

Message #35

Revelation 14:1-5

One of the real threats of our day is for those who claim they are right with God to immerse themselves into a paganistic lifestyle. This is a lifestyle that basically says we do what we want, we experience what we want, we pursue money, success and pleasure and then we go to church.

But there are others who are solid in their faith and commitment. They do not follow the crowd and pursue their objectives. They stand up and stand out and shine bright for the glory of God. They have a wonderful, close relationship with Jesus Christ. As the world falls apart, they experience victory and joy.

That is the story of what happens here in Revelation. As we come to Revelation 14, we are chronologically in the middle of the Great Tribulation and things have turned toward and against Israel.

Satan is confined to this earth and the Antichrist and the False Prophet are in Jerusalem and they are in full operation.

Isaiah said there will come a time when Israel needs to get out of Jerusalem (Is. 52:11). However, for those who are faithful in Israel, we read, "And the God of Israel will be your rear guard" (Is. 52:12).

What we see in these verses is this:

JESUS CHRIST WILL HAVE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE 144,000 JEWS WHO ARE HIS PROPERTY AND ARE FAITHFUL TO HIM.

While the world is experiencing the judgment of God, here is a group that has a great relationship with God. They are faithful witnesses and focused on living a godly life.

When we look at **verse 1**, we cannot help but see this is geographically zeroed in on Israel because the Lamb is standing on Mt. Zion.

Mt. Zion is a specific spot in Jerusalem, which is literally located in the western mountain ridge of Jerusalem.

This very spot is the literal spot that Israel expects to become very important to her receiving God's presence, protection and blessings. **Over and over again the Bible speaks of Mt. Zion as being the very spot to which Jesus Christ will eventually return and start His reign (Ps. 14:7; 20:2; 48:1-2; 53:6; 110:2; 128:5; 134:3; 135:21; Is. 2:3; 11:9-12; 24:23; Joel 2:32; 3:16; Amos 1:2).**

It is predicted that Jesus Christ will actually stand and reign on Mt. Zion (Is. 2:3; 24:23). During the Tribulation, Mt. Zion will be a place of escape (Joel 2:32; 3:16).

In the middle of the Great Tribulation, Jesus Christ will have a private meeting with the 144,000 at the very location and spot to which He will physically return 3 ½ years later (Rev. 19).

There are at least nine observations we want to make from these verses:

OBSERVATION #1 – The Lamb is literally standing on Mt. Zion with these 144,000. **14:1a**

The Lamb is Jesus Christ, and at this point in the Tribulation, He makes a literal, Personal appearance at this spot in Jerusalem, when Satan, the Antichrist and False prophet are all there.

This will be a very unique moment and a very special moment. There have been several suggested reasons why this happens:

- 1) Some suggest that Jesus Christ returns here at this point to reinforce to the 144,000 the fact that they have been sealed and will be kept safe from the attacks of Satan during the time of Jacob's trouble.

This certainly would be a major encouragement to these witnesses.

- 2) Some suggest that the first sealing in chapter 7 protected them from the wrath of the Lamb, but not necessarily the wrath of Satan (12:12), and therefore they will be martyred in Jerusalem. So Jesus appears to them to let them know that as this martyrdom takes place, He is with them.

However, the sealing in chapter 7 does not appear to be isolated to just protection against God's wrath; plus, when the demons are released before the 3 ½ year period, they kill people but obviously cannot touch the 144,000 (Rev. 9:14-18). **There is no evidence that these 144,000 will be martyred.**

- 3) Some suggest that this is the moment when Jesus Christ takes the 144,000 home to be with Him in their own private Rapture.

Although this is possible, it certainly is not stated that the 144,000 have their own Rapture. If that were the case, more than likely Jesus would not be standing with them on Mt. Zion; they would be caught up with Him in the clouds.

- 4) Some suggest that this is a Personal appearance of Jesus Christ to inform the 144,000 that His Kingdom and takeover of the world is on the way.

This certainly is a real possibility. This would reinforce the fact that the Kingdom will soon be here, even though from this point on it will look like Israel is going to be exterminated.

5) Some suggest that Jesus returns to meet with these 144,000 to show Satan and his team who are there that He is the Victor and not Satan and his demons.

Satan and his forces will realize Jesus Christ is in town and is on top of that mountain with 144,000. Even though they have been given great power here during this time, Jesus Christ is the Victor and they are the losers.

OBSERVATION #2 – This is the same 144,000 Jewish men we saw earlier in Revelation **7:4-8. 14:1**

If this were a different group, the writer would have used the pronoun “another,” which he so often does in Revelation (i.e. 14:6). These 144,000 have been operating at this point ever since chapter 7.

They are 144,000 Jewish evangelists who have been sealed by God and protected by God as His ministers. They have been communicating the Kingdom Gospel to the world.

Their sealing had the name of Jesus Christ and the name of God the Father on their forehead. This sealing was not visible to other humans, as the mark of the Beast will be, but it is visible to God.

It was this sealing that protected them as they ministered and now that things are about to turn completely and totally against Israel, it is this sealing that becomes their security.

OBSERVATION #3 – These 144,000 Jews learn and sing a new exclusive song. **14:2-3a**

The language of **verse 2** describes things related to God’s judgment—thunder and sound of many waters. There is obviously a tremendous worship service taking place in heaven that is focused on the judgment of God and these 144,000 are fully aware that the things happening on earth are part of the judgment of God that will lead to the glorious return of Jesus Christ.

The 144,000 are not at the worship service in heaven, but they are very aware of it. They can hear this song and they are able to learn it and sing it.

The text does not say that the 144,000 are in heaven at this worship service, but they are aware of it. They are able to sing a heavenly song on earth that at this point no one on this earth knows.

This idea of singing a new song is often used in a context of God turning things around for His people and turning things from despair to blessing (Psalm 40:1-3).

We know in heaven that there are harpists who play instruments. That point is revealed in several different texts—Rev. 5:8; 14:2; 15:2; 18:22). The harpists here are heavenly trained musicians. This is not a concept that we are all floating in the clouds strumming harps. These are very skilled musicians and very skilled harpists.

We learn from the Apostle Paul that the mention of the harp is in a context of different spiritual gifts (I Cor. 14:7). So if one is actually in this harp orchestra, one is very, very skilled.

John heard them playing and he heard them singing and it was a new heavenly song that only the 144,000 could sing.

The adjective “new” (kainhn) refers to something brand new and never in existence before. So this hymn will be a brand new hymn written, played and sung in heaven. This will be some kind of hymn because it is coming from heaven. We will get to hear it because we will be there when it is played and sung.

The only ones who will know this hymn will be the 144,000 on earth.

OBSERVATION #4 – These 144,000 will have been redeemed from the earth. **14:3b**

The word “purchased” or “redeemed” means Jesus Christ purchased them with His blood (Rev. 5:9; 7:14). The specific word “redeem” or “purchase” is critical to this point.

As we have pointed out many times in our studies, there are three Greek words that may be translated redeem:

- 1) Agorazo - go to the market and purchase something and leave it in the market.
- 2) Exagorazo - go to the market and purchase something and take it out of the market and home with you.
- 3) Lutroo - go to the market and purchase something and take it away and set it free.

The word used here is agorazo. What this means is that Jesus Christ paid the price for these 144,000 and He owns them, but He has purposely left them here in the world. He has left them here on earth even though they are His property.

The prepositional phrase “from the earth” means Jesus Christ has purchased this group of 144,000 from beside the people on this earth.

OBSERVATION #5 – These 144,000 have kept themselves pure. **14:4a**

As we look around at our world, it is becoming more and more perverted and depraved. But after the Rapture, immorality will break loose at a level not seen before.

There will be no restraint on sexual immorality and there will be no repentance of it, either (Rev. 9:21).

During that time these 144,000 will keep themselves pure from any immorality with women during the Great Tribulation.

There is no question that Satan is the great promoter of sexual immorality and it is a terrible sin in God's estimation and it is a different level of sin in God's estimation (I Cor. 6:18).

Sexual immorality will be so rampant during the Tribulation that people will not repent and actually will end up going to hell for it (Rev. 9:21; 21:8; 22:15).

When Satan and his forces are actually totally confined to this earth, sexual immorality will reach a new level this world has never seen. We know from Jesus Christ that the morality will revert back to what it was in the days of Noah, and in the days of Lot, and Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:26-29).

In the days of Noah, there was unusual immoral activity that was demonic and in the days of Lot, and Sodom and Gomorrah, there was unusual level of homosexuality.

In a normal dispensation, the key to not being immoral is to be married (I Cor. 7:1-5). The Tribulation is not a normal dispensation. During the Tribulation, things will be so stressful that marriage will not be a good option (Matt. 24:19; Jer. 16:1-6).

What this passage clearly teaches us is that it is possible to walk in such close fellowship with Jesus Christ that even when living in a corrupt and immoral world, we remain pure. These 144,000 will do that throughout the Tribulation.

A key to not getting involved in immoral things is our mind. Immorality starts in the mind long before it reaches the body. Be very careful what you feed into your mind.

Certainly we know God can and will forgive immorality just as He did with the people of the church of Corinth (I Cor. 6:9-11; 18-20). But once one has been forgiven, one needs to pursue that which is pure.

OBSERVATION #6 – These 144,000 follow the Lamb. **14:4b**

What this suggests is that they follow Him and do what He wants them to do all the way through the Tribulation.

It is very possible that during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, they will be leading Jewish people who believe, to a place of escape. They will direct them to specific areas around Jerusalem where they may survive.

According to Zechariah, 1/3rd of the Jews will survive and they will need places to hide. There are nearly 7 million Jews living in Israel at the present time. What that means is 1.6 million will survive.

These 144,000 will be following Jesus Christ, and more than likely these 144,000 will be directing Jewish people to places of safety.

OBSERVATION #7 – These 144,000 are the first fruits. **14:4b**

We believe they are the first fruits of those who meet with Jesus Christ at the spot He will return. They are the first to be with Jesus Christ on Mt. Zion, in the Kingdom context.

Some have said this means they are the first Jewish men to be martyred by the Antichrist, but there is no hint of their death in this text.

OBSERVATION #8 – These 144,000 are truthful. **14:5a**

These are God's true witnesses and they tell the truth. They are not like the lying, religious phony leaders who will be flourishing in the Tribulation. These men are truth setters. They always tell the truth and have always told the truth.

During the Tribulation, when Satan is on this earth, truth setters and truth seekers will be rare. The majority of people will be liars and the Antichrist will be the most deceitful liar to ever exist (Rev. 13:3-4, 14).

OBSERVATION #9 – These 144,000 are blameless. **14:5b**

The word "blameless" is not the word sinless. What this means is that no valid charges may be brought against these 144,000. This is another indication that they are not martyred and they are not raptured.

They are obviously on this earth because the term "blameless" is a classification of someone on earth and not one in heaven.

These 144,000 will be men of integrity. They will live their lives free from immorality and deceit and they will be blameless during the Tribulation and they will have close fellowship with Jesus Christ.