

The Revelation

Lesson 12

As a follow-up to our last lesson, although the two *beasts* are presented as animals in the REVELATION, in reality, the *first beast* is the final world empire made up of the ten countries formed after the *Roman Empire* died. Those ten countries will have their own governments until they unite and form the *Revived Roman Empire*. It was not an animal, it was an empire that will be led by the final *King of the West*. The *second beast* was not an animal but a religious movement that was developed in two distinct confederations of tribes of Central Asia and Arabia that *presented itself as a religion of peace yet spoke the evil of Satan*. The *second beast* operated in the domain of the *first beast* and laid down the rules of life and commerce within the boundary lines of the new empire. It required the worship of the *first beast* and the *great red dragon*. It also required the name or number of the *beast* to be worn on the forehead or the right hand in order to buy, sell or trade with this new empire. However, the most important point to make at this intersection of study is that the two confederations of tribes of Central Asia and Arabia have held to the same religion adamantly since 630 AD. It is inconceivable to believe that those tribes which control Arabia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey and a small section of Russia will ever change their religion. Then, when that same religion begins to operate within the *Revived Roman Empire*, for all practical purposes most of Europe, Asia Minor, Central Asia and Arabia will all worship the same god. But, this does not mean that the Arabia and Central Asia countries of today will be part of the *Revived Roman Empire*; they will not. To the north, Russia and its affiliates will not; to the east, India, China and their affiliates will not; to the south, African tribes in general will not; neither will the countries of these two confederations. Only nations around the *Great Sea* will follow the *great red dragon*, the *first beast* and the *second beast*. Later in the REVELATION, this *Revived Roman Empire* will be metaphorically called the *sea*. Even though the two original confederate nations of the *second beast* will follow the same religion, they will not follow the *great red dragon* or the *two beasts*.

After seeing the history presented of the *woman with child*, the *great red dragon*, the *beast* with seven heads and ten horns and the *beast* with two horns, John looked and saw the 144,000 Israelites. We met them for the first time in seal six (7:4-8). At that time, we were only told that they had been sealed with the name of Jesus and the name of God the Father on their foreheads. Here we find them standing on Mount Zion.

(3) One Hundred and Forty-four Thousand (14:1)

Rev 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

The Bible's first mention of Mount Zion was with King David's conquest of a Canaanite city controlled by the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6-10; 1 Chronicles 11:4-9). At the time, David's capital was in the city of Hebron and with the capture of this new location, David made it his

new city in his seventh year as King of Israel. It is a mountain surrounded on three sides by deep valleys. It stands 2,510 feet above sea level. The Temple Mount to the north stands at 2,428 feet and is a full 100 feet lower of the City of Zion. But Zion is not the tallest mountain in the area. Across the Kidron Valley to the east is the Mount of Olives and it stands at 2,710 feet, a full 200 feet above Zion. Nevertheless, the Mount of Olives did not have the terrain surrounding it to provide the best protection and David chose Zion as the place for his town which came to be known as the *City of David*. We know that city as *Jerusalem*. Throughout the centuries since David made it his city, Israel's city, nations upon nations have tried take it as their own capital. Some have been successful, others have not.

Looking down from heaven, John sees in this cast of participants in the tribulation the 144,000 Israelites “**standing on Mount Zion**” with the seal of Jesus and God the Father imprinted on their foreheads.

(a) **Voice (14:2-5)**

(i) **Sound of the Many Waters (14:2a)**

Rev 14:2a And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder,

The 144,000 Israelites must be special to the LORD. When John saw them, he heard a voice roaring “**like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder.**” It sounded like the cascading of waters over the rocks of a fall or the rippling of thunder across the skies, John must have heard the sound coming toward him from a distance.

(ii) **Sound of the Harpists (14:2b)**

Rev 14:2b and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harpists playing on their harps.

As the swelling of the sound came nearer to John, he realized that he was hearing the sound “**of harpists playing on their harps.**” It was music! Beautiful music! Loud music! We must wonder if these harpists are the twenty-four elders playing their music in heaven. Remember what we learned about them in chapter five.

Revelation 5:8-9 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

The elders played their harps when the LORD was found to be the One worthy to open the seals on the *Book of Life*. And they sang along with their own harp music a new song about the LORD. What a song it was! It told of the LORD’s death which “**purchased for God ... men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**” What the LORD did to purchase those whose names were sealed in the *Book of Life* must have included the 144,000 Israelites He sealed for this time in the story.

These same elders were playing their harps again, singing a new song, and they needed singers to join along and the 144,000 were there, ready to vocalize.

(iii) Sound of the New Song (14:3)

Rev 14:3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

The throne of God is in heaven and so are the four living creatures and even the elders. That is where they were created to be! But down on earth, spread across Mount Zion, John saw the 144,000 and he could hear them singing a new song that was written for them and them alone, a song for those whom the LORD had “**purchased from the earth.**” The Greek word for “**purchased**” is *agorazo* and it means *to buy in the market place*. How did the LORD *purchase* these Israelites from the earth? He did it the same way and at the same time that He purchased all the rest of the saints of all time when He was slain on the cross at Calvary.

(b) Virtue (14:4-5)

(i) Untainted (14:4)

Rev 14:4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These *are* the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

We must tread carefully to interpret this verse in total harmony with the rest of Scripture. Concerning these 144,000 men, when we read, “**These are the ones who have not been defiled with women,**” it is quite easy to interpret here that a sexual relationship with a woman is, in itself, an act that defiles the man. But that thought is not in harmony with God’s intent for women in the Scripture. The sexual relationship between a man and a woman in a proper God honoring relationship is never one that defiles; rather, it is one that fulfills God’s purpose for a relationship between a man and a woman with God’s stamp of approval on it in every way. But to the contrary, when a man enters into a sexual relationship with a woman outside of marriage, for whatever reason, regardless of the excuse, it is an act of defilement in God’s eyes. In this first part of the verse, these 144,000 Israelites have not had inappropriate relations with women in any way.

But the verse continues to say, “**for they have kept themselves chaste.**” This phrase casts a whole new light on these 144,000 Israelites. “**Chaste**” is the English word for the Greek *parthenos*. It means these Israelites were *virgins*. Rarely are men referred to as *virgins* in the Bible. Those men and boys who took the *nazarite* vow were to be virgins all their lives but we have very little explanation or instruction about that practice in the Scripture. Whether or not these were *nazarites*, they were Israelites who had never had a sexual relationship with a woman, 144,000 of them untainted by sin.

The passage continues to say, “**These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.**” Notice that John does not say they followed “the LORD wherever He goes.” Although that is what John truly means in this passage, he uses an idiom to express his meaning. These 144,000 Israelites are the sheep that faithfully follow the “**Lamb**” of God. It is their role and nature as sheep to follow a leader whether a shepherd or the dominant sheep of the

herd. Sheep were never hard to care for when they knew their shepherd. They trusted their shepherd because they knew he would lead them to green pastures and lead them by still waters (Psalms 23). But that relationship took time, lots of time. Shepherds were with their sheep 24 hours a day. They were never afraid of their shepherd because he walked among them almost every hour of every day. Within the herd, a dominant sheep always exists. Shepherds can quickly identify that sheep; he is the one that all the other sheep eventually follow when the shepherd is absent. Shepherds learned hundreds of years ago that they could put a bell on the dominate sheep and then keep that animal right next to him as they walked from pasture to pasture and all the other sheep would automatically follow the sound of the *bell sheep* as they were grazing on their journey. For these 144,000 Israelites, the “**Lamb**” of God was their *Bell Sheep*, the one they followed faithfully wherever He led them.

The LORD had also purchased these 144,000 Israelites “**from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.**” When did He purchase them? Obviously, He purchased them when He died on the cross of Calvary but that is not really the question here. John is telling us that the LORD purchased them when He stopped the winds from blowing on the earth and sent the angel to seal them on their foreheads with His name and the name of God the Father. When did that happen? It occurred in the *sixth seal* just before the Church arrived in heaven (11:13d). We must be clear here; they were sealed but that does not mean they were saved. Had they been saved before the Church was removed from the earth, they would have been part of the Church and entered heaven at that time. They were only sealed and as we should remember, the locusts were not allowed to hurt them for five months (9:4-5). The whole Nation of Israel would soon follow the LORD and that would occur with the resurrection of the two witnesses, but when these 144,000 were sealed by the angel in *seal six*, they were just the “**first fruits**,” the best of the best of the first day’s harvest of the yearly crop. It always belonged to the LORD in Israel’s tradition as commanded by the LORD through Moses. But we must not forget, after the “**first fruits**” were presented to the LORD, the whole field still remained to be put into the storehouse. In this case, these 144,000 Israelites were just the beginning of all the souls of all of the Nation of Israel that were still to become sheep that “**follow the Lamb wherever He goes.**”

(ii) Unblimished (14:5)

Rev 14:5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

Furthermore, these 144,000 Israelites were unblemished in two ways. First, “**no lie was found in their mouth.**” No false words had ever come from their mouths. They were truth tellers; they were never liars. They were also “**blameless.**” It is the Greek word *amomoi* and it was used to describe the requirement for the animals that were to be sacrificed to the LORD. Those animals had to be *without defect* and that is what the word “**blameless**” means. These 144,000 Israelites were *without defect* in every way having to live with but untainted by the *red dragon*, and the two *beasts*.

(4) The Angel with the Gospel Message (14:6-7)

(a) In the Midheaven (14:6a)

Rev 14:6a And I saw another angel flying in midheaven,

The Church will be in heaven by this time in the story. For at least 2000 years the Church had been the primary source used by the LORD to share the eternal gospel to every soul on earth. But the Church had been removed from the earth. That does not mean that the Gospel had been removed from the earth. It was still here, it was still found in the printed words of the Holy Scriptures. It just meant that the primary verbal communicators of the Gospel have been removed. However, the LORD will not allow the Gospel to be extinguished even when the Church has been transferred to heaven. People will still be on earth who need to have the chance to hear the eternal salvation Gospel message about the LORD and what He did to offer everlasting life to all who would listen and believe. The LORD always provides a way for a lost soul to find salvation through the Gospel and that will still be true during the *End Times*. Three angels will proclaim the LORD's Gospel. This first angel will make his entrance by flying in the “**midheaven**.” Do not confuse this angel with the “**eagle flying in the midheaven**” (8:13); the two are completely different. In chapter 8 it was an eagle, here in chapter 14 it is definitely an angel. All the copies of the ancient manuscripts agree with our translation of these two passages. No mistakes have been made in their transmission into the English language. However, the word “**midheaven**” is the same in both passages. It means the *zenith*, or the *highest point in our atmosphere* that can be flown by earthly creatures. Angels are not earthly creatures and they can certainly fly though outer space if needed simply because they are spiritual creatures that can move between heaven and earth. Yet, according to John, this angel was flying at the same level as the eagle earlier in the story of the REVELATION.

(b) With the Eternal Gospel (14:6b)

Rev 14:6b having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;

The message of the angel is the “**eternal gospel**.” Just to be clear, this Gospel message has not changed one bit since the days of the first pages in the book of Genesis. When Adam’s grandson was born, it was in that year that men “**began to call upon the name of the LORD**” (Genesis 4:26). At Bethel, Abraham “**called upon the name of the LORD**” after his sinful trip down into Egypt (Genesis 12:8). When Hagar was desperate in the wilderness and had no place to turn, she “**called upon the name of the LORD**” (Genesis 16:13). The same language can be found for the acceptance of the Gospel message in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Daniel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Zechariah and most of the books in the New Testament. The way to salvation has never changed. It has always been done by *calling upon the name of the LORD* and giving Him worship and glory.

(c) With a Message (14:7)

Rev 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

In this passage, the “**eternal gospel**” message contains the same core of the everlasting message of the LORD, “**Fear God, and give Him glory.**” It is a terrible thing to “**Fear God**” and to refuse and reject Him. Bible teachers often interpret the word *fear* to mean

worship; that is not the case here. The Greek word is *phobeo* and it is the basis of our word *phobia*. It means *to be terrified*. This angel's message will be meant to scare to death the people living all over the world at that time. With that, the angel gives hope in the words "**give Him glory.**" "**Glory**" means to give *praise and honor*. In other words, the angel is imploring the people of earth to turn their hearts to the LORD. Why? "**Because the hour of His judgment has come.**" If anyone on earth would like to say he did not know about the coming of the judgment of the LORD, he will be without excuse. This angel was sent to make sure of that. The decision to give glory to God will rest solely in the heart of each soul just as it does today.

(5) The Angel with the Announcement Message (14:8)

Rev 14:8 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."

The LORD will not send just one angel with a message. A second will be sent to give the reason why "**the hour of His judgment has come**" and all the people should "**Fear God, and give Him glory**" (14:7). His announcement says, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.**"

Who is "**Babylon the great**" and how has she forced the nation to drink the "**wine of the passion of her immorality?**" This is the first mention of this person; it is the first mention of her intent. We know nothing about her to this point in the story and we will have to wait until she is explained by John to understand why the anger of the LORD is pointed at this person called "**Babylon.**" The one thing we can safely say at this point is that she is eternally in trouble with the LORD for her actions were imposed on the people of the whole world. We will meet her again in chapters 16 and 17.

(6) The Angel with the Warning Message Message (14:9-11)

Rev 14:9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

And then the LORD will send a third angel to corroborate the message of the first two angels with an incredible warning. For the first time we discover the eternal doom for those who fall into the trap that will be set by the *beast, his image and his mark*. Those who follow this *beast* and his requirements will be stopped in their tracks. Where? The REVELATION has not told us yet, but we know. It will start in the valley of Megiddo when the followers of this *beast* will be surrounded by the "**holy angels and ... the Lamb**" who will rain down fire and brimstone upon them. That will be just the beginning of their torment; his followers from that point on will be eternally tormented for following the *beast*.

We have already heard about the *image of the beast* and the *mark of the beast* in this *seventh trumpet*. As a reminder, the *beast from the land* will require that all the people

worship the *beast, the image of the beast*, and have the *mark of the beast* placed on either the forehead or the right hand.

We began our interpretation of the *seventh trumpet* under the premise that it contained *history within the prophecy* by presenting the participants of the tribulation in the order of their entrance into the recorded history of the ages since creation. We started with God's Covenant with creation stored within the Ark in heaven followed by the *woman* known as Israel and her twelve stars known as the tribes that composed the Nation of Israel. The *great red dragon* and the Baby born to the *woman* came next. Then came the *first beast* and the second beast followed by the singing voices of the 144,000 sealed Israelites. We also included in the premise of our interpretation that the orderly description of these participants would include enough information that we would be able to identify their origin, current status and future intent. Even though we discovered each participant in order with specific details about the lives of each, as a third premise, we held to the interpretation theory that many of the specific details were still yet to be acted upon and will be fulfilled in the future of this story.

At this point in the story, we have the perfect example to prove our whole premise of interpretation. These three angels will arrive in the story in chronological order after the *second beast* has arrived on the earth but before he has required *everyone to worship the first beast, his image and take his mark on the forehead or hand*. How do we know this? The third angel's warning says, **“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ...”** This warning was attached to the two previous statements by the two previous angels in context. All three angels were presenting the message of the **“eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people,”** (14:6). Therefore, the **“eternal gospel”** was being offered to every human on earth at the time the angels were making this proclamation. Even though it will occur after the *two beasts* have arrived in their positions on earth, the proclamation of the *second beast* will occur after every human on earth has heard this warning. In other words, the LORD will have the angels tell everyone, **“Do not worship the beast or his image or take his mark on your forehead or hand,”** before the *second beast* actually makes that demand. Why? Because it is the nature, characteristic, mercy and compassion of God! It is how God works; it is how God treats His creation. For example, He warned Adam about the fruit of the forbidden tree long before he had a chance to eat of it. He warned Noah about the coming flood long before a single drop fell. He warned Abraham about his descendants' bondage of 400 years in Egypt three generations before they set their tents in the land of Goshen the first day. He warned the Pharaoh of Egypt about each plague before it occurred. He warned the Nation of Israel about her impending sins and gave her the Ten Commandments as a guide before she broke every command. He warned the Northern Kingdom about the coming king of Assyria long before Sennacherib arrived on their doorstep. He warned the Southern Kingdom about Nebuchadnezzar long before he swept away the brightest of the nation's youth. He warned the Nation of Israel about the coming empires that would rule over her through a dream to Nebuchadnezzar long before each began to take their promised turn in history. He even warned Mary and Joseph about the Child they were to have shortly. He warned Joseph of Herod's deadly plan for their Baby. He warned the nation about the coming Messiah through

a dirty old prophet named the Baptist. He warned the twelve Apostles about their Leader's death, burial, and resurrection. Need we go on? God never warns after the fact! Not once! It is not a warning if it is after the fact. He never says, "*I meant to tell you about that, but, even though I didn't I am going to punish you anyway.*" Never! In fact, in the book of Hebrews we learn that it is God's nature not to hold a sin against a person if He has not told the person it is a sin! But when He does, it is a sin. Therefore, with the voice of the third angel's proclamation to all humans in the whole world, it is the first time they will have heard the warning and it is God's nature to proclaim it before any have been required to worship the *beast and take the mark*. God is ahead of their plans. How do we know? We know because God makes the foot of the Cross equally available to every human; no one has a better place at the Cross; one place is just as good as another; everyone human is invited whether or not he accepts the invitation; it is plainly and simply God's nature to be fair to every soul that He knew would be born even before He spoke creation into being. It is not His nature to warn about the tattoo of the number of the *beast* on the forehead or the hand, after some people have already been to the local shop for the imprint. If it is found on the forehead or hand the penalty is torment and God's nature will not let a soul enter into a contract like that without first hearing the warning. This warning will not be in the fine print, it will be heard from the "**mid-heavens**" around the world. Everyone will hear the screech of these three angels and understand every word. Then, those who worship the *beast, his image, and take the mark* will be without excuse.

With all of that said, we can safely say that we are just about to catch up with the end of the story of the two witnesses and the salvation of the Nation of Israel.

(7) The Perseverance (14:12-13)

(a) The Saints (14:12)

Rev 14:12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Human saints are once again living on earth. The last saints we knew about in this story were the ones John wrote about in the *sixth seal*, the "**great multitude ... with palm branches**" that had left earth and arrived in heaven. Only sinners were left on earth, sinners who needed salvation in order to become saints. Oh, perhaps the two witnesses were saints, if they were in fact human, but that question still remains until we all can discover that answer when we arrive in heaven. But truthfully, they could not have been around in the days of Zechariah and remained alive until the *End Times*. If they came today to the Americas, they would be well over 2,500 years old and for that reason, those two *sons of oil*, as Hebrew calls them, *who stand on earth for the LORD*, must be heavenly creatures and not earthly.

A new crop of saints has emerged since the departure of the Church. They have put their trust and belief in Christ; they have grasped the Scriptures and hidden the word of God in their hearts; they have made God's commandments their eternal code. Sinners they are, saved in the same way every member of the Church was saved by *calling upon the name of the LORD Jesus* and making Him their Messiah. They are not accepting the *faith of Baal*, the red dragon, either beast or image; they are accepting the *faith of Christ* and therefore, Christians are once again roaming the earth with the message of salvation for all who will hear.

(b) The Blessing (14:13a)

Rev 14:13a And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'"

But waiting for salvation comes with a great price in the days of the tribulation. John hears the word from heaven say, "**Write.**" What John must write constitutes both a blessing and a warning of what is to come. **"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!"**

In the *fifth seal* we met the souls under the altar who had died because they held to the testimony of their faith in Jesus. They lost their lives as martyrs. We remember that they asked Jesus, "*How long will these deaths go on?*" And Jesus told them, "*These deaths will continue until every soul that is to die for his faith in Me has died,*" (Revelation 6:9-11). There we find the blessing and the warning. The prophecy of the *fifth seal* has not been fulfilled as of yet in the story. It means that they will heed the warning of the three angels and refuse the requirement of the empire to worship the *beast, his image and take his mark*. The penalty for their earthly rebellion will be a heavenly reward.

(c) The Rest (14:13b)

Rev 14:13b "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

The work of the *red dragon*, and the *two beasts* will not transpire on earth without a fight, a spiritual conflict, a battle of theology, a war of faith. In the short run of the *red dragon's* time on earth with his two henchmen in tow they will send many saints to their rest in glory of the LORD. It will be the same for them as it was for Paul, "*To be absent from the body is to be present with the LORD.*" What a place the LORD has prepared for them. It is a place of prominence and perseverance right under the altar in heaven. Their deeds on earth for the cause of Christ will be recorded in the books of heaven, but the most important deed in their record will be their acceptance of Jesus as their Savior. No more toil, no more labors, no more heartache, tragedy, sorrow or tears. Nothing but glorious rest within the presence of their Savior! Oh, what a Savior He is!

But now, the Savior has a task to do and it is His turn to enter the scene again in this story of His REVELATION.

(8) The Son of Man (14:14-16)

(a) His Crown (14:14a)

Rev 14:14a Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud *was* one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head

We are still in the *seventh trumpet* and we are still being introduced to the participants in the events of the last days. As the tribulation continues on earth with many saints being martyred by the *dragon* and his *beasts*, John sees the LORD sitting on His throne in the cloud. John recognizes Him as the "**one like a son of man.**" In the New Testament, this title is a reference to Jesus. It is used in the context of His ministry and the last week of His life often called His passion. But the greatest body of material in the New Testament uses it in reference to His Second Coming. Matthew, Mark and Luke repeat the context of Daniel

7:13 concerning Jesus' coming on the clouds of heaven to appear before the throne of God and be given dominion over all people of the world and an everlasting kingdom as we see in this REVELATION passage (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; 22:69). Specifically, we see this “**son of man**” come in glory and take His throne (Matthew 25:31) suddenly (Matthew 10:23; 16:28; 24:27, 38-39; 24:44; Luke 17:22-27) to condemn unrighteousness (Matthew 13:41; 16:27; John 5:27).

What authority did Jesus have to come as the “**son of man**?” Daniel gives the answer.

Daniel 7:13-14 I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and *men* of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

His authority came from the “**Ancient of Days**,” another title for God the Father. And with that authority Jesus has been given a “**golden crown**.” The word *crowns* in the REVELATION always means the authority to rule over a kingdom. In this case, the “**Ancient of Days**” has given Jesus the authority to rule over the final kingdom on earth, His kingdom that will never end – Amen, Amen!

(b) His Sickle (14:14b)

Rev 14:14b and a sharp sickle in His hand.

As the ruler of the final kingdom, the *Crowned King of Glory* has the authority to rule over and protect His people. John saw a “**sharp sickle in His hand**” to accomplish that. It was not a bow and arrow, it was not a spear and shield, it was not a sword and dagger. It was not an implement of war; it was an implement of agriculture used to reap a harvest. It was a semi-circled knife with the sharp edge to the inside. Its hard form could wrap around several stalks in the field at the same time and sever them with a single pull. An acre could be dropped to the ground in short order by a single skilled reaper. The One Who holds this sickle created its design and He is the most skilled user of such an implement in all of heaven and earth. One of the most important skills for a reaper is the knowledge to know when to reap the harvest because reaping at the wrong season produces no usable crop.

(c) The Angel Cry – Reap (14:15)

Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe."

The hour of judgment had come, the hour of judgment on those who *worshiped the beast, his image and took his mark*. They had all heard the warning from the three angels and yet they listened to the evil voice and bowed at the foot of the *red dragon*. The earth was divided by this time; all who would follow the *beasts* were under his control, all who would not would remain as far away from him and his ways as they could. The hour was ready, the *red dragon and the beasts* had somehow gathered all their followers together, gathered them

like clusters of grapes ready for the sickle. “*Reap the harvest for it is ripe,*” the angel said to the LORD on His throne in the cloud.

(d) The Son of Man – Reap (14:16)

Rev 14:16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

One swing and the LORD had done His job. The harvest was over. Surely that harvest was in the valley of Megiddo, but we do not know that yet.

(9) An Angel with a Sharp Sickle (14:17)

Rev 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

But the harvest was not complete for an angel has a sickle too; therefore, there must be another harvest to reap besides the one in Megiddo.

(10) Another Angel (14:18)

(a) His Power (14:18a)

Rev 14:18a Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar;

Who is this angel? He must be a *Seraph*. Such angels are called that name because it means *fiery*, flaming, like the one guarding the door to the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life until the right time to open its gate again on earth.

(b) His Call (14:18b)

Rev 14:18b and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.”

The fiery angel told the angel with a sickle to reap a harvest from the earth. Why? Was the LORD’s harvest not complete? Surely it was! He reaped the harvest in Megiddo but the rest of the earth He left for His angelic reaper to complete. But this harvest was specific too! Notice that he was to reap from the “**vine of the earth.**” This tidbit phrase brings great heartache to the students of God’s Word. Remember Jesus’ words, “*I am the vine and you are the branches.*” He was speaking about His relationship with the Nation of Israel. Later, in the book of Romans we learned that many of the natural branches of the vine would be broken off and unnatural branches would be grafted to the vine. In short, Israel would be broken away from Jesus and the Church would be grafted in until the *End Times*. Then, Israel would be grafted back into Jesus. But that does not mean that all of Israel would automatically be grafted back in. Even though all the holy city of Jews gave glory to God at the end of the *sixth trumpet*, and the political and religious leaders of the Nation of Israel had finally accepted Jesus as their Messiah, it does not mean that all Jews followed their lead and accepted Jesus. All across the world there would be Jews who refused Jesus even though the assemblies of their faith have put away their Rabbinic Judaism and become Christian. These

rebellious Jews are part of the “**vine on the earth**” that must be harvested so a true and believing Nation of Israel can enter into the Kingdom of our LORD and of His Christ.

Jesus will harvest the final evil empire; His angel will then harvest the final remnant of an evil Israel.

(11) The Swing of the Sickle (14:19)

(a) The Uses of the Wine Press of the Wrath (14:19)

Rev 14:19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from* the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

The rebellious Jews may not have been at Megiddo, but there they were thrown “... **into the great wine press of the wrath of God...**” when the angel gathered them from the earth. There their blood would spill with all of those people involved in the final evil empire.

(b) The Place of the Wine Press of the Wrath (14:20)

Rev 14:20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

It is about fifty-five miles from Jerusalem to the bottom tip of the valley of Megiddo which itself is only about 36 miles long and 15 miles at its widest point. How then can the blood come “**out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles?**” The “**wine press**” is the valley of Megiddo; it is the place where all the enemies of the LORD will be judged in that hour. But we must not forget that it is a valley and valleys have passes through the hills surrounding them that lead downhill, usually down river and stream beds to the sea. So, too, Megiddo has rivers and streams that leave the valley and head to the *Mediterranean Sea* to the west and the *Dead Sea and Red Sea* to the south. The Nation of Israel is 290 miles in length. The nation lies 90 miles to the north of the valley of Megiddo and 200 miles to the south of it. Therefore, this blood will run south out of the valley of Megiddo and empty into the *Red Sea*. As it came through the passes of the valley, John saw it as high as the horse's bridles. Note, too, that by necessity, the blood would pass near the city of Jerusalem as it journeyed south to the sea.

And so, we have new information about the wine press in the valley of Megiddo, but we must remember, this is the *seventh trumpet* and we are being introduced to the participants in the story with some specific details. It is not the time of the Megiddo event; that will come later in the story after the pouring of the *seven bowls of wrath*.

(12) The Sign (15:1-4)

(a) The Seven (15:1)

Rev 15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

We are still in the *seventh trumpet* and now we come to the introduction of the seven angels with the *seven bowls of the wrath* of God. These angels have seven ugly plagues that will torment the *beast and his followers*. The bowls will be poured upon the earth from heaven. When the last bowl is poured, the *two beasts* will be cast into the lake of fire, but that is still to come in the story.

(b) The Saved (15:2)

Rev 15:2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

John continues to describe what he was seeing. He has already mentioned the seven angels with the *seven bowls*, but he must describe their surroundings too. Under their feet he saw the floor that looked like “**a sea of glass mixed with fire.**” Oh, how stately it is! A flat see-through surface, shimmering as a fire shimmers and acting as a pathway to the edge of heaven where these heavenly creatures will cast the contents of their bowls down, down, down, upon the earth. John already knew about these angels because they were involved with the pageantry of the LORD leading to the wine press in the valley of Megiddo. But John also saw the glorious throngs of people who were victorious over the wiles of the “**beast and his image and the number of his name.**” And we see them on that beautiful shimmering sea with their harps in hand – harps that belonged to God. These people are not martyrs, neither are they dead. They are the saved who safely avoided the events in the valley of Megiddo.

The picture in this verse takes us back to the crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus 15. Chased by Pharaoh to the shore of the sea, the Israelites were trapped at a dead end with nowhere to go. But they did have a place prepared by the LORD and it rested on the other shore. The sea opened and the Nation of Israel made the terrifying journey down into the middle of the seabed and then up to the other side. Once there, the nation stood at the shoreline of the sea and watched as the army of Pharaoh drowned. And the deep covered them and they died in the depths like a stone. Within a few minutes, the sea returned to its normal levels, slowly shimmering as it made its way south to the gulf. With the sea calm, the nation erupted in song.

Ex 15:1-4 ... “I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him. The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deeps cover them; They went down into the depths like a stone. ...”

So, too, these victorious souls who have survived the great day of the wrath of the LORD on His enemies in the valley of Megiddo will erupt in song.

(c) The Song (15:3-4)

Rev 15:3 And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! ⁴ "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

Israel had been saved from her bondage in Egypt and she rejoiced with a song. Here Israel has been saved from the bondage of all the nations that have afflicted them through all the centuries, nations controlled by the enemy of God. John hears the song. How interesting it is that the song sung at the Red Sea is noted. This song, as short as it is, has a wonderful ring as a combination of the “**song of Moses**” and the “**song of the Lamb**.” The first was sung at the Red Sea, the second sung at the crystal sea. The first was a triumph over Egypt, the second a triumph over Babylon. The first explains how the LORD led His people out, the second explains how the LORD led His people in. The first was the first song in the Bible and the second is the last song in the Bible. The first represents the execution of God’s enemy, the second represents the exaltation of the saints. The first is sung by the redeemed Nation of Israel, the second is sung by converted Nation of Israel.

The song is thus. “**Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty...**” In other words, “*How great a God You are!*” “**Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!**” In other words, “*How good a God You are!*” “**Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?**” In other words, “*How glorious a God You are!*” And there we have the song from the Red Sea renewed.

The song goes on to its second point. “**For You alone are holy...**” In other words, “*How holy a God You are!*” “**For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU...**” In other words, “*How magnificent a God You are!*” “**FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED.**” And finally, in other words “*How manifest a God You are!*”

With all that said, John has seen in heaven that which is to transpire shortly on earth!