

Revelation Pastor Lou DeVizia

Revelation 14:6-12 Fellowship Bible Church; Woodbridge, NJ

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Introduction: This section of this chapter continues the look at the triumph of the Lamb of God. The first part of the chapter showed a vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (i.e., Jerusalem), a picture of the ultimate victorious return of Jesus the Messiah to earth. Standing with Him, apparently there to receive Him, were the 144,000 sealed of God who survived the Great Tribulation unscathed. A great voice of praise rained down from heaven as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, returned to earth to rule and reign.

When the Lord returns, He will do so as a conquering warrior - a stark contrast to the babe born in the manger He was at His first coming! What the Lord's return to earth means, immediately at least, is judgment: reaping the earth's harvest, and pouring out God's wrath. There are first the mighty proclamations of three angels (vv.6-12). The first announces the "good news" or "good news" of the time of God's judgment - it is truly good that the hour of vindication of the righteous God has arrived. The second angel announces the fall of "Babylon" - possibly a reference to the fall of the entire world's system of power, including religion, politics, economics, etc. Then the third angel focuses on individuals, singling out those who are worshipers of Antichrist ("the beast"). Christ has returned: His own will be comforted, His enemies will be judged.

After a word of encouragement in v.13, the final section of the chapter (vv.14-20) reveals another vision, this one describing a great and bloody harvest. First the Son of Man (the Lord Jesus) reaps His harvest of His faithful still on the earth. Then in judgment the wrath of God is "trampled out."

The timing and meaning of the last section will be considered in the next study; this study focuses on the proclamations of the three angels. The entire chapter should be seen, contextually, as a unit looking at the triumphant Messiah.

1. Verse 6-7 - The first angel's proclamation: "the hour of His judgment has come."

- v.6 - **Then I saw...** this is still part of the vision begun in v.1. **...everlasting gospel** This is viewed a couple of different ways by Christians. Some preachers see it as a reference to the evangelistic invitation to repent and believe and be saved, the "good news" we are preaching to a lost world. However, the term "good news" means "good news" and the good news here is what the **angel** proclaims in the next verse (vv.6-7 are one sentence). It is a message of God's judgment, and it is for **all** the **earth**; God's righteousness and justice are **everlasting**; He has been very patient, but now the triumphant return of the Messiah has come.

- v.7 - **saying...** Here is the angel's message. **Fear God and give glory to Him... worship Him...** the three commands in the angelic proclamation are to 1) *fear* God; 2) *glorify* God; and 3) *worship* God - things only *believers* can do. Also, for a believer, that God's **judgment has come** is indeed *good news*, for it is indicative of the end of their trial and struggle, and it is the final vindication and triumph of God - it is all the believer has been longing for. This all goes hand-in-hand with Christ's return, seen in vv.1-5.

NOTE: One of the difficulties with assigning the evangelistic role to this angel is that his proclamation includes no call to repentance and faith.

2. Verse 8 - The second angel's proclamation: "Babylon is fallen."

- v.8a - **saying...** Here is this angel's proclamation. **Babylon... that great city...** It is very difficult to be completely dogmatic about it, but this is certainly either a reference to 1) the last days' version of the Roman Empire, as previously studied ('Babylon' seems to be a pseudonym for *Rome* in 1 Peter 5:13) ; or 2) the entire system of power in the world, religiously, economically, and politically (some have even read the United States into this, though it would seem when the elaboration on this concept is seen in Chapters 17 and 18, it would be difficult for any single nation to fit the bill). **...is fallen, is fallen** The angel is announcing this victoriously. **...she has made all nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication.** The 'Babylon' of the Great Tribulation will cause all the world to fall into idolatry - the worship of the beast - a spiritual fornication (James 4:4 describes love of this world as spiritual adultery). When Jesus returns, 'Babylon' will be destroyed once and for all (see Chapters 17-18).

3. Verses 9-12 - The third angel's proclamation: 'the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever.'

- v.9a - **saying...** Here is the third angel's proclamation.

- vv.9b-11 - Those who have received the beast's **mark** and worshiped him will be forever **tormented**. The description of the torment seems to mirror what Jesus taught about Hell. It is unavoidable that Hell is 1) real and literal; 2) conscious; 3) eternal.

- v.12 - A description of the believer (**the saints**) who has persevered through the Great Tribulation: **they trust and obey!** This should be a description of all believers, including us.