

Keeping the Glory in the Gospel

Revelation 14:1-7

The new vision in Revelation 14 begins with the words¹, **“And I looked, and, behold, a Lamb...”** This is a dramatic change from the vision of the dragon and the vicious beasts in Revelation 12 and 13. Those evil ones will make war against the believers and dominate the world with wickedness. Revelation 14 assures us that this is not “The End.” In fact, Revelation 14 encourages us to read the rest of this book by keeping the end in mind. The Lamb – the Lord Jesus Christ – introduced in Revelation chapter 5, will stand in victory upon Mt. Zion. And with Him will stand those whom He has led to victory. Here is a display of God’s gracious favor – His triumphant grace that is at work in each and every believer today. This is the glory of Gospel grace and these 7 verses remind us to keep the glory in the Gospel.

Revelation 14:1-5 reminds us of “the 144,000” originally introduced in Revelation chapter 7. There, just as deep depravity comes into its own, God will seal His servants for the dangerous times ahead.

I. The Followers of the Lamb

A. Revelation chapter 7

In an earlier message, from Revelation 7 ([entitled 'The Seal of the Living God'](#)), we were introduced to the 144,000 who will be sealed during the Tribulation. These will be 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. As we noted, a fifth angel comes from the direction of the rising sun (Revelation 7:2) to place the seal of the Living God upon 144,000 Jewish believers. Verse 3 describes this as a seal – a mark of authentication or a pledge. It may be a visible mark of ownership. But it certainly will be a mark of protection and preservation of God’s witnesses in the coming times of terrible trouble upon the earth. This seal stands in stark contrast to the mark of the beast – the insignia of the doomed – described in Revelation 14:9-11. But it’s important that we don’t get so focused on the seal that we miss the Sovereign. This is the seal of THE LIVING GOD. The God of the Bible is alive, in contrast to all the idols of men’s imaginations in the generations since Eden. The false prophet (Revelation 19:20) will deceive the people to make them think that the statue of the Antichrist is alive (Revelation 13:11-16). But his will be the deadly deception of doom. World religions that teach that men will become gods will fall into the evil trap of the Antichrist. They will worship him as a god with the hope that they themselves can become gods. But we gather here today to celebrate and worship the Living God. The scroll will be unsealed and the saints will be sealed up. And this is the glory of Gospel grace.

These men will serve the Lord in such a terrible time of trouble that Jesus predicted, “... except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Mark 13:20). But during these prophesied times, observe the triumph of the glory of Gospel grace in Revelation 14.

B. Revelation chapter 14

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are

virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:1-5).

Here are 7 triumphant characteristics of these stalwart servants of God.

1. 144,000 on Mount Zion, with the Lamb, v.1

Commentators are pretty evenly divided on this question: Is this Mt. Zion the heavenly Jerusalem or the earthly Jerusalem? W. A. Criswell thinks it is in eternity in heaven; John MacArthur thinks that Revelation 14:1 refers to the second coming of Christ. He cites both Psalm 2 and Psalm 48 to speak of God's glorious victory on Mt. Zion, and that is the real point of this vision in Revelation. We have every indication that these servants of God will be protected through the Tribulation, and that they will be honored in eternity. The number is the same in Revelation 5 and in Revelation 14; not one of them is lost! These will be living testimonies of the glory of the Gospel.

2. In their foreheads is the name of the Lamb's Father, v.1

These servants bear the seal of God the Father. Every believer is "**sealed until the day of redemption**" (Ephesians 4:30). And every one of us knows that the Lord will sovereignly protect his earthly life until the Lord is ready to take us home. For we know that eternal life is a gift – not something to be earned. In the words of Jesus, "**And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand**" (John 10:28).

3. Singing a unique song to the Lord set to powerful, heavenly music. vs. 2-3

Verses 2 and 3 reveal that these 144,000 will sing an exceptional doxology set to heavenly music. Joining "**a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder**" these 144,000 will sing a unique and exclusive hymn, accompanied by the harps of heaven. Stop to think about the most glorious symphonic chorale you have ever heard to illustrate verses 2-3. But this choir, blending the voices of heaven and earth will be the ultimate expressions of Christ's victory – memorable for all eternity.

4. These are people who have been redeemed from their sins. v. 3

Most wonderful of all, these 144,000 are servants of the living God who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. They testify to you how to answer the most important question anyone will ever ask you: "*If you had to stand before God and He were to ask you, 'What will you give in exchange for your soul?' what would your answer be?*" Your good works will not save you. Your baptism will not save you. Aren't you glad that your eternal salvation is not dependent on a religious leader saying the right words? Recently people in Phoenix found out that their priest had been saying one wrong word for 20 years – invalidating their baptisms!ⁱⁱⁱ (That's the same baptism that they were falsely told would save them!) Your sincerity will not save you. The only way you can be redeemed is "**with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot**" (1 Peter 1:19). The Bible's answer to the question above is this: the blood of the Lamb was given in exchange for your soul. What are you trying to do to get to heaven? The Bible testifies that Jesus has already done it all for you. World religions say, "Try, try, try;" God's Word says, "trust." Will you trust the finished work of Jesus Christ alone for your eternal salvation?

5. These are male virgins who devoted themselves to following the Lamb. v. 4

In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, the apostle Paul gave his advice (not his command) to those who were single “in the present distress” (the horrible persecution of Christians by the Romans). Paul encouraged as many as were able to remain unmarried to serve the Lord. In the Tribulation, these 144,000 will choose to remain unmarried in order to serve the Lord more freely.

6. They are the “first fruits” of many before God and the Lamb. v. 4

The term “first fruits” refers to the first produce of a tremendous harvest. Christians in this church age are also called “first fruits.” James 1:18 tells us **“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.”** The triumph of the glory of Gospel grace is the spiritual DNA of believers. God willed that we would be born again by “the Word of truth.” The 144,000 will be the first fruits of God during the coming Tribulation. Like all the saints of this church age, the 144,000 will be born anew by the Word of truth. Have you been born anew? Jesus said, **“You must be born again”** (John 3:7). When you are so sick of the bondage that your sin has brought you to, remember this: Jesus said that you can and must be born again. He offers you a new, glorious beginning. Our God can make all things new (Revelation 21:5) and He can make a “new you” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Will you ask Him to do this glorious work of Gospel grace in your life?

7. These are sincere messengers who are faultless in God’s sight. v. 5

In the mouth of these servants, there will be no deceit. They will preach Gospel truth. They will be completely righteous in God’s sight. How is it possible for sinners – born in rebellion against God – to be righteous and faultless in God’s sight? It is only by the blood of the Lamb – **“the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). Those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb wear the righteousness of Christ and are faultless in God’s sight. Those who will be born again are blessed and washed from their sins. Remember, this is the righteous glory of the Gospel!

II. The Angel Who Preached the Gospel

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto those that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. Saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’” (Revelation 14:6-7)

According to Acts 10:1-7, an angel of God told the centurion, Cornelius, to send an invitation to Peter in Joppa (a coastal city on the Mediterranean). In verse 6, the angel said that Peter would tell Cornelius what he must do. After he met with Cornelius (a Gentile), Peter reported what the angel said in more detail. The angel had said to Cornelius, **“He [Peter] will tell you words by which you and all your house shall be saved!”** (Acts 11:14). Think of it! “Words by which you and all your house shall be saved!” The angel did not preach the Gospel, but referred Cornelius to a Gospel preacher. If you are lost in your sins today, and you wonder what an angel from heaven would tell you, here is the answer: “Find a Gospel preacher like Peter and he will tell you words by which you can be saved for all eternity!” In this church age, this is God’s design. Redeemed human beings tell others “the Words of truth” by which they can be saved.

But Revelation 14 predicts a distinct change. This will be after the church age, during the Great Tribulation. Then, and only then, will an angel from heaven be given the privilege of proclaiming **“the everlasting Gospel!”** As if he had a pulpit in the sky, that angel will preach the Gospel to all the inhabitants of the earth who will be alive at that time. In the greatest possible danger – of being cast into the Lake of fire for all eternity – these people will hear God’s message of mercy, the everlasting Gospel. Undoubtedly, many will be born anew by this preaching of the Word of Truth. That angel’s preaching in the future can give us important instruction about how to preach the Gospel today. This will help us to keep God’s glory in the Gospel. The Gospel is briefly explained in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, **“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”** That is the essential content of the Good News of the Gospel by which men are saved. But now consider what the angel will emphasize:

“Fear God and give glory to Him” If we are to preach the Gospel, we must preach the fear of God and the glory of God. Only by preaching the unique excellence of our God can sinful men recognize that they fall short of His glory (Romans 3:23).

“The hour of judgment has come” Proclaiming the Gospel must include preaching about what God calls “sin” and God’s judgment of sin.

Worship the Creator who made Heaven, Earth, the oceans and the springs

The preaching of the Gospel must emphasize the need of every sinner to repent and to worship the Lord, the Creator who made all things. To turn to the Lord is to turn to new life in Christ and to find the glory of the Gospel. Here at Calvary, we emphasize the glorious Gospel with the following acronym:

G – The Glory of God – Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

R – The Rebellion of Mankind – Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

A – The Awful Penalty for Rebellion – Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

C – Christ Paid the Penalty! – John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

E – Embrace Christ by Faith Today – Romans 10:9 “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

May God grant that we would preach the Gospel like an angel and keep the glory in the Gospel.

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<https://www.calvary.org/2022/02/15/a-priest-used-one-wrong-word-during-baptisms-the-church-now-says-thousands-were-invalid/>

ⁱ See Revelation 4:1; 6:2,5,8; 7:9 and 14:14.

ⁱⁱ See, The Seal of the Living God, accessed at <http://www.sealofthelivinggod.org/faq/faq-of-the-seal-of-the-living-god/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Natacha Larnaud, "A priest used one wrong word during baptisms. The church now says thousands were invalid." CBS News, February 15, 2022 accessed at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-priest-used-one-wrong-word-during-baptisms-the-church-now-says-thousands-were-invalid/>