

# Blessed Are Those: A Journey through Revelation – Part 16

## Follow the Lamb - Rev 14:1-20

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### Intro:

- This morning, we are jumping back into our series “Blessed Are Those: A Journey through Revelation,” looking at this book through the lens of **Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”** So, with each chapter, we are looking for the blessing that we can read, hear, and take to heart.
- Two weeks ago, in Revelation 13, we saw the dragon standing on the sand of the sea and summoning two beasts—one from the sea and one from the earth—who killed people who refused to worship them and take their mark. We were warned of these things and instructed and encouraged to be faithful to Christ, patiently endure persecution, and *refuse to worship anyone or anything besides Christ*.
- Today, in chapter 14, the focus of the vision turns from looking at the enemies of God and His people and their plans, to looking at the Lamb, His people, and His plans. This sets us up for the final conflicts and battles in the rest of the book, which culminate in the glorious victory of the Lamb who will reign forever and ever. Then we see what awaits those who follow Him.
- In the chapter for today, we are going to see the Lamb and the firstfruits of the redeemed. We will hear three proclamations given by angels and then read about two great harvests, one of the redeemed who receive God’s goodness, and the other of enemies of God, who receive His wrath.
- We will ultimately be both warned and encouraged to follow and stand with the Lamb, who leads and redeems His people by and through His sacrificial love. We are invited to join and follow Him, in contrast to following the enemies of God, who use power to force people to follow them and pleasure to entice people into their deceptive bondage. The contrast could not be starker between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. We are to see this contrast and choose who we will follow and which kingdom we will join.

### The first of the redeemed

#### Revelation 14:1-5 NIV

**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 firstfruits to God and the Lamb. 5 No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.**

- *The Lamb who is standing*
  - Again, notice the contrast between the two opposing forces. On the one hand, we have Satan, who stands on the lowest point, shifting sand, and appears like a ferocious seven-headed dragon with crowns and horns, accompanied by two beasts of power and

deception out of the sea and land, conscripting people into serving them and killing those who refuse.

- On the other hand, we see Jesus, who is standing on the highest place, the solid rock of Mount Zion, appearing like a sacrificial Lamb surrounded by His faithful followers whom He has redeemed. He has the voice and the power of the Father, and the sound of praise in the presence of the four living creatures and the elders is all around.
- On one side, we have the fierce, furious, and ferocious clothed in power and hatred, and on the other side, we have the sacrifice, surrendered, and servants who sing a new song, clothed in praise and glory. This is the true nature of the spiritual reality of all creation.
- *The redeemed who are following*
  - The 144,000 are a representative group, the “firstfruits” (v. 4) of all those who come after. They have the names of Jesus and the Father written on them (in contrast to the “mark of the beast”). They are the children of God and members of His Kingdom.
  - They have been “redeemed,” purchased and chosen by God through the sacrifice of the Son. They sing a new song before the throne, they tell the truth about the Lamb, and they are “pure virgins,” meaning they are fully devoted to Christ and follow no other “gods” (including involvement with the great prostitute who rides the beast—chapter 17).
  - The Lamb of God stands on Mount Zion with 144,000 followers who bear His name. They are marked by loyalty, purity, and unwavering devotion. These are believers who have chosen to remain faithful despite opposition. They follow the Lamb everywhere He goes out of devotion and love, and they are blameless because they have been redeemed. They sing a new song of victory, a song only understood by those who have experienced redemption through Christ. This is who we are called to be and to do.
  - After seeing this vision of Mount Zion and all that it entails, we hear three angelic proclamations of what God has decreed.

## **The angelic proclamations**

### **Revelation 14:6-7 NIV**

**Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”**

- The first angel flying between heaven and earth proclaims the eternal gospel to all nations, tribes, languages, and peoples as a final warning and invitation to fear and glorify and worship the God who has made everything, because the hour of His judgment has come. Even in the last hour, God provides mercy before His final wrath is poured out.

### **Revelation 14:8 NIV**

**A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”**

- The second angel, following the first, then declares that “Babylon the Great” has fallen, which represents humanity’s defiance to follow and give glory to God, and instead chose to follow and give glory to themselves. The conception of Babylon is the “tower of Babel,” as seen in Genesis 11, where the people of the world banded together to “make a name for themselves” in defiance

of God's command. Its culmination is seen in Revelation 17 where self-indulgent power and pleasure use and consume all for itself and oppose God, and persecute and kill God's holy people.

- The sinfulness of people and their prideful, arrogant rebellion against God and His righteous rule will all come crashing down in the end.

#### **Revelation 14:9-11 NIV**

**A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, 10 they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name."**

- The third angel, following the second, proclaims in a loud voice the horrendous and just decree that all those who worship the beast and its image and receive its mark will drink the wine of God's fury at its full strength and receive no rest in their torment.
- This end is horrifying, sickening, and justified. These people have been warned, time and time again, even in the last hour, to turn from their wickedness and worship the good and glorious God, but they refuse and continue in their persistent and wicked rebellion and war against God and His people.
- Knowing this final end causes the people of God to overcome good with evil, to continue to proclaim the gospel, persevere in faith, and suffer and sacrifice for the Savior (see Romans 12).

#### **Revelation 14:12-13 NIV**

**This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."**

- The people of God are called to patient endurance, to endure all the trials, tribulations, and torments of this world, to continue despite all these things to keep God's command, and to remain faithful to Jesus. Blessed are those who remain faithful, even unto death. Perseverance is rewarded by eternal rest, reward, and peace in Christ in their place in the Kingdom that will have no end.
- God and His angelic messengers have proclaimed these three things, and they will come to pass at the right time before the final renewal of time and all things new. Next, we see two great harvests, one of the righteous to glory and the rebellious to wrath.

#### **The great harvests**

#### **Revelation 14:14-16 NIV**

**I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15 Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the**

**harvest of the earth is ripe.” 16 So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.**

- The one pictured in this image is understood to be Jesus because He is seated on a “white cloud,” which is how Jesus will return (Luke 21:27). This person is called “a son of man,” a title which Jesus claimed (Matt 11:19) according to Daniel 7:13. And this person is dressed like Jesus in Revelation 1:13. He is told by the Father when the earth is ripe for harvest and the exact time to reap it.
- This is seen as the harvest of the righteous, as the people of God are seen as a harvest (Matt 9:37) that will be gathered in at the end like wheat, in comparison to the weeds that will be “burned with fire” (see Matt 13:24-43).
- So this “grain” harvest for those who will be harvested into the Kingdom is shown in contrast to the “grape” harvest that will be gathered in for destruction.

#### **Rev 14:17-20 NIV**

**Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth’s vine, because its grapes are ripe.” 19 The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath. 20 They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.**

- Now, the angels gather the “grapes” from the earth. The angel that was in charge of the fire next to the altar, which is a call back to the images of the saints crying out from under the altar for justice, and other angels hurl the fire of wrath to the earth in response to the suffering of the saints (Rev 6:10; 8:5).
- These people are gathered outside the city, which is the city of God, the New Jerusalem, where they will receive the wrath of God like grapes that are crushed in a winepress. These are people who devoted their lives to serve their own power and pleasures in rebellion against the good and glorious God. Their destruction will be full, and it will be final because they have resisted the grace and mercy of God and persisted in fulfilling their appetite for destruction. To destruction they will go (see also Isa 63:1-6; 2 Thes 1:5-10; Rom 2:3-5; Matt 25:31-46). Let all be warned who walk in this way that their end is not eternal life, but eternal death. Repent and turn to the mercy of God and trust Christ for your salvation.

#### **Conclusion**

- As we come to the close of Revelation 14, we are given a striking and sobering picture of two roads and two destinies: one leading to rest, reward, and rejoicing in the presence of the Lamb, and the other to wrath, ruin, and eternal separation from God. The message is clear: we must choose our allegiance. There is no middle ground in the great spiritual conflict between the Lamb and the beast, between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world.
- So, what does this mean for us today? How should we respond to this vision?
- *Follow the Lamb with unwavering devotion*
  - The redeemed are described as those who “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (v. 4). This is the call for every believer, not merely to admire Jesus from afar, but to walk in step with Him daily, even when the path is difficult or costly. Where He leads, we follow, into holiness, into sacrifice, into truth, into grace. Ask yourself: Am I following Christ wholeheartedly, or only when it’s convenient?

- Application: Make a daily habit of surrender, starting each morning with a prayer of devotion: “Lord, wherever You lead me today, I will follow.”
- *Worship God Alone*
  - In a world filled with seductive voices calling for our allegiance, whether political, cultural, material, or spiritual, the first angel’s message still rings out: “Fear God and give Him glory . . . Worship Him who made the heavens and the earth” (very. 6-7). Don’t worship the things of this world. Worship the One who made it.
  - Application: Examine where your heart, time, and treasure go. Is your worship directed to God alone, or have other things begun to take His place?
- *Live As the Redeemed*
  - The 144,000 are described as blameless, truthful, and pure. These are not perfect people, but those who have been redeemed and now walk in light of that redemption. They are “firstfruits,” set apart and living proof that God saves and sanctifies.
  - Application: Let your life reflect your salvation. Speak truth, pursue holiness, and live in such a way that points others to the Lamb.
- *Proclaim the Gospel Boldly*
  - Even in the final hours of history, the eternal gospel is being proclaimed. And that same gospel has been entrusted to us today. There is still time for people to repent and turn to Christ, but we must tell them.
  - Application: Pray for one person you can share the gospel with this week. Look for the opportunity, and take it.
- *Persevere in Patient Endurance*
  - Verse 12 says, “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God.” We must not give up, even when it’s hard. The world may oppose us, but the Lamb stands with us, and His victory is certain.
  - Application: When you’re tempted to despair, remind yourself: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them” (v. 13). Your faithfulness is not forgotten.
- So, let us stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Let us sing His song, proclaim His gospel, live in His holiness, and endure with His strength, until the harvest comes and we are gathered home.
- “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9). Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

***Our prayer team is available to pray with you after the service near the “Prayer” sign at the front of the sanctuary and also in the prayer room, next to the offices.***

### **Questions for Growth Groups**

1. Read Revelation 14:1-5. What stands out to you about the contrast between the Lamb on Mount Zion and the beasts of Revelation 13? What does this contrast reveal about God’s Kingdom versus the kingdom of the world?
2. The 144,000 are described as those who “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” What does it practically look like in your daily life to follow Christ this way? What hinders you from doing this more fully?
3. The first angel proclaims the eternal gospel to all peoples, urging them to fear God and worship Him (vv. 6-7). How can this call shape our sense of mission and urgency today?
4. The fall of Babylon (v. 8) symbolizes humanity’s pride and rebellion against God. In what ways do you see the spirit of Babylon present in our culture today? How do we resist it?

5. Verses 9-11 describe the judgment awaiting those who worship the beast. How does this warning deepen your understanding of God's justice and mercy? How should it affect the way we share the gospel?
6. Verse 12 speaks of patient endurance and faithfulness. What helps you remain faithful to Jesus in difficult seasons? What spiritual habits help cultivate perseverance?
7. Revelation 14 ends with two harvests—one for the redeemed and one for the rebellious. How does this image of the final harvest help clarify the importance of our choices and allegiances in this life?