

BACK TO THE TRIBULATION PART 3

Scripture Reference: Revelation 14:1-20

Last session we continued seeing more details John provides for the Tribulation. We looked at John’s vision and were introduced to two different “beasts.”

QUESTION?	From last session, who are the two beasts?

We saw that the Antichrist would have been mortally wounded but then come back to life. We saw how the false prophet would influence people to make an image of the beast to worship and even cause the image to breathe and speak! Finally, we discussed last session how the false prophet would cause all to receive the mark of the beast on either their right hand or their forehead.

The Lamb and the 144,000

Now let’s read **Revelation 14:1-5**. John begins with the word “*Then*” which signifies that these events immediately follow the preceding events at the end of chapter 13. As we have discussed in several sessions, during this second half of the tribulation, Antichrist’s persecution of God’s people will be the most intense of all time. Yet that time will end with the sixth seal and the *Day of the LORD* (see Session 9). In this passage of **Revelation 14:1-5**, John sees the preparations for this climactic event!

According to verse 1, what does John see? _____

The “*Lamb standing on Mount Zion*” refers to Jesus in the city of Jerusalem. And with Him are the 144,000. What is on the foreheads of the 144,000? _____

As a reminder, read **Revelation 7:3**. Just as the false prophet is going to have all the people receive the mark of the beast, God will place His own special seal – His Name – on the foreheads of His 144,000 prior to the outpouring of His wrath. **Revelation 14** deals with the events leading up to the sixth seal and before the opening of the seventh seal which unleashes God’s wrath upon the earth via the seven trumpets.

Even though we know the “Lamb” refers to Christ, what other clue supports that claim in verse 2? _____

Read **Revelation 1:15** and check your answer.

Also is the “voice of loud thunder”. As we see in verse 3, it seems that Jesus and these 144,000 are singing a “new song” – most likely a song of redemption praising the Lamb!

Then, John describes the 144,000.

EXERCISE	In Rev. 14:3-5, list all the descriptions of the 144,000.

THE THREE ANGELS:

We now transition to another segment of John’s vision. He sees three different angels. Read **Revelation 14:6-13**.

The First Angel (vs. 6-7)

This angel flies through the midst of heaven. What is his purpose? _____

This angel preaches the gospel to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. Again, this is just prior to or even a part of the 6th seal which includes the rapture of God’s people prior to the outpouring of His wrath. So this will be the last opportunity for people to repent and believe in Christ prior to the rapture.

The Second Angel (vs. 8)

What do you see as the purpose of this second angel?

This second angel proclaims the victory of God over the powers of Satan and his corrupt city and world system symbolized by “*Babylon*”. This is the final warning of impending defeat for the Antichrist and all who follow him.

The Third Angel (vs. 9-11)

This angel issues a harsh warning against doing what? _____

This is the final warning against taking the mark of the beast and worshiping his image. Interestingly, this seems to imply that there will be those – even this late in the tribulation period – who are neither worshipers of the Antichrist or followers of Jesus Christ. These will be the ones whom will receive these warnings and opportunities. These verses also seem to indicate that once a person receives the mark of the beast and/or worships his image is beyond repentance. There are some who hold that only if a person both worships the image AND receives the mark that they are beyond repentance. In that case, those who have received the mark in order to buy food but have not yet worshiped the image of the beast could still feasibly trust in Christ.

QUESTION?	What do you think?

The bottom line – don’t risk it! It is far better to starve than to suffer an eternity of torment.

QUESTION?	According to John’s vision, what is the consequence(s) of worshiping the image of the beast and receiving his mark?

ENCOURAGEMENT

Now we hear words of encouragement for the saints. Read **Revelation 14:12-13**. Here John highly commends the patience and endurance of the saints who remain obedient and faithful to Christ during this most difficult time.

How will believers be able to endure this most intense persecution? _____

Read **Philippians 2:13** and **Hebrews 12:1-2**. How do these two passages help us answer this question? _____

Then John hears the “*Spirit*” say, “*Blessed*”. What is another word we use today for “blessed”? _____

This moment marks a change. John says, “*from now on*” that those who die in the Lord will be happy. This is, again, at the onset of the Day of the LORD. The cosmic conflict is nearing its end. Read **1 Corinthians 15:50-56**. This passage is referring to the rapture when we’re “*changed*” which we have learned takes place in this same time sequence of the sixth seal. It is at this moment that “*death is swallowed up in victory*”. It is in this moment that death loses its “*sting*.” The fear will be completely gone! Though death is not ultimately destroyed until later (future session) from this point on, death in Christ will make one “*blessed*” or happy. One major reason for the happiness is that the believers of this time, unlike those who receive the mark of the beast and worship his image, will enjoy everlasting rest.

THE FIRST HARVEST

Read **Revelation 14:14-16**.

QUESTION?	Describe in your own words the image John sees.

Who is it that rides on the cloud with the golden crown and sickle ready to reap?

This is none other than Jesus Himself. The golden crown (Greek word *stephanos*) refers to His victory! If you remember from Session Eight, this word *stephanos* doesn't refer to a crown worn by kings to rule but the one worn by kings or athletes when they have won a victory. This would literally be an olive wreath around the head. So this shows Jesus coming in victory!

The sharp sickle in His hand shows He is about to reap a harvest. We see the angel encouraging Him that it is time for the harvest is ripe. So Jesus reaps!

Who is He reaping? _____

Read **Matthew 3:12**. We see that here is when Christ reaps the "*wheat into the barn*". In keeping with our time sequence of being in the sixth seal, **to what event does the reaping refer?** _____

THE SECOND HARVEST

Read **Revelation 14:17-20**. In this episode, an angel – not Christ – comes out of the temple with a sickle to reap. He has power over "fire."

With what have we seen "fire" associated in the last several sessions? _____

QUESTION?	Describe in your own words what takes place in this second harvest.

Where does this "*winepress of the wrath of God*" take place? _____

Read **Zechariah 14:12-15**. The entire fourteenth chapter of Zechariah is dealing with the Day of the Lord. Can you remember from Session Nine what this epic battle is called?

So, **who is this angel reaping?** _____

Thus concludes this three chapter "rewind" back to the tribulation events end with the rapture and then the wrath of God being poured out upon the unrepentant. In Session Ten we discussed the Seven Trumpets. These are the beginning of the outpouring of the wrath of God upon all the earth. As we'll see in **Revelation 15**, we get ready for the Seven Bowls.