C. Christ will come again in victory to vindicate us before the world that opposed, persecuted, and slandered us. He will give us rest and reward for our work of faith, our labor of love, and our steadfastness of hope in Him, Christ Jesus our Lord.