

Revelation 14 - The Lamb and the 144,000

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COURSE COMMENTARY

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14:1 - a Lamb on Mount Zion

- **a Lamb standing on Mount Zion**

Mount Zion refers to the city of David in Jerusalem (1Chr. 11:5). It also can refer to Jerusalem in the Millennium (Joel 3:16). There is also mention of Zion as the heavenly mountain of God (Heb. 12:22-24; Eze. 28:13-15?; Rev. 21:20). Which Zion is in view here? Earthly or heavenly? If **heavenly**, the 144,000 have probably died. If **earthly**, the 144,000 who were sealed have survived the Tribulation.

- **a heavenly scene?**

Evidence in favor of the heavenly Zion: **1)** The location of singers is "before the four living creatures" in heaven (Rev. 14:3). They are "before the throne" (Rev. 14:5). **2)** When last seen, the Lamb was standing in heaven. In the Millennial Kingdom, the Lamb would more naturally be seated on the throne of David. **3)** The 144,000 are said to be *from the earth* (Rev. 14:3) and *from among men* (Rev. 4:4). This implies they are no longer on earth among men.

- **an earthly and heavenly scene?**

Perhaps the Lamb and the 144,000 are on *earth* and the rest of the participants are in *heaven*. The heavenly chorus sings a song that the 144,000 then learns on earth. Weaknesses of this view include: **1)** The song originates in the mouths of the harpists rather than the 144,000 who had the actual experience in the Tribulation. **2)** The faultlessness of the 144,000 before the throne (Rev. 14:5) must be taken as salvific and not a physical position. (This phrase is only found in the TR.) **3)** Since others besides the 144,000 sing, there is a need to distinguish between *singing* and *learning* the song. **4)** The uniqueness of the song and its singing is harder to explain. **5)** Most manuscripts (NU and MT) indicate the voice or sound is *like harpists*, but may not be harpists.

14:2 - a voice from heaven

- **a voice from heaven like the voice of many waters**

Possibly a single loud voice (Rev. 1:15; Rev. 11:12). Or a great multitude speaking in unison (Rev. 19:1).

- **I heard the sound of harpists playing**

Textual variations make it difficult to know whether John heard *harpists* or that the voice was *like harpists* but not actually harpists. Moreover, the same Greek word, *phone*, can mean either "voice" or "sound." The *voice* is probably a *sound* which includes a multitude and harpists.

14:3 - they sang a new song

- **they sang**

Isaiah indicated the ransomed (redeemed) would return to Zion with singing (Isa. 35:10). This

theme is repeated by Jeremiah ([Jer. 31:11-12](#)). The song celebrates the victory of the 144,000 and their unique experience.

- [no one could learn that song](#)
Only the 144,000 could learn the song, probably because the lyrics speak of their personal and unique experience. Either they *initiate* the song and are the only singers, or the chorus in heaven *teaches* them and only they among men on earth can sing it.

14:4 - virgins

- [not defiled with women](#)
This statement does not negate the divine institution and blessing of marriage ([Heb. 13:4](#)). These probably minister in a time when most sexual relations are outside of marriage. Fornication and licentiousness is probably rampant.
- [they are virgins](#)
In their complete dedication to the Lamb and their calling, they forgo sexual relations with women to focus completely on their unique God-given tasks during the Tribulation. These are the "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" which Jesus taught about ([Mat. 19:12](#)).
- [firstfruits](#)
The first portion of grain and fruit harvests, as well as flocks, was offered to God. It demonstrates the priority given to God and indicates a larger harvest to follow ([Lev. 23:10](#)).

14:5 - faultless

- [in their mouth was found no deceit](#)
The mouth is the organ out of which the heart "speaks" ([Mat. 12:34](#); [15:8, 18](#); [Rom. 10:10](#)). These were pure of *heart*. Their mouths are like the Lamb ([Isa. 53:9](#)). They represent the early stages of the glorious promise of the New Covenant to Israel wherein they will be righteous ([Zep. 3:12-13](#); [Jer. 31:33-34](#)).

14:6 - a preaching angel

- [an angel having the everlasting gospel](#)
The earth dwellers, in their time of testing ([Rev. 3:10](#)) are continually urged to repent. This is their final chance before taking the mark and being eternally damned.

14:7 - fear God and give glory to Him

- [fear God and give glory to Him](#)
This is not the gospel message, but the intended result of the gospel message. This is the reaction which is urged of the earth dwellers. Evidently some respond for martyrs in the next chapter sing of God's fear and glory ([Rev. 15:3](#)).
- [who made heaven and earth](#)
The Creator vs. creature distinction is the basis for all true worship. The earth dwellers have rejected God as Creator. Thus, the destruction of the earth's resources and systems is intended as a wake-up call to their error.

14:8 - Babylon is fallen

- **Babylon**
Where and what is Babylon in Revelation? 1) Commercial success and general godlessness anywhere and in any age? 2) Rome? 3) Jerusalem? 4) We can't tell and it doesn't matter? 5) A literal city on the banks of the Euphrates, founded by Nimrod as Babel ([Gen. 10:8-10](#)) ? We believe the latter.
- **is fallen, is fallen, that great city**
"Is fallen" : aorist proleptic verbs--stating the event as if it has passed. It is so sure and imminent as to be understood as a done deal! "That great city" is an allusion to Nebuchadnezzar's prideful statement which resulted in his 7 years affliction as a grass grazer ([Dan. 4:30-33](#)).
- **wine of the wrath of her fornication**
She has corrupted the nations, both commercially and through physical and spiritual fornication ([Rev. 17:1-2](#); [18:3](#); [19:2](#)). Babylon polluted the nations and so God will judge the nations through her before she herself is judged ([Jer. 51:7](#)).

14:9-11 - beast worshipers damned

- **if anyone worships the beast**
This is a unique time in history and the angel is describing an "unpardonable sin." This is why the Beast worshipers are not written in the Book of Life.
- **he himself shall also drink of the wrath of God**
Having drunk from the cup of God's judgment ([Rev. 16:19](#)) , the recipient is the object of God's wrath ([Job 21:20](#)) and staggers with drunkenness, becoming mad and participating in his own destruction ([Jer. 25:16](#); [Zec. 12:2-4](#)).
- **tormented FOREVER!**
They will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" ([Rev. 20:10](#)). This is the *second death* ([Rev. 21:8](#)).

14:12-13 - blessed are the dead

- **blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on**
This special recognition by God underscores the horrors of the reign of the Beast which includes unprecedented slaughter of Christians by the Beast ([Rev. 13:7](#)), his image ([Rev. 13:15](#)), and the Harlot ([Rev. 17:6](#)). These receive special mention and position in the Millennial Kingdom ([Rev. 20:4](#)).
- **that they may rest**
The Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory (where the dead go to pay for their sins before entering heaven) is unknown to Scripture. When believers die, they receive "rest" and are instantly in the presence of the Lord ([Dan. 12:13](#); [Luke 23:43](#); [2Cor. 5:8](#); [Php. 1:23](#); [Rev. 6:9](#); [Rev. 15:1-3](#)).

14:14-16 - the earth's harvest

- **the harvest of the earth is ripe**
The long interadvent period between Christ's first and Second Coming is now seen as coming to an end, a time only the Father knows ([Mark 13:32](#)). There are *two* harvests before us. The first harvest is that of the faithful (wheat) and the second is that of the faithless (tares) ([Mat. 13:26-](#)

30). Here, the second harvest is portrayed as a grape vintage--the 'grapes of wrath.' "He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together His **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other " ([Mat. 24:31](#)).

14:17-20 - the winepress of God's wrath

- [the harvest of the earth is ripe](#)
Now the tares are taken out so they cannot enter the Millennial Kingdom ([Mat. 13:39-43](#)). "One will be taken, one will be left" -- those taken are removed in judgment ([Luke 17:30-37](#) cf. [Mat. 24:28](#)). The eagles gather to feast on the bodies ([Job 39:30](#); [Rev. 19:17](#)).
- [gather the clusters of the vine of the earth](#)
God's vineyard brought forth *wild grapes* which are now to be destroyed ([Isa. 5:1-5](#)).
- [the great winepress of the wrath of God](#)
This is the campaign of Armageddon at the second advent of Christ ([Isa. 34:2-8](#); [63:1-6](#); [Joel 3:12-14](#); [Zep. 3:8](#); [Rev. 19:15](#)). (We will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 16.)

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).