



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Revelation

Chapter 14

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Introduction

- Following the troubling description of the beasts in the previous chapter, this chapter provides scenes which appear designed to reassure the saints to remain faithful to God

Chapter Outline

- The Lamb and the 144,000 1-5
- Three Angelic Proclamations 6-13
- Reaping the Earth's Harvest 14-16
- Reaping the Grapes of Wrath 17-20

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- *I looked*, indicating a fresh phase of the vision
- Having described, Revelation 12 and 13, the trinity of enemies with which Christ and his people faced, the vision now passes on to portray the blessedness in store for the faithful Christian
- And, on the other hand, the final fate of the dragon and his adherents
- We are thus once more led to the final judgment

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- And just as in the former vision, after the assurance of the salvation of the faithful, Revelation 7, came the denunciation of woe for the ungodly, Revelation 8-11:14, leading once more to a picture of the saved, Revelation 11:15-19
- So here we have the assured blessedness of the faithful portrayed, Revelation 14:1-13, followed by the judgments upon the ungodly, Revelation 14:14 - 18:24, and leading on once more to a picture of the saints in glory Revelation 19

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- The Savior, the Lamb, in whose blood the saints have found their victory, is seen standing on the citadel of the heavenly city
- Babylon is to be introduced later in the chapter, Revelation 14:8
- In contrast, Zion, the chosen abode of God, Psalm 132:13-18, the type of the spiritual city whose citizens are true to the King, Psalm 2:6, 74:2; Hebrews 12:22-24, is introduced here
- There are to be seen the Lamb, set as King upon the holy hill of Zion, and with Him the sealed ones, His faithful soldiers and servants

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- *Standing*, Ready to defend His Church and standing before God to intercede on her behalf
- They are described as 144,000 in number
- A number which represents the full growth of the choice ones of God, the true Israel of God, Revelation 7:4
- The Fathers like number 12 which is 4 (the 4 corners of the world a symbol of the whole world) multiplied by 3 (the Holy Trinity) which means all those who believe in the Holy Trinity x 10 x12 which means all the believers from the whole world

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- These have their Father's name on their foreheads which a symbol of the mind and thoughts
- They can be recognized as children of God, Revelation 7:2-3 and Revelation 22:4
- Christ is "*standing*" in the Heavenly Jerusalem in company with His people who are redeemed and restored to Eden/ Mt Zion in perfect communion with God the Father

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- From the Church that the Apostle saw, came sweet and harmonious sounds as a marvelous symphony
- He heard *the voice of many waters*, It is the voices of the nations and tongues, whoever their race is
- The voice of our Lord is like water a symbol of life
- Those who accepted faith, and were entirely bound to the Savior, praising Him with joy

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- The saints stand with their Lord, the Lamb, on Mount Zion, and just as a voice came from heaven bearing witness to Christ, so the saints heavenly voices are heard, full of majesty and sweetness, as though the sounds of sea and thunder blended with the music of heavenly harps
- A reminder of the magnificent 29th Psalm
- There the saints, secure in Zion, hear all around them the voice of God in the thunder and in the sea, while in His safe sanctuary the saints can sing of His honor

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- It is a heavenly song, and no spirit dulled by earthly desires can learn it
- The Spirit of the Lord can open the dull ear to hear and to rejoice in the songs of God's saints
- In the midst of the world-noises of Babylon men can neither hear nor sing in the correct and proper way the Lord's song, Psalm 137:4
- But the redeemed, the purchased from the earth, of the Lord can come with singing unto Zion, Isaiah 51:11

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- The "new song," a song of victory won by those who have been tried in the world and subjected to temptations
- The joys of heaven and the song of victory are not for those who have submitted to the world
- We have heard of this new hymn or new song before in Revelation chapter 5:7-13 when the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders were singing the new hymn to the Lamb
- The new hymn or song is prophesized 7 times in the Old Testament (Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1; Isaiah 42:10 and mentioned twice in the New Testament (Revelation 5:9 and 14:3))

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- There are two major different interpretations of verse 4 by commentators
- The first group take the expression "*defiled with women*" literally suggesting that that St. John is speaking of literal celibacy and they reference Jesus' statement concerning the unique gift of celebrity in Matthew 19:11-12
- The second group of commentators use this example of the symbolic use of the word "eunuch" in their interpretation of the Revelation 14:4 passage
- Their point is that the word "virginity" is being used in the same symbolic way for a pure and holy state

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- Some suggest that the term "virgin" is being used metaphorically just as in the Old Testament marital infidelity is a metaphor for idolatry and in this case is being contrasted with the worship of the beast
- These 144,000 men have remained faithful and true and have rejected worship of false gods and therefore are sealed to serve the Lamb
- Marriage has always been considered a holy union
- It is one of our Church Sacraments so how can there be defilement?

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- Throughout the Bible religious fidelity is called chastity, 2 Cor 11:2, while fornication and harlotry are used as metaphors for apostasy and idolatry, Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 2:20-3:11; Ezekiel 16:15-43; Revelation 2:14, 20-22
- The expression can hardly be limited to the unmarried, as the 144,000 represent the wide society of the choice ones of God
- Those who worship the Beast are fornicators
- Those who are sealed by the Lamb are chaste

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- They are those whose hearts have been made as the hearts of little children, Matthew 18:1-4, who have that purity of heart which Christ declared to be blessed, and which St. James declared to be the first mark of heavenly wisdom, Matthew 5:8, and James 3:17
- St. John pictures the faithful Church as the bride adorned for her Husband the Lamb, Revelation 19:7, 8; So also St. Paul, 2 Corinthians 11:2

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- *who follow*, The word "*follow*" is a typical Biblical metaphor for the obedience of a disciple, Matthew 9:9, 10:38, 16:24; Mark 9:38, 10:21,28; Luke 9:23; John 8:12, 10:4-5,27, 21:22
- They are those who are with Christ, who have tasted the cup that their Lord tasted, and have taken up their cross and followed Him
- The third mark is separation, or unworldliness
- They were purchased from among men, as a *firstfruits* to God and to the Lamb

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- They were a chosen generation, a special people, Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9, as the Israel of God, Deuteronomy 7:6
- The *firstfruits* were the best of their kind, Numbers 18:12, selected from the rest, and consecrated to the service of God
- So the redeemed are the best of their kind; they who have proved themselves faithful to God, who voluntarily separated themselves from the world, and consecrated themselves to the service of God while in the world, and who are thus afterwards separated by Him and consecrated to His service forever

The Lamb and the 144,000

14:1-5



- *in their mouth was found no deceit*, They have been cleansed from sin in the blood of the Lamb
- God's holy people are characterized by truthfulness (Ephesians 4:24-27)
- This is in contrast to the Beast in the image of the Dragon, the father of Lies, John 8:44; Revelation 12:9, and his followers who practice worship of the Beast: idolatry is the basic Lie
- There are five characteristics that identify the people who can learn the New Song, *not defiled with women; follow the Lamb; firstfruits to God; their mouth was found no deceit; they are without fault*

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- We have seen the servants of God; we have marked their character; we are now to see the weapon which is to be employed in the conflict against the enemies of Christ
- In the next few verses we will read about three angels with three proclamations and three messages
- The first is holding *the everlasting gospel*
- It is not worldly or temporarily but *everlasting* and essential to our eternity

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- It is represented as in the hand of an angel rising in view of all nations: “The sound has gone out unto all lands.”
- The Gospel message is for all mankind; the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, in accordance with our Lord's words in Matthew 24:14
- This is the good news that God loves the world, has redeemed mankind, that they belong to Him
- This word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and the weapon (not carnal) which the Church uses against her enemy

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- Bishop Victorianus says, that the angel is Elijah the prophet who comes to help the Church. He preaches and evangelizes among the nations and tribes, encouraging the Church in every nation to persist until the end.
- He confirms the believers in the fear of God, to give Him glory, and refuse to worship the dragon and the Antichrist
- Those to whom it is preached are sitting inactive on the earth
- They must be roused to fear God and give Him glory

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- They must not fear the powers of evil, the wild beasts, etc., or be afraid of their terror, 1 Peter 3:14-15
- They must realize that there is an hour of judgment at hand, which will discriminate between the worshippers of the world and of God
- Let them learn to worship the Creator of all, and to turn from the worship of lesser and lower

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The second angel follows on the first
- Some think that the angel is “Enoch,” who accompanies Elijah, the first angel
- The first angel encourages and confirms the believers, and the second angel frightens the wicked and the deviants
- The end of the world-city, the capital of the empire of the world-power, follows the proclamation of the gospel
- The principles of Christ’s gospel must undermine the world-power

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The fall of some Babylon principle has almost always succeeded the age of spiritual revival
- This is the first time Babylon is directly mentioned in Revelation
- This is the first direct prophetic reference to Babylon that will anticipate the full exposition to come in chapters 17-19
- Babylon in the Old Testament was a nation in opposition to God who seduced people into fornication: worshiping false gods
- In Isaiah chapter 21, Isaiah prophesizes Babylon's destruction before her rise as a world power

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- Isaiah 21:9 is almost a direct quote of Revelation 14:8 *“Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground“*
- Later Babylon became the symbol for apostate Israel whoring after false gods
- The influence of Babylon is declared in her making *all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*”
- She has given all nations to drink of deadly wine—the wine alike of her sin and of her death, of her fornication and of the wrath

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- As we read in Jeremiah 51:7-8, *“Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD’s hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged. ⁸ Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed.”*
- Babylon, then, is clearly a symbol of some principles which have been more or less accepted by all nations, and which will more or less involve all in the consequences of her fall, Revelation 16:19, 16:17, where the features of this Babylon are more fully developed

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- Some says that this third angel is the Holy Bible, particularly the prophecies mentioned in it about the Antichrist
- This third angel naturally follows the other two, which describe the powers which are in conflict: the word of God, and the Babylon of the world
- The gospel will triumph; Babylon is ended
- Therefore, comes the warning that men should not identify themselves with the city of worldliness, falsehood, and sin

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The commission of this angel reaches further than that of the preceding
- It extends not only to the capital city, not only to the principal agents and promoters of idolatry, but to all the subjects of the beast, whom it delivers over to everlasting punishment
- The reference to the wild *beast*, the *image*, and the *mark*, carries us back to the last chapter, and shows us that Babylon is only another aspect of the work of God's enemies
- It is the city of the world-power

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The warning not to receive the mark is a declaration that man, individual man, is responsible
- The warning is given to men while there is yet time; the fall of Babylon, which is prophetically spoken of as having taken place (verse 8), being yet in the future; that is to say, at the end of the world
- The passage states that it is undiluted wine which *is poured out full strength* indicates that the punishment is in full measure
- God's wrath will not be tempered, but the wicked will feel the full force of His anger

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The punishment is in the presence of the angels and of the Lamb
- The Lamb will be their Judge, and will condemn them to everlasting burnings, and pronounce the sentence on them
- And the angels will be the executioners of it
- They will gather them out, and separate them from the righteous, and cast them into the furnace of fire
- The sight of their power and glory will increase the torment of the sufferers

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The three angels indicate three sides of the mission of the suffering Church, in the time of the Antichrist, which are:
 1. The first angel speaks about the glory prepared for those who worship the Lord, that is, "eternal life."
 2. The second angel speaks about the destruction of the kingdom of the Antichrist, i.e., "vanishing of the world."
 3. The third angel speaks about the suffering prepared for the Antichrist and his followers, that is, "eternal fire."
- These three sides or messages are announced by the two prophets, and are clarified by the Holy Bible

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The imagery of the smoke going up reminds us of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19:28; and is mentioned in Isaiah 34:10
- This statement of the eternity of punishment is also in agreement with Luke 16:26 and Mark 9:44
- *they have no rest day or night*, Sin, which is first embraced as a delight, becomes soon an inevitable tormenter
- There is a destiny of unrest in all sin

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest
- “*no rest*,” in contrast with the blessed rest of the saints (verse 13)
- *whoever receives the mark of his name*, Those whose distinguishing characteristic is that they are worshipping the beast, and persist in worshipping him, even to the end
- This characteristic is so strongly marked that they are here represented as keeping it even after their death

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- In this readiness to wait, to endure through much tribulation to the end, is the patience of the saints seen
- There is a patient waiting for Christ shown by those who keep God's commandments, who adhere faithfully to righteousness in spite of much temptation, and who refuse to pay reverence to the god of this world because firm in the faith that Jesus is King
- God having in the former chapter shown His servant John the reign and rage of antichrist in his time of forty-two months, and in this chapter what shall be the end of him and all his followers

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- He concludes with telling him: This is a period of time wherein the patience of his holy ones will be tried, both in waiting for their deliverance, and also in their patient enduring antichrist's oppression and cruelty
- *here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*, Here will be the trial of men, whether they will keep to the faith of Christ, and obedience of God's commandments, by coming out of, or keeping in, this spiritual Babylon

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- Verse 13 contains the second of the 7 beatitudes or blessings that occur in Revelation and here, for the first time, the faithful of God are called *blessed*
- The 7 blessings are: Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, & 22:14
- For the sake of these faithful children, God calls out from heaven with words of assurance that John is commanded to write down, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on"*

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- Because of the work of our Savior and Redeemer, heaven has been opened to God's covenant people
- In the Old Testament the righteous had no hope of heaven
- We no longer need to fear death; death has no power over us because it has been conquered by the resurrection of Christ
- No need of labors, for the effects of their former works accompany them and permit them now complete rest
- Contrast the opposite fate of the wicked, described in ver. 11

Three Angelic Proclamations

14: 6-13



- Such are happy, for they rest from toil, and their works of faith and labors of love follow with them into the presence of their Lord, *“And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”* (Matthew 10:42)
- *“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”* (Hebrews 6:10)

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14:14-16



- We have seen 3 angels proclaiming the sovereignty of God, prediction the fall of "Babylon"; making proclamations to the land of Israel (v. 6-13), and describing the future torment of idolaters
- Now 3 more angels appear performing symbolic actions over the Land of Israel (v. 15,17-20)
- In the center between these 2 groups of angels is the Son of man as John saw Him clothed with the Glory-Cloud in Revelation 10:1 and as Daniel saw Him coming in the Glory-Cloud in Daniel 7:13

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14:14-16



- The message of encouragement to the Church is let the Beasts do their worst, they cannot win because Christ has ascended and has received everlasting dominion over all peoples and nations
- His kingdom will never be overthrown
- *sat One*, Christ is here intended
- It is shown by the cloud, Luke 21:27, "*They will see the Son of man coming in a cloud*"

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14:14-16



- The expression, "Son of man" John 5:22, *"For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son"* and John 5:27, *"And has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man"* The white color, Revelation 6:2
- He sits, because he comes in judgment
- *golden crown*, Of victory
- As He is the heavenly King, King of kings, and God of gods

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14:14-16



- He comes to reign with His children an everlasting heavenly reign
- *in His hand a sharp sickle*, With which the *Lord of the harvest*, Matthew 9:38 reaps the harvest of the world
- The figure is found in Joel 3:13, "*Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe*"

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14:14-16



- The angel came out pleading, asking the Lord “*Thrust Your sickle.*”
- This is the desire of the angels, the longing of those who are in Paradise, Revelation 6:10, and the goal of the militants who hope for it in every prayer saying, “Your kingdom come,” “*and we wait for the resurrection of the dead and the life to come.*”
- *out of the temple*, The inner sanctuary of God, Revelation 7:15
- Thrust in Greek, "Send"

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14:14-16



- The angel does not command the "Son of man", Revelation 14:14, but is the mere messenger announcing to the Son the will of God the Father, in whose hands are kept the times and the seasons
- *for the harvest of the earth is ripe*, The measure of the sins of wicked men will now be filled up, and the afflictions of the saints will be accomplished in them, and the number of God's elect will be completed in the effectual calling
- They will be all called, and so things will be ripe for the second coming of Christ

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- *another angel came out of the temple* , Therefore from God Himself, entrusted with a work symbolizing the final judgment
- *he also having a sharp sickle*, To assist in this execution, and finish the destruction of the enemies of the truth
- This angel some believe is an instrument God would make use of to cut down antichrist

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- Others would have it to be the word of God in the mouth of his ministers, *“sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit”* (Hebrews 4:12)
- And thus they judge this angel to be the same with the rider upon the white horse, Revelation 19:11-21, out of whose mouth went a sharp sword, Revelation 14:15

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- A third angel and this time is coming *out from the altar* where we saw, *the souls crying beneath the altar*, Revelation 6:9-10 and, the angel mingling *incense with the prayers of the saints* Revelation 8:5
- *had power over fire*, The fire being the fire of the altar, the fire of judgment, Revelation 8:3
- Or, less probably; the angel who has power over fire generally, Revelation 7:1; Revelation 16:5

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- *cried with a loud cry*, Characteristic of the heavenly utterances as in verse 15
- That is, he came forth, as with a command from God, to call on him who was appointed to do the work of destruction, now to engage in performing it
- *her grapes are fully ripe*, Their iniquities were come to the full, and they were now ripe for judgment
- The sickle is figurative of the instrument by which the career of those on earth is terminated

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- The "sickle" and the "wine press" are both alluded to in the passage quoted in verse 14 from Joel 3:13
- For the meaning of this gathering of the vintage, as representing the punishment of the wicked
- Verse 18 represents God's Vineyard

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- The three angels came out, longing to see the glorious day of Judgment, to see the righteous, glorified and crowned, and the wickedness of the wicked poured on them, and their darkness falling back on them
- Bishop Victorianus says, that this vision concerning the three angels points to doomsday, when the wicked perish, on the coming of the Lord
- The angel came out to declare that all the believers' struggle is accomplished, and the time has come to reap the clusters of grapes, which are persecuting the saints and the believers, and shedding the blood of the martyrs

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- *into the earth*, That is, into that part of the earth which might be represented by a vineyard; or the earth considered as having been the dwelling of wicked men
- *threw it into the great winepress*, Isaiah 63:1-6
- That is, the wine-press where the grapes are crushed, and where the juice, resembling blood, flows out, may be used as a symbol to denote the destruction of the wicked in the last day
- And as the numbers will be immensely great, it is called the *great wine-press of divine wrath*

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- The symbol appears to be used here alike with reference to the color of the wine resembling blood, and the pressure necessary to force it out; and thus employed it is one of the most striking emblems possible to denote the final destruction of the wicked
- The outflow of the blood of the grapes pressed reached over a distance of *one thousand six hundred furlongs*
- The winepresses stood usually outside the city: it is so represented here, not without an allusion to those who fall under the weight of this judgment

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- The description in verse 20 implies the terrific nature of the punishment
- In the same way the distance mentioned is no doubt intended to denote the extensive nature of the punishment, though why that particular number is chosen is not absolutely clear
- Possibly it is derived from the square of 4 multiplied by the square of 10; four being significant of the created world, Revelation 4:6, and ten being the sign of completeness, Revelation 13:1

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

14:17-20



- The number thus portraying completeness as regards the created world, and the inability of any one to escape God's judgment
- As bishop Victorianus says, "They are thrown in the winepress of God's anger, and they are tread down outside the city (heaven), and this is the punishment of the wicked."
- The patience of God towards sinners, is the greatest miracle in the world; but, though lasting, it will not be everlasting



Discussion

- Why is it significant that *“the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion”*? Is this usage of *“Mount Zion”* referring to heaven or earth?
- Why could no one learn the new song *“except the one hundred and forty-four thousand?”* How does this vision encourage or challenge you?
- What does it mean that the 144,000 *“have not been defiled with women”*?
- How can these men *follow the Lamb wherever He goes?* In what sense are these men *first fruits to God and to the Lamb?*



Discussion

- Specifically, on whom did downfall come? Why did she fall? Explain
- What is significant about *“sitting on the cloud”*?
- What would happen to those who worship the beast and have his mark? How severe is their punishment? Give other passages regarding drinking the wine of God’s wrath. Explain the meaning.
- In contrast to the wicked, what is said regarding the destiny of those who die in the Lord? List other passages showing the righteous will receive this blessing.