

Ministry of Grace

Revelation Chapter 14

Notes

This chapter starts out with a vision of the 144,000 witnesses standing on Mt. Zion. They are singing a song, probably a song of praise to God, although we aren't told what the song is. The Mt. Zion that they are standing on is the heavenly Mt. Zion. We know this because John heard the sound from heaven of harpists playing on their harps and the 144,000 are singing the song before the throne, the four living creatures and the elders, which is in the throne room of God.

Three angels then fly overhead (this is now an earthly scene) proclaiming the final gospel message, followed by an announcement of the destruction of the Beast's empire, and the judgment of condemnation of all those who have the mark of the Beast.

This chapter ends with a vision of the two harvests, the harvest of the righteous (the wheat harvest) and the harvest of the damned (the grape harvest). These two harvests appear to be a prelude to the Sheep and Goat Judgment (also called the Judgment of the Nation).

The vision described here occurs just before the outpouring of the seven bowls of judgment at the end of the tribulation, which are described in chapter 15.

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

This scene describes the Lamb of God, the Messiah, Jesus Christ standing on Mount Zion which is the heavenly Mt. Zion. This is NOT a picture of the church, because the 144,000 are clearly identified as being Jews (see Revelation chapter seven).

“**Then I looked, and behold**” – This is an indication that John is about to describe a new vision. The word “then” is a poor translation because it seems to indicate a time sequence. The Greek word is *kai*, meaning “and” or “but.” If you look at the timeline, you will see that the events described in this chapter are at the end of the Tribulation, whereas the previous vision (of the two beasts) was at the middle of the Tribulation. The word “**behold**” is in the imperative mood indicating a command. It's as if John was saying, “**Then I looked, and ... look at that!**”

“**the Lamb**” – Some manuscripts say “a Lamb,” but the best Greek manuscripts say “**the Lamb.**” Throughout the book of Revelation, the Lamb of God is referred to with this Greek word *arnion*, a diminutive of lamb, which literally means “a little lambkin.” Our Savior does not have to appear as something mighty and powerful because He, and He alone, *IS* mighty and powerful.

“**on Mount Zion**” – As we mentioned above, this is the heavenly Mt. Zion. It appears to be a gathering of celebration. In the book of Hebrews this very celebration is spoken of:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

“... his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.” These 144,000 are the witnesses for Yahweh who were sealed as described in chapter 7. In that chapter we were told that they were “sealed ... on their foreheads.” In the current verse we are told that that seal consists of the name of the lambkin and the name of His father.

Revelation 14: 2

And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,

“voice” – This is from the Greek word *phonē*, which refers to a sound or tone made or given forth. So “voice” is most often the appropriate translation for an intelligent being, whereas “sound” is probably more appropriate for a nondescript sound or the sound of inanimate objects like musical instruments. Given the context, it is more reasonable to translate this as

And I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of loud thunder.
The sound I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,

“The voice (sound) I heard was like the sound of harpists” –What is significant about the sound that John heard is that it is a musical sound, a sound of joy which is to be immediately followed by the singing of the 144,000.

Revelation 14:3

and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

“They” is a reference to the 144,000. Since they are the only ones who are able to learn the song, it is obviously they who are the ones singing the song.

Notice that they were singing “before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.” This is the very throne room of God, described by John in the 4th and 5th chapters of Revelation. This is evidence that the current vision is about a scene in heaven, on the heavenly Mt. Zion.

“redeemed” is translated from a form of *agoradzō*, which means “to purchase.” It is different than the word used by the Apostle Paul in reference to the redemption of Christians as in **Galatians 4:5** (*exagoradzō*, meaning to purchase and take out of the market place.) However, it is significant in that these 144,000 are also purchased (with the blood of the Lamb).

Revelation 14:4

It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,

“not defiled themselves with women” – The word “defiled” is from the Greek word *molunō*, which means “to stain” (always used in a bad sense). These 144,000 are not sexually stained, or defiled with women, as the text reads. This is conclusive evidence that the 144,000 are all men.

“virgins” – This is from the Greek *parthenos*, which means “a virgin,” one who has not engaged in sexual activity. Symbolically, however, it can be a reference to one who has kept himself or herself free from adultery or fornication. These are most likely men who have never engaged in sexual activities. This fact would be particularly astounding given the fact that mankind is unrestrained from sin during the tribulation (since the Holy Spirit was removed with the church at the rapture). This is made even worse by the fact that the world is also under intense demonic influence like never before known to mankind.

It is likely that sexual sin and perversion will be rampant on the earth during this time. Yet, these 144,000 will remain pure!

There are some who claim that the description of these as “**virgin**” refers to their spiritual purity as evidenced by the statement “**These are the ones who follow the Lamb**” which immediately follows. The grammatical construction of the opening sentence of this verse, however, makes a direct association between their virginity and the fact that they have not been defiled with women.

“**who follow the Lamb wherever he goes**” – This is most likely a reference to their total dedication to their calling by God as witnesses throughout the earth during the second half of the tribulation. Notice that they were originally sealed at mid-trib (**Revelation 7:1-8**).

“**firstfruits for God and the Lamb,**” – In the Old Testament the firstfruits, the first part of the crop to be harvested or the firstborn of animals, were offered to God as completely set-apart to be used in His service. See **Deuteronomy 26:1-4** and **Deuteronomy 18:3-5**. These 144,000, as firstfruits to God, have been set-apart for special service to God during the tribulation.

Revelation 14:5

and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

“**lie**” – Some Greek texts have the word *dolos* here, meaning “fraud or guile.” The best manuscripts have the word *pseudos*, meaning “a lie.”

“**blameless**” – From the Greek word *amōmos*, meaning “without spot or blemish.” As representatives of the Lamb, these 144,000 will be undefiled and pure as the Lamb of whom they are witnessing. Since these are humans who have a sin nature, however, they will not be without deceit or fault in and of themselves. Rather, like those of us in the church age who are saved, they will be declared as pure and sinless and may even appear that way to the sinful earth dwellers during the tribulation.

Revelation 14:6, 7

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

First angel proclaims THE ETERNAL GOSPEL with a loud voice

“**Then**” – This is, again, the Greek word *kai*, meaning “and” or “but.” It is **not** an indication of time sequence. Therefore, it is more appropriately translated “and.”

“**another**” – This is “another of the same kind” (the Greek word *allos*). The “same kind as what” is unclear. Having seen many angels in his visions up to this point it is difficult to identify specifically what previous angel is referred to. John’s message, then, is simply that he saw an angel flying etc.

“**eternal gospel**” – This angel is proclaiming the “eternal or perpetual good news” to those who dwell on the earth. This is a slightly different expression than we have seen before for the permanent earth dwellers. Instead of *katoikountas* (those who permanently dwell), John used the word, *kathēmenous*, meaning “those who permanently sit.” So, the meaning is essentially the same, except it portrays a stubbornness on the part of those who dwell on the earth.

This angel flies through the sky above the earth proclaiming to the unsaved, the eternal gospel, that God is the creator and salvation is in Him alone; time is almost up, so repent now before it is too late.

Revelation 14:8

Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

Second angel announces CATASTROPHIC JUDGMENT

“Babylon the great” – There is much discussion as to the specific thing referred to by this expression. Throughout the Bible, Babylon is referred to and held up as an example of greedy commerce and false religious practices. In the book of Revelation it may be a reference to:

- A literal city, whether the actual city of Babylon or some other city of which Babylon is a symbol.
- A political, socio-economic system separate from and against the principles of God
- A false religious system

Some of the Greek texts have this as “Babylon the great city” If that is accurate, then this is likely either a reference to an actual city or to the political, socio-economic system that is symbolized by the great city. However, the reference to “her sexual immorality” is likely a reference to the religious system that is portrayed by Babylon. Throughout the Old Testament the nation of Israel was spoken of as an unfaithful wife (a harlot) and having committed sexual immorality, specifically, her idolatry and unfaithfulness to God. Hence, this reference to Babylon the great may be an all-encompassing reference to the world religion in combination with the economic-political-religious system headed up by the Beast. This proclamation by this angel is an announcement of the total demise of all that is ungodly during the tribulation.

“fallen” – This more accurately should be translated “fell.” It is repeated for emphasis. This is a use of the aorist tense referred to as “proleptic aorist” which is talking about something that has not yet occurred as if it has already happened because the eventuality of it is so sure.

“she who made all nations drink” – Literally this is “she gave all nations to drink.” There is nothing in the Greek to indicate that “she” forced all nations to drink. They have done it voluntarily.

“of her sexual immorality” – Since sexual immorality, fornication, and harlotry are images of spiritual unfaithfulness to God, this may be a reference to the false religious system of the tribulation.

Revelation 14:9-11

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

Third angel announces IMPENDING DOOM with a loud voice

“and receives a mark” – This occurs during the 2nd half of the tribulation

“he also will drink the wine of God's wrath” – In no uncertain terms anyone receiving the mark of the Beast will experience the wrath of God!

“full strength” – This is literally, “having been mixed unmixed.” That is, it is not diluted at all like the wine of the first century which was mixed with water, typically six parts water to one part wine. This will be the full strength of God’s wrath.

“in the presence of the Lamb” – This seems to be contradictory to what Paul taught in his second letter to the church at Thessalonica:

in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, **away from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of his might, (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

There is a reconciliation of these seemingly contradictory verses, however. In **Revelation 20:15** is a description of the damnation of all those not found written in the book of life. This occurs at the Great White Throne Judgment and even though angels are not specifically said to be there, it is likely that they will be. At this judgment the lost will be cast into the lake of fire, in the presence of God and in the presence of the holy angels, where they will suffer torment eternally. Once they are in the lake of fire they will be eternally separated from God with no hope of ever being reconciled to Him. This is the ultimate fate of all who receive the mark of the beast.

Revelation 14:12

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Even in the midst of the terrible wrath and impending judgment of God there is mention of those who remain true to God and the blessedness of those who remain faithful even to death during the tribulation.

“endurance” – This is the Greek word *hupomonē*, meaning “to remain under.” It is the picture of a beast of burden remaining and continuing under a heavy load instead of shaking it off. It is sometimes translated as “patience,” but it can also be translated as “endurance” which is probably a better translation in this case. These are the ones who keep the commandments of God and remain faithful to Him throughout this second half of the tribulation. Some of these faithful will survive the terrible tribulation and persecution of this most horrible period in the history of mankind.

Revelation 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

Since John is commanded to write this blessing, and those who are to read John’s writing are saints who exist from the first century on, this appears to be a blessing promised to all who are martyred for their faith throughout the church age and the tribulation. Back in the second chapter of Revelation, in the letter to the church in Smyrna, John gave the promise of the crown of life for those who are sacrificed for their faith:

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

“blessed” – This is from *markarios*, meaning “possessing the favor of God, that state of being marked by fullness from God.” Throughout the centuries faithful Christians have been martyred for their faith. Many, if not most, of these killings have been performed by those who claim to be worshipers of God and part of the organized church.

“says the Spirit” – Here and in **Revelation 22:17** are the only two places in the Bible where the Holy Spirit is quoted directly.

“rest from their labors” – One of the most consistent pictures of the heavenly reward for faithful believers is rest from their labors. The word translated “rest” is *anapauō*, meaning “to give rest, quietness, and refreshment.” It is the same word used in chapter 6 when God told those martyrs under the altar:

Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. (Revelation 6:11)

The word here translated “labors” is *kapos*, meaning not just “labor” but “great and wearisome labor.” It is a picture of what believers go through when the ungodly are in power.

“for their deeds follow them” – No matter whether a soul appears before the Bema Seat Judgment (Christians), the Sheep and Goat Judgment (Jews and tribulation saints) or the Great White Throne Judgment (all unsaved) it is their works which are looked at. Works will never result in salvation (they cannot meet God’s standard of righteousness) but they will apparently determine levels of reward or punishment. (see Bible Study on Judgments). In the book of Hebrews, we are given this message:

For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, (Hebrews 6:10, 11)

This is essentially what Paul taught the Galatian Christians.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Revelation 14:14

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.

“Then I looked, and behold” – This phrase introduces a new vision by John. There are two harvests described in verses 14 through 20. The first is a grain harvest like the one alluded to in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:25-30). In that parable, the Lord is talking about those who are the chosen ones (the sons of the kingdom), who will be harvested at the end of the age, which is the same exact time that this chapter is talking about.

“One like a son of man” – Though this is expressed as one “like” a Son of Man, it is apparent that this is, in fact, “the” Son of Man. You may recall in the first appearance of Jesus in Revelation he was referred to in the same way:

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands **one like a son of man**, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. (Revelation 1:12, 13)

This return of the Messiah to set-up his earthly kingdom is also the scene that Daniel was describing when he saw one like a Son of Man:

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came **one like a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13, 14)

This occurrence in Revelation 14:14 is the last time in the Bible that the title “son of man” is used for Jesus Christ. Note the dramatic contrast between this and the first use of this title in the Bible:

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20)

He who came with nothing, not even a place to sleep, who judges nothing before its time, will come again as the conquering, ruling King of kings and Lord of lords, the Judge of all the earth. He who came as a servant to save people from their sins will come a second time as the ruling King, Almighty God, to judge people for their unbelief.

"a golden crown" – This is not a *diadema*, or ruler's crown, rather it is a *stephanos*, or victor's crown as He comes to claim victory over all who opposed Him.

Revelation 14:15

And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."

Fourth angel comes from the temple and proclaims with a loud voice, IT'S JUDGMENT TIME!

Some believe that the one "like a son of man" can't be Jesus because in this verse He appears to be taking orders from an angel. This angel comes out of the temple in heaven before the throne of God and he delivers the message, which is from God the Father to God the Son, that the time has finally come. Recall, that in Jesus' answer to His disciples as to when the Day of the Lord would come, He said this:

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. (Matthew 24:36)

Jesus declared that He, the Son of man, did not even know the time. Now that the time has come, it is announced to the Son by an angelic messenger from the Father. God's anger has reached its limit, and His wrath is about to be poured out. The time for grace is over, there will be no more delay; the harvest of judgment is come!

"the harvest of the earth is fully ripe" – The word translated "fully ripe" is the Greek word *exēranthē*, from the word *xēros*, meaning "dry." It is a word that implies that the harvest has become completely dry and ready for harvest. This is another indication that this is a grain harvest. No one can say that God has not waited until the last moment to execute judgment. He has given mankind every opportunity to repent of sins and now the time has finally come to execute His judgment.

Revelation 14:16

So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

What is the difference between the grain harvest and the grape harvest? Some have speculated that the grain harvest represents the common people of the world and that the grape harvest represents the political and religious leaders and the military. I see no evidence for that at all. A more likely explanation is that the grain harvest represents the gathering of the believers and the grape harvest represents the gathering of unbelievers. This could be the separating of the sheep from the goats for the judgment described in chapter 20. This grain harvest is what Jesus was describing in His parable of the weeds in Matthew chapter 13.

He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. *The harvest is the close of the age*, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw

them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”
(Matthew 13:37-43)

Notice that the harvest described by Jesus in Matthew 13 occurs “at the close of the age,” which is the time period written about in this 14th chapter of Revelation. Also notice that the good seed are referred to as “sons of the kingdom,” which kingdom is just about to be inaugurated.

Revelation 14:17, 18

Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."

Fifth angel comes from temple with a sharp sickle

This angel is God’s version of “the grim reaper,” who comes to reap vengeance on all who oppose God

Sixth angel, the one having power over fire, comes from the altar and cries with a loud voice, “IT’S GRAPE HARVEST TIME!”

“who had power over fire” – Literally this is “the one **having** power over fire.” This angel comes from the altar of incense under which the slain martyrs reside (see the fifth seal judgment of **Revelation 6:9-11**). These martyrs are the ones who prayed to God:

“O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Their prayer is now being answered. This altar is also described in **Revelation 8:3-5** just before the trumpet judgments begin. Here, again, it is associated with the prayers of the saints.

“gather the clusters of the vine of the earth” – The rebellious, unrepentant sinners are represented here as clusters of the vine. Their being cut off represents their being severed from life on the earth.

“grapes are fully ripe” – The word here translated “fully ripe” is a different word from what we saw in verse 15. Here it is the Greek word *ēkmasan*, meaning “at the point of complete ripeness.” It pictures these as completely full of the juice of rebellion against God, at the maximum point of being ready to make juice.

Revelation 14:19, 20

So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

This is God expressing His wrath against those who have rejected His offer of grace as pictured by their blood coming out of the winepress. This may be a reference to the battle (slaughter, actually) of Armageddon where all those who have come out against God will be slain without mercy by the word out of the mouth of the returning Messiah.

“as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia” – This is one of those verses in the book of Revelation that has many fanciful interpretations, some of which seem reasonable and while others are not. First of all, this is a judgment against the stubborn earth dwellers, for we see that the result of this harvest is blood.

Some have claimed that there will not be enough blood in all of mankind to produce what John has described here. So, let's do a little analysis. Knowing how much each of you loves math, let me do all the work for you. The distance of 1600 Stadia is equivalent to approximately 200 Roman miles, which is about 184 statute miles which are what we use today. That is approximately the distance from the northern edge of Israel to the southern edge in the 1st century. Given that fact, and the fact that the Jordan River flows from the north of Israel almost to its southern end, we can assume that John is talking about the blood flowing like a river. The average height of a horse's bridle is about 5^{1/4} feet and the average width of the Jordan River is about 100 feet. Therefore, the approximate volume of a river of blood 184 miles long, 100 feet wide, and 5^{1/4} feet deep is a little more than 500 million cubic feet.

If we assume that there are about 3 billion earth dwellers at that time with an average of 1.3 gallons of blood per person, we learn that the volume of their blood is ... wait for it ... wait for it ... a little more than 500 million cubic feet.

So What?

In order to survive the tribulation period, especially the last three and a half years, believers in the true God will have to be very focused on Him. They will have no luxuries in life. They will have to depend on God for the very basics of life, like food and shelter, because they will not be able to purchase any of them. They will have to be steadfast in their belief because the whole world will be against them. They will not be able to gather together with other believers without fear of being found out and killed. If they do possess a Bible, they will have to read it in secret. Their entire life focus will be on surviving until Jesus returns to set-up His Kingdom on earth, if that is God's will.

Where is your life focus? Is it on the here and now? Or is it on your eternal existence in glory. A Christian teenager acquaintance of ours recently said, "I can live my life the way I want, because God's forgiven me." That's focusing on the here and now. It's also a picture of a Christian who is just coasting through life. What this person is missing is the fact that God is not only a forgiving God, but He is also a rewarding God. He has already announced that He will reward all those who serve Him with a humble heart. However, such service requires hard work and dedication to His will, not our own.

Jesus doesn't ask any of us to do anything that He hasn't already done. We owe Him a debt of gratitude. Due to our sins, we owe our lives to God, but Jesus paid our debt and asks only that we serve Him faithfully. If we don't, we'll still be forgiven and we'll still get into heaven, but if we do, we can expect eternal rewards. I can already hear someone saying, "But, it's hard to do God's will. It often means that I can't do the things I really want to do!"

It was easy for Jesus to do His Father's will. After all, He is God. Well, let's take a look at Luke's account of Jesus's in the garden of Gethsemane:

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, **not my will, but yours, be done.**" And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:39-44)

Here's how Matthew described it in his gospel account:

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be **sorrowful and troubled**. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father,

if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; **nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.**” And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” (Matthew 26:36-46)

Jesus knew what He was about to go through and He didn't want to do it. Do you see that? He didn't want to do it! He asked the Father to find Him a different way of accomplishing His plan. But when there was no other way, He was willing to go through the agony and ignominy of the cross because that was the Father's will. He didn't do it for himself. He did it for the Father, and we end up being the beneficiaries.

So, let's look again at what the Christian teenager said, “I can live my life the way I want, because God's forgiven me.” That's a pretty selfish attitude, isn't it? My mother taught me that if someone does something nice for you, then you should be willing to do something nice in return. But that's old fashioned. That was way back in the previous century. We don't think like that today, do we? We're more focused on looking out for good ole number one. Is that doing God's will?

At the end of the tribulation there will be a judgment called the Sheep and Goat Judgment. God will separate the worthy ones as sheep and the permanent earth dwellers as the goats. To the sheep He will say:

... ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ (Matthew 25:34-40)

And to the unrighteous permanent earth dwellers He will say:

... ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ (Matthew 25:41-45)

These earth dwellers were only thinking of themselves. They didn't care for anybody else. In other words, they were living their life the way they wanted to. And -- they got what they deserved.

However – Christians are different. We know that we are forgiven already. We've been washed clean by the blood of Christ and God has declared every Christian to be as righteous as Christ. We already have our free ticket into heaven and nobody can take that away. So, we can live our lives however we want to, can't we? We can, but -----

Listen, we won't be at the Sheep and Goats Judgment, but we will be at the Bema Seat Judgment. There, we will receive rewards for being like the sheep. All the things that we do for others, in the name of the Lord, will produce rewards. But everything else we do, that is, everything else we do, especially those things that we do for selfish reasons, will end up being burned to a crisp.

Do you feel even the slightest twinge of guilt when you intentionally ignore what you know God wants you to do and, instead, do what you want to do? Do you smell the smoke when you do? If we live this life selfishly, we will arrive in heaven smelling of smoke. However, if we live this life doing God's will, we will arrive in heaven with a crown.

Let's focus on eternal values and live the way we are instructed to:

- “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, ... (Matthew 7:12a)
- Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
- For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)
- And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:9-10)
- Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)
- Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

We may not end up this life as the richest person. We may not end up being the most popular. We may not end up with the most toys or the most friends. But then again, what we will get in this life is not the most important thing, is it? The important things will be rewards which will last for eternity.

Are you ready to meet your Lord at the Bema Seat? I sure hope so!

Let's Pray

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