

Revelation 14:6-13

Whenever God's judgment is actuated, God's angels are active. For example, when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and all the inhabitants of the cities in the valley, God sent angels to first get Lot out of the area (Genesis 19). One of the great privileges we have in the Church Age is to communicate the things of God. In this Age of Grace, we, who know the Lord, are the spokesmen for the Lord. We are the ones who witness and we are the ones who warn. However, during the Great Tribulation, when Satan is confined to this world and the Antichrist is controlling this world, God will use His angels to communicate His truth.

There are at least six angels mentioned in this chapter (14:6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18). These angels, as Dr. J. Vernon McGee observed, "denote another radical change in the protocol of God's communication with the earth" (*Revelation*, Vol. 5, p. 1008). By the time we reach this point of the Tribulation, almost all living believers are on the run and are in hiding. Believers, both Jewish and Gentile, will be trying to survive.

It is interesting to see that God is not limited or hindered in any way by the evil and rebellion of humanity or Satan. God's program will continue to move forward and He can use His angels to accomplish anything He desires to accomplish. There are three main angelic pronouncements in these verses:

ANGELIC PRONOUNCEMENT #1 – The pronouncement of the eternal gospel. **14:6-7**

In this first pronouncement, there are three angelic facts we may observe:

Fact #1 - The type of angel. **14:6a**

The pronoun "another" (ἄλλος) means another of the same kind. This is another of God's heavenly angels who are actively involved in the outworking of the Tribulation.

Fact #2 - The motion and location of the angel. **14:6b**

The angel was flying in "mid-heaven." We have seen this type of thing before (Rev. 8:13). What this means is that this angel is not at the throne of God, nor is he flying in our atmosphere, but he is flying in the stellar heaven where the planets exist.

Fact #3 - The mission and communication of the angel. **14:6c-7**

The mission of this angel is to preach the eternal gospel to all people who live on the earth, every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

During the Church Age, angels do not have the privilege of preaching the gospel. That responsibility falls to the believer and the church.

However, during the Tribulation, very few believers will survive because most will be martyred. As a result, God will use His angels to communicate His gospel.

This very event was predicted by Jesus Christ just prior to His glorious return. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.” This will basically be God’s last invitation to respond to His gospel. This angel will be able to accomplish in a short period of time something that the Church could not do in over 2000 years, take the gospel to every person in the world.

The word “gospel” means “ good news.” In all reality, the gospel is only good news for one who believes; it is bad news for one who does not believe. Now we may observe that the specific gospel that this angel preaches is called the “eternal gospel.”

The noun gospel does not have an article (anarthrous) which means this angel is proclaiming a character and quality of the gospel, not necessarily the specific Grace Age gospel. We may notice from **verse 7** that this gospel is in the context of fearing God and in the context of God’s judgment.

Dr. C. I. Scofield observed that there are four gospels presented in the New Testament:

- 1) There is the gospel of God - the good news of God’s grace primarily proclaimed by Paul, offering salvation and justification to any who will believe on Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16).
- 2) There is the gospel of the Kingdom - the good news that Israel will one day receive all of the wonderful things God has promised to her - a Promised Land, a righteous King, and a blessed Kingdom (Matthew 4:23).
- 3) The eternal gospel - the good news that the wicked will be judged and condemned by God forever (Revelation 14:6-7).
- 4) The different gospel - any perversion of the true gospel which may come via an angel or a man (Galatians 1:8-9).

The basis for any salvation gospel offer is the Grace of God regardless of the dispensation (C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Study Bible*, NASV, Revelation 14:6, footnote, p. 1738).

The particular emphasis of the angelic pronouncement here is the “eternal gospel,” which focuses on God’s pending judgment. The good news is that God is about to take over the world via a final and ferocious judgment and make it a place of total righteousness, and in view of this those in the world need to repent and worship God, not the Antichrist.

ANGELIC PRONOUNCEMENT #2 – The pronouncement against the “ great ” city. **14:8**

Again we observe that this pronouncement is made by “another” angel, which means another of the same kind. The particular pronouncement of this angel is against the city known as “ Babylon .”

In the Bible, **Babylon is never viewed as being in a right relationship with God.** It is compared to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 13:19) and it is a city that has intoxicated many people to move away from a true relationship with God (Jeremiah 51:7).

There are three ways Babylon is used in Scripture:

- 1) Babylon refers to a literal city ;
- 2) Babylon refers to an apostate religion - all false man-made religions started here;
- 3) Babylon refers to a godless political power - Babylonian Empire.

Alexander Hislop wrote a fine book called *The Two Babylons*. In that book he points out that Babylon was Satan’s headquarters from the beginning. It was the place where false religion and idolatry began.

Many came to believe that this was a symbolic reference to Rome because years ago no one could figure out how Iraq could end up holding such a prominent place in the world. But that has all changed now. The Islamic religion is the most apostate religion there is and it is spreading faster than any other religion in the world. Islam has a false prophet - Mohammed; Islam has a false name of its deity - Allah; Islam has a false place to worship its deity - Mecca; Islam has a false day of worship - Friday. Islam is a devil religion and it will be toppled by God.

There are two specific facts brought out about from this angel:

Fact #1 - Babylon is fallen . **14:8a**

The word “fallen” is mentioned twice for emphasis meaning Babylon is going down. The word “fallen” (επεσεν) means that in one moment of time Babylon is going to fall down from its high position (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 361). The specific description of its fall will be graphically described in Revelation 17-18, so obviously this is a critical part of God’s judgment.

Fact #2 - Babylon has been influential . **14:8b**

Babylon made “all” the nations to be idolatrous and immoral . Right now the Islamic religion is literally trying to make the world drink her religion. Islam is focused on reaching the world. Do not be deceived; those in this religion are idolatrous and immoral. People who get involved in false religion and in immorality become intoxicated by it.

ANGELIC PRONOUNCEMENT #3 – The pronouncement against beast worshippers.
14:9-13

During the Tribulation you cannot be neutral. You are obedient to God or you are aligned with Satan and the Antichrist.

If one worships the beast and takes the mark, he has crossed a line that will mean condemnation. If one is in the Tribulation it will be very tough on this earth to survive without this mark (Rev. 13:16-17); however, if one has the mark he will be condemned by God.

That is precisely what this angel announces to the world. We may notice from **verse 9** that another of the same kind of angel announces this judgment.

If any person worships the beast and his image and receives the mark on his forehead or hand, he will receive and experience the full wrath of God, and according to **verse 10**, he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. This is a very unique Tribulation judgment.

Verse 11 says that the smoke of their burning will go up forever and ever. One who is burning has no rest either day or night. There is no relief, ever. It never gets better than constant eternal burning.

People need to very carefully consider the duration of eternal fire - forever and ever.

On the other hand, according to **verse 12**, during the Tribulation there will be those who keep the commandments, specifically not to worship the beast or take his name or mark, and they will keep their faith in Jesus Christ.

Verse 13 is clear to point out that most believers will die in the Tribulation. People often ask, will there be people saved during the Tribulation? The answer is yes, lots of people, but most of them will die. During the Tribulation it will be far better to be killed by the beast than to be tormented with the beast.

The difference between the death of the Tribulation believer versus unbeliever is that the believer has eternal comforting rest (**14:13**); and the unbeliever has eternal burning unrest (**14:11**).

Revelation 14:14-20

God is a loving and forgiving God, but God is also a jealous and avenging God (Nahum 1:2).

In these verses there are two harvests which are described:

(Harvest #1) - The harvest of the earth . **14:14-16***

(Harvest #2) - The harvest of the vine . **14:17-19 (18*)**

HARVEST #1 – The harvest of the earth . **14:14-16**

There are three observations we want to make concerning this harvest of the earth:

Observation #1 - The first person John sees is one “like” the Son of Man. **14:14**

One reason why this one is “like” the Son of Man is to show that this final judgment is coming directly from Jesus Christ. There are some who believe this being is in fact Jesus Christ. In Daniel 7:13-14, the Son of Man refers to a Divine Person, Jesus Christ, who is holy enough to approach the Ancient of Days and is given dominion over the whole world. It is possible that this is the moment in Revelation when this takes place, which begins the finale of the wrath of God.

Others believe this is a high ranking angel who is very close to Jesus Christ as we move toward His Second Coming. There are six reasons why some think it is an angel.

(Reason #1) - The adverb “like” is a comparative Greek word, meaning this angel had a likeness to the Son of Man but was not necessarily the Son of Man.

(Reason #2) - There is no article before the noun “son” leaving the possibility that that is not “the” Son of Man, but the character and quality of what He will do.

(Reason #3) - The words “another angel” of **verse 15**, describe another of the same kind of being that may exist in **verse 14**.

(Reason #4) - The angel of **verse 15** tells the being of **verse 14** what to do, and no where in Scripture does Jesus Christ ever get orders from or take orders from angels.

(Reason #5) - The context is filled with angelic beings who are very active in this final judgment **14:15, 17, 18, 19**.

(Reason #6) - The “golden crown” is the crown of victory (stephanos) as opposed to the crowns of royalty (diadamata) which crowns the head of Jesus Christ (19:12).

Our conclusion is that this is either the moment Jesus Christ actually is given the charge to take over the world or this is a high ranking angel who is demonstrating that the final wrath of God is coming directly from Jesus Christ.

There are four main descriptions that we are given concerning this heavenly person:

(Description #1) - This one is “like” the Son of Man. **14:14a**

God the Father has turned all judgment of every man over to Jesus Christ because He is the Son of Man (John 5:26-27). What this means is that this heavenly person has been made to appear in like manner of the Son of Man. The phrase “Son of God” emphasizes Christ’s deity and the “Son of Man” emphasizes Christ’s humanity. If this is an angel, he now specifically takes on the look of a heavenly humanity. This is the moment He begins the execution of the final and fierce wrath of God.

(Description #2) - This one is seen sitting on a white cloud. **14:14b**

The idea of sitting or coming on a cloud is clearly a moment predicted in Scripture in regard to the glorious return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:30). We do not typically see anyone coming with or in or on the clouds, so this point is often connected to the coming of God’s presence (Exodus 13:21-22; 19:9, 16; I Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 19:1; Jeremiah 4:13; Ezekiel 10:4; Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26).

It is predicted that Jesus Christ would come “in” a cloud (Luke 21:27) and He would come “on” a cloud (Matthew 24:30). The heavenly being in Revelation 10:1 comes “in” a cloud and the heavenly being in Revelation 14:14 come “on” a cloud. Both events inform the world that judgment comes directly from God and is specifically coming from Jesus Christ.

(Description #3) - This one has a “golden” crown. **14:14c**

The crown (στέφανος) referred to here is a crown of victory, not one of royalty. The noun is singular, so this is a key moment of victory, but it is not a total moment of victory. The “golden” imagery reveals that this is a pure victory. These judgments are ferocious, but they also are pure judgments of God.

(Description #4) - This one has a “sharp” sickle. **14:14d**

William Newell observed that the word “sickle” occurs only twelve times in Scripture and seven of those times are right here in these verses. The word “sharp” occurs seven times in Revelation and four of those times are also right here. Now a sharp sickle was used for harvesttime, which means the harvest of the world has finally arrived.

What God is communicating is that His final harvest judgments at this point will be very swift and very sharp. It will be a clean, quick cutting judgment.

Observation #2 - Another angel commands the first to reap in view of a ripe harvest. **14:15**

There is something very unique about what is stated here in **verse 15** and what is stated in **verse 18**. There are two different Greek words used for “ripe.”

The word “ripe” in **verse 15** describes something that has become dry and withered. The fruit is gone and you would view it as a bad harvest. The word “ripe” in **verse 18** is one that means to be ripe at its prime and at its peak.

What is being said is that the whole world has become lifeless as far as spiritual life and fruit. Evil has reached its peak. This is when God will sweep His final sickle of wrath into this world. This will be the prime moment and the peak moment for His wrath harvest.

Observation #3 - The judgment will be a judgment against the earth. **14:16**

The whole earth will experience this ferocious judgment of God. This harvesting judgment was clearly predicted by Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42).

Now this idea of the “sickle harvest” has often been promoted as a Grace Age witnessing, evangelistic program (i.e. John 4:34-38). The initial harvest concept comes from Matthew and it is not a missionary slogan for witnessing; it is a severe warning of pending judgment. If our witnessing is to be an accurate “harvest” witnessing, it must include the idea of pending judgment.

The harvest referred to here in Revelation is specifically connected to Israel and her judgment just prior to her Kingdom (Matthew 9:37-38; 10:6, 15; 13:37-43). Our responsibility is always to “sow seed” of the Word of God (Matthew 13:3).

HARVEST #2 – The harvest of the vine. **14:17-20**

The “wine press” judgment is referred to in many O.T. passages (Isaiah 63:1-6; Joel 3:12-14). Joel seems to emphasize the utter terror of this judgment.

At this moment in the Tribulation, another angel surfaces at the wrath harvesttime of God and is involved in specifically executing an incredible number of people. His job is to destroy humanity; literally kill people because the evil has reached such a level that it is time for God to pour out His final wrath.

Typically people would get into a wine press and trample the grapes and the juice would spurt out because the grapes were being crushed. This is exactly the imagery God presents here.

There are three observations we may make concerning this harvest:

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Observation #1 - This judgment comes “out of the Temple of heaven.” **14:17-18**

This is a very sacred judgment that comes directly out of the throne of God. Carefully observe in **verse 18** that this judgment comes right from the “altar.” At God’s altar there can be forgiveness, but there also can be ferocious judgment. In either instance the activity is sacred.

Observation #2 - This judgment is “outside the city.” **14:20a**

What is specifically revealed here is that the actual place of this judgment will be outside of Jerusalem. This may refer to the fact that this will mostly be a Gentile judgment and it also may refer to a specific location which is close to Jerusalem, yet outside the city. It has been calculated that the actual radius around Jerusalem is a length of land that totals approximately 200 miles.

Many believe that this is a preliminary overview of the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-20). Those who survive this terrible judgment will be those left to enter the millennium (Matthew 24:40-41).

Observation #3 - This judgment is ferocious . **14:20b**

There are predictions in the O.T. of a ferocious judgment, the likes of which is found right here in Revelation (Isaiah 34:1-3, 6).

The judgment is so ferocious that blood would cover a distance of 200 miles and be four to five feet deep. To put this in some perspective, this blood would cover a distance from Kalamazoo west to the Mississippi River at the Iowa border.

There has never been a judgment like this anywhere in history and Julia Ward Howe missed the interpretation when she applied this to the Civil War in her famous “Battle Hymn of the Republic” in which 650,000 people died from 1861-65.

Some have argued that the Promised Land itself is only about 184 miles. However, if one measures from Bozrah (Isaiah 34:6) in the southeast to the valley of Meggido, the distance of 200 miles is no problem. We believe this to be literal numbers.

Revelation 15:1-8

There are some very misguided theologians who actually believe that the purpose of the Great Tribulation is to purify the Church. Most of those who hold to this position have not carefully crawled through Revelation.

What many do not seem to realize is that there is an eschatological program for the Church, for Israel, and for the nations. Each of these programs is very distinct and each has specific passages of Scripture that address this point.

For example, the Apostle Paul in writing to Titus concerning the Church said, “Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” What the Church is looking for is for Christ to appear to take us home to be with Him. We are not waiting to receive the wrath of God in the Tribulation, and it is very clear that the Tribulation is all about the wrath of God.

Revelation 15 is the shortest chapter in Revelation, but it is a powerful chapter which gives us a great introduction to the finale of God. We may observe that this chapter is marked off by three visions, which are all introduced by the three “and I saw” (καὶ εἶδον) grammatical constructions (**15:1; 15:2-4; 15:5-8**).

VISION #1 – The vision of the final wrath. 15:1

John sees “another” sign in heaven. This is another of the “same” kind of sign John has been seeing all throughout Revelation, which means it is another part of the judgment and wrath of God.

A sign in Scripture is a sign designed to reveal the plain truth about something (John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19). That is the purpose of the sign. It is a tragedy that some people make the book of Revelation out to be a series of hallucinations filled with mysterious secrets and visions which we cannot ever figure out. The whole point of signs is so we can figure it out.

We may observe that the “sign” is classified as being “great” and “marvelous.” What John will actually see will be the seven last plagues that finish the wrath of God. It is classified by God as a great and marvelous moment.

Now the word “plagues” is a Greek word that means calamity or wound. What John is seeing then are the angels who are about to inflict the final calamity or final wound to this earth which will bring to culmination the wrath of God in the Great Tribulation. **The actual phrase “the wrath of God” (ο θυμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) emphatically stresses that God is the source of all of this wrath.**

It is interesting to see that the wrath of God, from heaven’s perspective, is viewed as great and marvelous. The wrath of God, from the world’s perspective, is terrifying and disastrous.

VISION #2 – A vision of worship. **15:2-4**

It is so ironic that the judgment of God, which causes some to curse God, is the same thing that causes those right with God to worship God.

In these verses, there are two points of worship:

Point #1 - The people who worship. **15:2**

This is one impressive scene. Standing before the throne of God are those who have been killed since the Antichrist demanded that everyone takes his mark at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation.

The “sea of glass” is the same sea which is before the throne of God, which is alluded to in Revelation 4:6. The difference is that the sea of glass in 4:6 is not mixed with fire like it is in **15:2**. Why? The answer is that when we first get a glimpse of this sea, our glimpse comes at the end of the Church Age, not in the Tribulation. **The judgment that occurs for the Church is not a judgment of wrath**. The Bema Seat judgment is not a wrath judgment but a rewards/loss of rewards judgment. **Revelation 15:2 is a wrath judgment and that is why the sea of glass is mixed with fire.**

By virtue of the fact that the sea is mingled with fire, indicates that those standing there have been judged severely as by fire and are now able to stand in purity before God’s throne. These are obviously people who were saved during the Tribulation.

What is specifically described about these people in **verse 2** is that they had been victorious by refusing to join the Antichrist. These believers refused to take his mark and were obviously executed because of it. They kept worshipping God when the rest were worshipping the Antichrist. They finished victorious. They refused to give their allegiance to the Antichrist during the Tribulation, and as a result, they are now standing before God’s throne, totally pure and holding the harps of God.

It is possible to end up victorious even when surrounded by the most satanic and vile things. What is so ironic here is that when these believers are executed it appears to be a victory for Satan. But it turns out to be the greatest moment of victory for the believer. If these Tribulation believers can finish victoriously in all they have to go through, then we, who live in the Age of Grace, certainly should be able to finish victoriously.

Point #2 - The praise of the worship. **15:2-4**

The praise hymn which is sung by these martyred Tribulation saints is called the “song of Moses” and the “song of the Lamb.” Moses is identified as the “bond-servant” of God and the Lamb is God.

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The common denominator, between the song of Moses in Exodus 15 (15:1, 7, 9-10) and this song in Revelation 15, is the praise that God receives because of the destruction of God's enemies.

The destruction of enemies caused Moses to sing praises to God and it also caused the Lamb to sing praises to God. The song will feature harps (15:2), which are called the "harps of God." These harps have been designed by God and, other than the various judgmental blasts of the trumpets, this is the only instrument that shows up in Revelation.

There is a twofold praise of this song:

(Praise #1) - God is praised because of His great and marvelous work. **15:3a**

Now this would include several things. God's great and marvelous work, through the Lamb, nailed the condemnatory Law of Moses to the cross. The Lamb's work on Calvary solved the Mosaic Law condemnation. Not only is that a great and marvelous work, but now God is about to destroy all of His enemies and the enemies of His people and take over the world.

(Praise #2) - God is praised for His majestic character. **15:3b-4**

Notice carefully that this heavenly praise song draws attention to God, not an instrument. The type of attention it draws to God is attention that honors nine character traits.

Trait #1 - God is Almighty (παντοκρατωρ) - all mighty, all strong at all times in all ways

Trait #2 - God is the Lord (κυριος) - all power and authority as Lord and Master

Trait #3 - God is righteous (δικαιος) - God's standard of righteousness that always does right

Trait #4 - God is true (αληθιναι) - total, genuine perfect truth at the ultimate ideal level

Trait #5 - God is King (ο βασιλευς) - royal, supreme King over everything

Trait #6 - God will be feared (φοβηθη) - a fear that trembles in reverence

Trait #7 - God will be glorified (δοξασει) - high, magnified opinion of God's splendor

Trait #8 - God alone is Holy (οσιος) - a holiness that is always right, peculiar to God

Trait #9 - God will be worshipped (προσκυνησισιν) by all nations - worship that reverences God

This is a praise song worth learning and singing, not like one we cannot ever figure out like "El Shaddai."

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VISION #3 – The vision of wealth and wrath. **15:5-8**

The description of the “temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in the heaven” speaks of two specific elements:

- 1) It speaks of the Mosaic tabernacle clearly connected to Israel.
- 2) It speaks of the ultimate Holy place in the Heavenly Temple.

There is a literal Temple of God in heaven and it is definitely connected to His judgment. The phrase “tabernacle of the testimony” clearly connects all Temple matters and judgment matters to the written Word of God.

According to **verse 6**, there are seven angels involved in this episode who are described in the following ways:

(Description #1) - These angels have the final judgments of God. **15:6a**

(Description #2) - These angels have priestly righteousness. **15:6b**

The clean and bright linen speaks of their pure and sacred priestly worship. The particular pure priestly responsibility that these angels have is to carry out and pour out the final pure judgments of God. The golden girdles speak of the total purity involved in this judgment.

We may notice what happens in **verse 7**; one of the four living creatures gives to the seven angels the final seven golden bowls which are full of the “wrath” of “the God” who lives forever and ever. The golden bowls indicate that this is pure wrath.

In **verse 8** we learn that at this moment the actual “Glory of God,” Himself, appears in this Temple. This would be the glory of God the Father. He chooses to display Himself and His glory in the form of smoke.

This is the same kind of way that God displayed His glory back in the days of Moses, because when the cloud was in the tabernacle, no one, not even Moses, was permitted entrance (Exodus 40:34-35). When Solomon’s Temple was dedicated, smoke filled it and no one could enter (I Kings 8:10-11). When Isaiah saw this smoke in the Temple of God, he thought he was doomed because he had seen this manifestation of God (Isaiah 6:4-5).

Make no mistake about this; as holy as these angels are, as pure as those are who are before God’s throne, no one is equal to the glory and majesty of God.

At the end of **verse 8**, we see that **no one is able to enter this Temple until God’s entire wrath has been completely meted out**. The privilege of fellowship and worshipping God is something directly connected to all sin and judgment issues being settled.