

# CHAPTER 14

## Revelation 14:1-5

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

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John describes the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. We know that from the past several weeks of study that the Lamb is a name for Jesus, so where is Mount Zion? This name is often associated with the temple mount in Jerusalem. But we know that Jesus has yet to return to earth. So at this point, the Lamb is still in heaven which begs the question what is the reference to Mount Zion?

John also references the 144,000 Jewish believers that were sealed from the events of Revelation 7. They were sealed by God with the vocation of evangelizing the earth. John hears a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. Because it comes from the throne, this must be the voice of God. Next John hears a song being sung by the 144,000 before the throne of God and before the creatures and elders. John says that nobody knows this song except for the 144,000 so it must be they who are singing at this point. Since they are gathered around the throne, we must conclude that they and Jesus are both in Heaven.

Why did John use the term Mount Zion in verse 1? Mount Zion is often used as a term in the Bible for the Kingdom of Israel in glory. So John sees the future kingdom of Israel in glory depicted in the throne room of Heaven. Jesus in His glory is preparing to rule and the 144,000 Jewish individuals prepare to enter and rule with Him. They were standing on the heavenly Mount Zion in the New Testament in Heaven. Mount Zion is referenced in both the book of Hebrews and Romans and it indicates that this is a heavenly place that is prepared to descend to the earth when Christ returns to earth. So this scene indicates that this is a time of preparation for the descending of Mount Zion to the earth in a coming time.

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Why is this mentioned in the Mid Tribulation period? Verse 3 mentions that they were redeemed from the earth. To be redeemed means that they were purchased from the earth, specifically by the blood of Christ. So these believers left the earth and entered heaven and we are told in verse 4 that they were redeemed from mankind as a firstfruits of God. Firstfruits were the first part of a harvest. They were typically the best part of the harvest, they were the low-hanging fruits because they were the best fruit.

So in connection with them entering heaven, we can say that these individuals were first and best of the martyrs that were soon to enter heaven. Since they entered heaven at the Mid-Tribulation time period, it means that they died during the first part of the Tribulation. They were the first to receive faith after the rapture and they were the first to spread the Gospel during the Tribulation. Verse 5 tells us that they were blameless indicating that they were models of obedience and service during their time on the earth.

So as a further act of grace towards these individuals, God allows them to leave the earth before the worst of the Tribulation happens in the second half. You might remember in earlier chapters that these individuals were protected from being harmed, but apparently by the Mid-Tribulation time period, this protection has been lifted. In particular, you may remember from last week that if anyone is destined for captivity or to be killed it will happen. So at this point there isn't really a way to be undecided.

For these individuals, they choose to believe in God and as a result they were martyred for their faith.

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## Revelation 14:6-11

**[6] 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. [7] 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." [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." [9] 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, [10] 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. [11] 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."**

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John sees an angel proclaiming the Gospel over the earth and this is a final effort by God to deliver the eternal Gospel that there is only one way to the Father, through Christ so that the world might be saved.

This is a final presentation to the world prior to the return of Christ. In this moment, the Gospel is proclaimed to the entire world just as Jesus promised. So God, in His incredible love, decides to share the message of Gospel and call for repentance one last time.

There is also another announcement that is made to the earth by an angel. The name of the Antichrist's kingdom is called Babylon and we will discuss it progressively over the next couple of chapters.

There is also an announcement from a third angel. This angel proclaims that if anyone worships the image of the Antichrist and takes the mark of the beast, he or she will also drink of this same wrath that is destined for Babylon. And it is an eternal punishment of being tormented with fire and sulfur.

This is a reminder of us that there is an eternal punishment for those who do not believe in Christ. It isn't figurative, or something that is only of the mind. Hell is a real place that those who fail to repent of their sin are destined to find themselves in.

Scripture is clear that those who refuse to repent and turn to Christ are destined to dwell there for eternity and be tormented night and day.

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## Revelation 14:12-20

**[12] Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. [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!" [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. [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." [16] So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. [17] Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. [18] And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." [19] 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. [20] 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.**

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John calls for the endurance of the saints and to those who keep the commandments of God. John is saying for those who are facing the final part of the Tribulation to have endurance for what is about to occur. Hope can be maintained by understanding that death is truly a blessing based on what they would otherwise be facing.

The voice calling from heaven says that death is actually a rest from what they would be facing. They can rest from their labors because their deeds follow them. What they labored for on earth follows them to heaven. They can press on knowing that if death comes it will actually be a blessing of rest.

John also sees one seated on a white cloud one like a son of man with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. This is an angel, and not Christ. The term son of man is at times used to reference Christ, but it also indicates a particular appearance.

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The word for crown here is a *stephanos* not a *diadem*, Christ always wears a *stephanos*. Lastly, this individual takes a command from another angel, something Jesus would never do. So angels are reaping the earth of believers through martyrdom. The angels will be reaping the earth of believers but the actual forces of death will be the Antichrist. The Lord allows the Antichrist to prosper and have success killing saints for 3.5 years, but his time is only temporary.

Two more angels appear out of the temple in heaven and also begin to reap. This angel is called to reap a different group of individuals because they face a different fate. This is a description of the fate of unbelievers at a point near the end of Tribulation.

This chapter has been describing on a whole what happens to the world's entire population over the course of tribulation. By and large unbelievers will face death towards the end of the Tribulation. And specifically what this references is the battle of Armageddon in which unbelievers face the wrath of God.

John describes this as a time of great bloodshed as unbelievers literally become a bloodbath. The blood that John describes is 4.5 feet high and stretches for two hundred miles. This is possible because it happens in a narrow ravine that runs in Israel, the valley of Kidron. This is the blood of billions of individuals.

The ending of this chapter refers to the fate of unbelievers upon the return of Christ. And this foreshadows the bowl judgments that we will begin talking about in the next chapter.