

Revelation
A New Song of the Redeemed

(Sarah Jones is going to recite the passage this morning)

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. 4 These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb. 5 No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

Ch 14 is a contrast to ch 13 and it begins a section, 14:1- 15:2-3, in which we see the final reward of the persecuted faithful and the final punishment of the beast and those who follow him

Beale: The segment ends with the saints' victory over the beast and the praise of God's glory. God is glorified because He is the one who has judged the beast and enabled the saints to defeat him.

v. 1- the Lambs army 144k

Those redeemed with the name of Lamb and Father written on forehead – marked like followers of the beast.

Once again, the scripture affirms that there are only two communities in this world. One belongs to the kingdom of this world or Satan (the same thing), the other to the kingdom of God. In the vision of John, we all wear one seal or the other.

That is a sobering thought.

There are two rival kingdoms Kingdom of the Beast or Satan and the kingdom of God. There is no neutral ground; this is a steel cage match of worldviews and only one is going to come out alive. On this Earth it may look like the kingdom of God is losing at times but ultimately God will win see Psalm 2.

But as we wait and go through what the Book of Revelation is describing it can be a bit disturbing and disorienting for us unless we have a vision of chapter 14 in mind. (EX: line for QE2)

It's not like one group is perfectly righteous in their own behavior, and the other group is totally unrighteous in all their behavior. There is a distinction, as is seen in v. 4-5.

As Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruit, and if you love me you will keep my commandments."

v. 1 When the Messiah comes, he will stand on Mt. Zion as king

What Does the Bible Say About Mount Zion?

What Does Mount Zion Symbolize?

The word Zion appears 152 times in the Old Testament, seven times in the New Testament, and is not only used to describe the mountain.

Mt Zion was the highest point in what became known as Jerusalem. The term became a shorthand term to refer to the kingdom of God, and of heaven itself.

The Bible describes Zion as:

The City of David (2 Samuel 5:7, 1 Kings 8:1, 1 Chronicles 11:5)

The city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 33:20, Isaiah 40:9, Psalm 51:18)

The entire Jewish nation (Isaiah 33:14, Zechariah 9:13)

The Millennial Jerusalem (Joel 2:32, Isaiah 2:2-3)

The eternal or Heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22, Micah 4:7, Isaiah 35:10)

Mount Zion is not just an important historical and spiritual landmark for Israel. From the time the ark of the covenant was moved into the City of David, then later to the temple that Solomon built, Zion became a hub of worship that represented the presence of God.

This precious gift of His presence is not limited to those of Jewish descent. When we accept Christ as our savior we are grafted into the inheritance of Zion as our place of refuge, protection, and communion with God.

From Zion, all God's children can obtain an intimate, sacred view of the Almighty—as He was, as He is, and as He will be. (Revelation 1:8) Zion is the essence, foreshadowing, and symbolism of the Kingdom of Heaven.

v. 1 These 144 k are those who have endured the wrath of the two beasts. While the beasts will do their worst against God's people, they will not be able to overcome them even though many may be martyred for their loyalty to Jesus. They are protected from ultimate eternal harm.

Cf ch 7 - a complete number of all saints of history. In chapters 7 and 9 the 144K were seen as sealed against the woes that lay ahead. To see the same number now in ch 14 indicates that not one of them was lost.

As Hoeksema put it, "144k is the number of the church of Jesus Christ. The number of saints in heaven and on earth is always 144k no matter how many millions are added to that number." (Behold He cometh p. 485)

This church of 144K is an international and multicultural body of those who are rewarded for their faithful witness.

This is what God is up to in this world – gathering in His elect from every nation, tongue and tribe.

And this is what the 144K are up to...

V. 2-3 Singing a new song- they are now Singing loudly – many thunders but like the sound of harps.

** If you don't like loud corporate worship, then heaven may not be so great for you.

The "new song" is not cryptic – in OT when God intervened, they sang a new song of victory that God alone accomplished i.e. parting the Red Sea – Song of Moses; Judges- The Song of Deborah

We will sing a new song of victory of the Lamb – he did it all. We were dead and Christ came to get a victory.

A song about the Lamb and of us, the redeemed. We can sing it right now.

If we believe it, why should we be afraid or miserable?

There is something of a spiritually therapeutic nature when we sing songs of celebration that exalt the Victory of the Lamb. Sometimes people may say, "I just show up at church after all the singing and other stuff so I can hear the sermon." Friends, if that is your mindset, then you are depriving yourself of the spiritual benefit of the praises of God's people. God inhabits the praises of his people.

If we believe and understand the gospel, then we should not be despairing even when beset with hardship. It's not a happy clappy denial of reality, but it is a deep-seated joy that comes from God.

This song is sung by those who had known the trial of faith and the deliverance by the power of God, whether it was a deliverance in this life or the one to come.

HERE'S AN IMPORTANT IMAGE:

The end of all things for believers is standing before the Lamb singing songs of victory. That should bring some joy in our life NOW, if we live with the end in mind.

We are to bear true witness to Christ even if it means death for His sake : “witness = martyr”. This is the normal Christian life exhibited in Revelation. **Living in light of the eternal reward is the only certain motivation for Christian living.**

V 4-5 – How they live

Undefined by the world – a message to the 7 churches – don’t give in to the world, especially in the areas of Purity, Submission, and Integrity. Those were powerful temptations to the believers in 90AD and they remain so today.

The redeemed are described by their moral attributes. They practice MORAL PURITY. The word is literally “virgins”, but given the symbolism of Revelation that is likely symbolic for sexual and moral purity in general just as fornication and adultery is a symbol of spiritual infidelity. Scripture never gives an exalted role for celibacy and it consistently commends the state of marriage.

When God’s people Israel strayed into idolatry, she was described as playing the harlot. In the NT – 2 Cor 11:2 Paul speaks of presenting the converts, married and unmarried, to Christ as a “pure virgin.”

1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed, you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Rev 14 describes as “virgins” those who have been faithful in their love for Christ.

The people are counted when going to war and in OT they would abstain from martial relations before going to battle.

God has prepared his army for war using the weapons of truth, righteousness, faith, -i.e. the GOSPEL – the good news of a new standing, a new identity, and a new power in Christ. The army fights an “ironic holy war” – Bauckham – It is ironic in that the power inherent in Christian warfare lies in self-sacrifice in imitation of the Lamb.

Later in chapter 14 we hear John refer to the world’s idolatry as immorality...

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.”

As a summary, the 144K demonstrate purity by refusing to be polluted with idolatrous worship of the Beast. In the seven letters to the seven churches in chapters 2-3, there are seven promises to those who overcome, i.e. stand firm and hold fast against the idolatrous temptations and schemes of the Beasts.

***Revelation 3:12: The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.**

Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, ...,and my own new name.

***Revelation 3:21: The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.**

Believers are seen as undefiled because they have the righteousness of Christ. They live in the reality of the forgiveness that is theirs in Christ and the righteous life to which they are called.

This army has the message of life, and they follow the lamb wherever he goes. (SUBMISSION)

FOLLOWER FIRST – the primary description of disciples is that of followers of Christ. We go where he goes and live the values of life that he lived.

*APP – a good thing to remember is that Jesus went to the lost and he was gentle and lowly of heart. With godly wisdom He also knew how to play hardball with those who wanted to play hardball.

Ira Chaleff describes traits of Courageous Followers in his book of that name:

- Assume Responsibility- like the overcomers of the Seven churches these followers don't settle for a mediocre life rooted in mediocre love for Christ.
- Serve – they seek ways to serve Christ and His church
- Challenge—their commitment to following Christ means they will challenge the status quo of the culture or the church when needed.
- Willing to participate in transformation – not just talk about what needs to change, but jumping in to help bring it about
- Take Moral Action- like the disciples in Acts before the religious and secular leaders, they are ready to stand firm for Christ. (Acts 4-5)

INTEGRITY: No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

Followers of the Lamb are to be people of TRUTH because Jesus is the Truth, the Incarnate Word. We become people of the truth when our minds are renewed by the Word.

In the world we are exposed to lies, deception, and craftiness in deceitful scheming. We can't stand firm against the barrage of error unless we gird our loins with TRUTH – Eph 6

The spiritual armor of God in Eph 6 is given in the context of warfare to explain that our struggle is NOT against flesh and blood, but our struggle is against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

VOv – Don't go unarmed through the enemy's land

**APPLY – be on guard against the conventional wisdom of the age, especially when it comes from mouths of the world forces of darkness.

The story is told of Frederick the Great, the 18th century King of Prussia, that he once inspected the prison in Berlin. The prisoners all fell at his feet protesting their innocence of whatever crime had landed them there. One man alone remained silent and held back. The king called to him, "You there. Why are you here?" "Armed robbery, Your Majesty." "And are you guilty?" "Yes, indeed, Your Majesty. I entirely deserve my punishment." Frederick summoned the warden of the prison and told him, "Release this guilty wretch at once. I will not have him kept in this prison where he will corrupt all the fine innocent people who occupy it."

Sadly, as we enter the height of the political season, we will be bombarded with lies and few will seem to care. EX: the late Harry Reid of Nevada- Speaker of the House 2012 told a story about Mitt Romney not paying his taxes. It was a lie. Years later when asked about what some called a lie, he said, "They can call it whatever they want. Romney didn't win, did he?"

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/harry-reid-is-proud-he-lied-about-mitt-romneys-taxes>

To know your own heart, just listen to the words of your mouth.

TONGUE EXERCISE G4L intro p. 17

Don't lie, gossip, complain, spin, defend, boast, or falsely accuse for one week or one day

Do speak words that edify, only speak good of others, words seasoned with salt, words of repentance, words that are true with love

1 Pet 2:20-21ff

21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while

being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

Jesus didn't revile in return because he trusted in the character and promises of God.

Do you really trust in God who judges justly?

The whole book of Revelation is about trusting our God who is in control, and who WILL COME TO JUDGE Righteously.

In doing so, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we too can hold fast as overcomers.

Amen

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