



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

CLA – 2016

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Chapter 14

- **Psalm 2:1** Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? **2** The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. **3** “Let us break their chains,” they cry, “and free ourselves from slavery to God.” **4** But the One who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. **5** Then in anger He rebukes them, terrifying them with His fierce fury. **6** For the Lord declares, “I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on my holy mountain.” **7** The king proclaims the Lord’s decree: “The Lord said to me, ‘You are my son. Today I have become your Father.’ **8** Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession. **9** You will break them with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots.” **10** Now then, you kings, act wisely! Be warned, you rulers of the earth! **11** Serve the Lord with reverent fear, and rejoice with trembling. **12** Submit to God’s royal son, or He will become angry, and you will be destroyed in the midst of all your activities— for His anger flares up in an instant. But what joy for all who take refuge in Him!

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- **12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” 14 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 and a sharp sickle in His hand. 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.” 16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.**

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- **These are interesting verses because they almost seem out of place because of what precedes them, and of what follows them.**
- **The verses before, and the verses that follow are all about the most severe of all of God’s judgments – the final state of the lost.**

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- **Verse #12 in the NLT is a little easier to make sense of – “This means that God’s holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus.”**
- **In the midst of all that judgment, believers are reminded of how important it is to remain true to their faith, and that in that time period, persecution will not be just possible, but certain.**
- **And in their suffering they are called to patiently endure, obey, and hold on to their faith.**

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- **And then we read about a voice from Heaven that says, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”**
- **The voice from Heaven may well be Jesus, we are not told, but it sure does sound like the same sort of outrageous claims He made in His sermon on the mount.**
- **Blessed are the mourners, and the persecuted – and just like the sermon on the mount, the only way we make sense of “blessed are the dead” is when we understand that “now is short, and eternity is long”.**

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- In fact, these “blessed” (beatitudes) statements are spread throughout scripture – many in the Psalms and no less than 7 in the John’s revelation.
- Matt 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
- Matt 5:10 ““Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness”
- Matt 5:11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you”

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- **But when we come to Rev 14:13 and read “Blessed are the dead” we have come to the one that is perhaps the most outrageous of them all.**
- **It is one thing to mourn, and another to be dead, it is one thing to be persecuted, and another to be dead, and it is one thing to be insulted, and another to be dead.**
- **Now if the voice from Heaven is Jesus, well then we are hearing from an authority on all of the subjects - on mourning, being insulted, being persecuted, and dying.**

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- **And the one Who knows, says, “yes” it can be a blessing to be dead when passing through death means life everlasting.**
- **Furthermore, the declaration of the dead being blessed is not limited to just those who are martyred in the tribulation, but it seems to extend to a broader category of saints, all who “die in the Lord”.**
- **I am in no hurry to die, but the older I get the more I can see the day when I may welcome death as the means to going home.**

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- **One of the blessings that comes to the saint when he dies is that he gets to rest from his “labors”.**
- **The Greek word here for 'labors' is “kopos” and this is what Strong’s has for a meaning - properly, a strike (blow) that is so hard, it seriously weakens or debilitates; (figuratively) deep fatigue, extreme weariness (wearisome toil).**
- **While I believe the “blessed are the dead” extends to all saints of all time, it was written especially to the tribulation saints.**

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- **And what do we know about the tribulation saints?**
- **We know that they are living in the worst of all times on Earth, and that they cannot buy or sell, they are persecuted by the Antichrist, and that they are particular targets in this world because they have refused the “mark of the beast”.**
- **It becomes rather easy to imagine these saints welcoming death, perhaps as no generation of Christians ever has, because of the conditions they are experiencing.**

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- “for their deeds follow with them.”..... The bible is clear on this subject and just as surely as the evil deeds of the lost follow them to the pit, so the good deeds of the saved follow us to Heaven.
- Heaven will not only be a time of rest, but a time of reward.
- Heb 6:9 Dear friends, even though we are talking this way, we really don't believe it applies to you. We are confident that you are meant for better things, things that come with salvation. 10 For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. 11 Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true.

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- 14 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 and a sharp sickle in His hand.
- Daniel 7:13 As my vision continued that night, *I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven*. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence.
- What we learn from scripture is there is a definite link between appearances of Jesus and clouds.

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- Matt 24:30 And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- Matt 26:64 Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”
- Acts 1:9 After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10 As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

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- **John 5:25** “And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. **26** The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. **27** *And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man.*
- The bible is very connected when studied as a whole – John told us in his gospel what he is describing in Rev 14:14; specifically that it is Jesus who has been given the task of judging all men.
- So when see Jesus with a sickle in His hand we should not be surprised.

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- **What we find as the rest of the chapter unfolds is that we are shown two views of the final judgments – two harvests, one depicted by grain, and the other by grapes.**
- **Not terribly different from Matthew 25 where the goats are judged, and Matthew 13 where we see the tares being judged.**
- **Matt 13:28 “An enemy has done this!” the farmer exclaimed. “Should we pull out the weeds?” they asked. 29 “No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.”**

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- **The judgments that are described here in chapter 14 are most likely the coming 7 bowls (the grain harvest), and the final battle of the ages, Armageddon (the grape harvest).**
- **At this point on our Revelation timeline, that's really all that is left to cover regarding God's dealings with fallen humanity.**
- **The 7 bowls will kill many, but not all – the battle of Armageddon will kill all of the remaining unsaved on the Earth.**

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- **17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; 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.” 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. 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.**

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- **Now we read of another angel, and this one comes out of the temple that is Heaven and he has his own sharp sickle.**
- **And we have yet another separate angel, this one described as one that has power to destroy with fire, appears and instructs the other angel with the sickle to reap the grapes from the Earth. (there are actually 6 separate angels in this chapter)**
- **And the grapes are said to be “ripe” and that original word is one that would indicate the grapes are “over ripe” or rotten – they are unworthy of their expected use.**

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- It is interesting to note that angel #6 comes from the altar – now where did we see the altar in Heaven mentioned before?
- Rev 6:9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. 10 They shouted to the Lord and said, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?”
- The martyred saints under the altar are praying for God’s judgment on their killers, and it would seem that Rev 14 provides the answer to their “how long?” question.

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- **Rev 8:3** Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great amount of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God's people as an offering on the gold altar before the throne. **4** The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out. **5** Then the angel filled the incense burner with fire from the altar and threw it down upon the earth; and thunder crashed, lightning flashed, and there was a terrible earthquake.
- So a quick recap – an angel who has power over fire, comes from the alter in the Temple of God, calling for a sickle to be used to judge those who are “over ripe”.

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- In the O.T. the Jewish priest twice per day would take fire from the brazen altar in a container called a censer, go into the Holy Place (not the Holy of Holies), and wave the censer.
- The smoke that came out of the censer symbolized the prayers of God's people ascending up to the throne of God into Heaven itself.
- So when we read of an angel coming from the temple of God who has power over fire, it just might be that what John sees is what many O.T. saints saw – a connection between the prayers of God's people and His answers to their prayers.

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- **The angel that came from the temple of God in verse #15 in the first harvest, came from the throne of God to enforce the will of God in judgment.**
- **The angel we meet in verse #18 who had power over fire, comes from the alter of God to ensure that the prayers of the saints are answered.**
- **The saints of the church age, and the martyred tribulation saints have been praying (thy kingdom come), and what we see here is God answering those prayers.**

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- **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 imagery here is not without significance – when the grapes were trampled upon in the ancient winepresses. the juices that would flow would not be far at all from the color of blood.**
- **In the case of Rev 14, the “grapes” that are thrown into the winepress of God’s wrath are thrown there against their will and they will experience the trampling of God via Armageddon.**

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- **Isaiah 63:3** “I have been treading the winepress alone; no one was there to help me. In my anger I have trampled my enemies as if they were grapes. In my fury I have trampled my foes. Their blood has stained my clothes. 4 For the time has come for me to avenge my people, to ransom them from their oppressors. 5 I was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed. So I myself stepped in to save them with my strong arm, and my wrath sustained me. 6 I crushed the nations in my anger and made them stagger and fall to the ground, spilling their blood upon the earth.”
- **Joel 3:12** “Let the nations be called to arms. Let them march to the valley of Jehoshaphat. There I, the Lord, will sit to pronounce judgment on them all. 13 Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread the grapes, for the winepress is full. The storage vats are overflowing with the wickedness of these people.”

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- **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.**
- **One of two things is true about this picture – either there is what would be tantamount to a river of blood that is 4-5 feet deep and 200 miles long, or the image is intended to tell us something else about this judgment.**
- **While anything is possible, and there may well be millions in the valley at the battle of Armageddon, it's hard to fathom a river of blood 4-5' deep and 200 miles long.**

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- **Another explanation could be that just as when grapes are stomped on with human feet, or rolled over with a large stone that the juice splatters all over, maybe that is the picture for us.**
- **The fact that blood splatters as high as 4-5' in the air from the impact of crushing of human bodies at Armageddon, and that the valley of Jezreel (same as the valley of Jehoshaphat) is about 200 miles long tells me this is a very plausible picture.**
- **Remember, at the time of Armageddon, the nations of the world will gather from all over to descend upon Jerusalem in one final attempt to thwart the plan of God by wiping out Israel.**

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- **Rev 19:11** Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. **12** His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. **13** He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. **14** The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. **15** From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. **16** On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

Questions