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## Eternal Heaven and Hell REV. 14

Rev. 6-13 basically shows the world ruined by man. With all restraint removed, with passions allowed to run their course, with Satanic power unrestrained, with evil plans long held back, but to full mammon, it is awful.

But from Rev. 14-20 we see a new perspective, the world rescued by God.

After Rev. 13, God won't leave us too long to breathe the fetid air of the beast on earth before we get to breathe the fresh air of His presence.

**3 X 7 = 21 Heavenly Vistas**

1. The Lamb
2. Zion
3. 144,000
4. Father
5. New Song
6. Throne
7. Cherubim
8. 24 Elders
9. Flying Angels
10. Eternal Gospel
11. Creator
12. Babylon the Great
13. The Mark of the Beast
14. Worth of God
15. Fire and Brimstone of Hell
16. Holy Angels
17. Saints

18. Faith with Jesus
19. Spirit
20. Temple in Heaven
21. 200 Miles - River of Blood

21 Heavenly Vistas:

<b>FATHER</b>	<b>SON</b>	<b>SPIRIT</b>
Zion	Lamb	New Song (Eph. 5)
Father	144,000	Angels (Heb 1:14 min spirits)
Throne	24 Elders	Babylon the Great
Ge 6:4 not strive	Cherubim	Eternal
Mark of the Beast	Gospel	
Wrath of God	Creator	Holy Angels
Temple	Hell	Saints
200 Miles of Blood	Faith in Jesus	Spirit

- I. Revelation. 6:1-5 blameless, invincible witnesses
  - A. contrast
  - B. character
- II. Revelation. 6: 6-8 endless, unchangeable gospel
  - A. - creator
  - B. - redeemer
  - C. - judge
- III. Revelation. 6:9-13 hopeless, indescribable torment and judgment
- IV. Revelation. 6:14-20 senseless, immeasurable warfare

Steadman<sup>1</sup> states:

Our earliest recorded history is largely a history of war and atrocity. For example, Shalmaneser III of Assyria, who ruled from his capital city of Nineveh, boasted in his court

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<sup>1</sup> Ray Steadman, Revelation, p. 270.

records, "With the blood of the enemy soldiers, I dyed the mountain as if it were wool."

In recent years, we have learned more sophisticated and efficient ways of killing than the spears and swords of ancient Assyria. When the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, 70,000 lives were extinguished in a single flash. And yet, so horrifying is the threat of nuclear war that we easily forget that atomic weapons were never necessary to produce mass slaughter.

Heaven<sup>2</sup>, as it is pictured in the Bible, is actually another dimension of existence, just beyond the reach of our five senses. You can be in heaven at the same time you are on earth. As I read these prophetic passages of Scripture, I become more and more convinced that this is clearly the case: the church *is* with the Lord -- but the *Lord is on the earth* throughout those seven turbulent years! The church is with the Lord, but it is invisible to the rest of the world, ministering to this select group of 144,000 Jews. During this time, Jesus will periodically appear to these living Jesus, standing with them and empowering them for their mission.

If this is true, then Jesus will be in exactly the same condition with them as He was with the eleven disciples after His resurrection, when for a period of 40 days He appeared to them from time to time. As you examine the gospel accounts of the time between the Lord's resurrection and ascension, you find He was often with them in various times, various places, and suddenly He would not be with them. It was as if He would step back into the realm of invisibility after appearing for a while in their midst.

First, *these men learn a new song which they hear from heaven.* They hear a great choir of voices singing the song of the redeemed.

*Rev. 14:1 "I saw, and behold the Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and there were with him one hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name, and the name of his Father written on their foreheads."*

John's next vision<sup>3</sup> opens with the Lamb standing in triumph on Mount Sion and with him the one hundred and forty-four thousand of whom we read in chapter 7. They are marked with his name and with the name of his Father on their foreheads. We have already thought about the meaning of the marking but we must look at it again. In the ancient world a mark upon a person could stand for at least five different things.

- ✓ It could stand for *ownership*. Often the slave was branded with his owner's mark, as sheep and cattle are branded. The company with the Lamb belong to God.
- ✓ It could stand for *loyalty*. The soldier would sometimes brand his hand with the name of the general whom he loved and would follow into any battle. The company of the Lamb are the veterans who have proved their loyalty.
- ✓ It could stand for *security*. There is a curious third or fourth century papyrus letter from a son to his father Apollo. Times are dangerous, and the son and the father are separated. The son sends his greetings and good wishes, and then goes on: "I have indeed told you before of my grief at your absence from among us, and my fear that something dreadful might happen to you, and that we may not find your body. Indeed, I often wished to tell you that, having regard to the insecurity, I wanted to stamp a mark upon you" (P. Oxy. 680). The son wished to put a mark upon his father's body in order to keep it safe. The company of the Lamb are those marked for security in life and in death.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. , p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> Barclay, p. 102ff.

- ✓ It could stand for *dependence*. Robertson Smith quotes a curious example of this. The great Arab chieftains had some humble clients who were absolutely dependent on them. Often the sheik would brand them with the same mark as he used to brand his camels to show that they were dependent on him. The company of the Lamb are those who are utterly dependent on his love and grace.
- ✓ It could stand for *safety*. It was common for those who were the devotees of a god to be stamped with his sign. Sometimes that worked very cruelly. Plutarch tells us that after the disastrous defeat of the Athenians under Nicias in Sicily, the Sicilians took the captives and branded them on the forehead with a galloping horse, the emblem of Sicily (Plutarch: *Nicias* 29). 3 *Maccabees* tells us that Ptolemy the Fourth of Egypt ordered that "all Jews should be degraded to the lowest rank and to the condition of slaves; and that those who spoke against it should be taken by force and put to death; and that these when they were registered should be marked with a brand on their bodies, with the ivy leaf, the emblem of Bacchus" (3 *Maccabees* 2: 28, 29).

These instances involve degradation and cruelty. But there were others. The Syrians were regularly tattooed on the wrist or the neck with the mark of their god. But there is a more relevant instance than any of these. Herodotus (2:113) tells us that there was a temple of Heracles at the Canopic Mouth of the Nile which possessed the right of asylum.

The Company of the Lamb are those who rest in absolutely secure safety.

Any<sup>4</sup> of any age--law, Church, kingdom--is by the sovereign grace of God, on the basis of the work that was accomplished by our Lord's atoning death.

The eternal gospel is a proclamation to all who dwell upon the earth and to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. It is the good news that the judgment of God, so long awaited, is about to be consummated, and that the groaning earth will be brought back from the reign of the rebel prince, under the sway of the Son of God. The rod which Satan has held over the earth has been heavy because it has been held by Satan. The rod which the Lord Jesus is about to hold over the earth is an iron rod, but it is held in the hand of the One who has said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30).

There are those who seek to escape the plain implications of the text before us. How can we follow interpreters who admit that this messenger preaches an everlasting gospel, but who yet deny that what is recorded of his preaching is the gospel that is announced? But let us examine the Scriptures and find the true answer. When God plainly says, "another messenger...having an eternal gospel...saying with a great voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come..." let us admit the plain fact and see that is what God is pleased to call "the gospel everlasting."

Once more, we repeat that men are saved only by the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that Adam and Eve were saved through believing God's Word concerning the Seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15) and that in token of that salvation the Lord God made coats of skins (after having some sacrificial victim) and clothed them (Gen. 3:21). So much for the past. We believe that every blessing that will ever come to this earth or to any individual or group of individuals on it will come on the ground of Christ's death on the cross. But the open preaching of salvation to all who will come on the simple basis of trusting God's Word about the work that was accomplished on Calvary, is a phenomenon which begins with Pentecost.

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<sup>4</sup> Morris, The Revelation Record, p.263-65.

The gospel has always had an element of judgment in it. When it was first preached in Eden, it contained the thunder of judgment. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That is bad news to the serpent, but it is good news to all who refuse to follow him. So the gospel goes on down through the ages. At times the bad news had more emphasis than the good news; that is to say, at times God proclaims the judgment side of the gospel more than He proclaims the theme of mercy. John the Baptist preached the gospel of the imminence of the kingdom of Christ. His wilderness cry was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). What judgment there was in all of his gospel preaching! "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, Christian literature left behind when believers were raptured but also they have heard the testimony of Enoch and Elijah for three-and-a-half years, have experienced many great divine judgments on earth, have seen and heard angels of God flying through the skies, and have realized at least in measure what is really happening in heaven and earth. Yet they still reject God and His Christ and are in imminent danger of receiving the mark of the beast and thus forfeiting all hope of repentance and salvation.

God, in His infinite grace, will thus send forth a mighty angel, flying back and forth across the skies, loudly proclaiming the gospel from one place to another, covering every nation and tribe and speaking in every language so that no one at the coming judgment would be able to say he hadn't heard.

Note also that the gospel he preaches is the "everlasting gospel." There is nothing new or different about it. Paul, in fact, had warned that if an angel from heaven came preaching some other gospel than the same gospel which he (Paul) had preached, that angel should be rejected as one accursed of God (Gal. 1:8). This, plus the fact that John himself, who certainly knew what the true gospel was, called the angel's message the

everlasting gospel, is conclusive proof that this gospel is the true and only gospel.

Yet, strangely enough, many Bible teachers have insisted that there are several different gospels ("gospel of grace," "gospel of the kingdom," "everlasting gospel," etc.), a different gospel for each dispensation, perhaps. This type of hermeneutics, however well intentioned, makes Scripture contradict itself for the sake of maintaining a particular theological system. In effect, it denies to God the ability to say what He means, thus requiring a hermeneutist with the proper theological training to translate what God says into what He means, for the benefit of the "layman."

It is the gospel which we are to preach, which believers in all ages were commanded to preach, and which the angel will preach. The gospel is everlasting. It is good news from God, and is exceedingly broad in scope. Many descriptions cannot exhaust its meaning, even though they can give us many insights to its nature. It is:

1. the gospel of God (1 Pet. 4:17),
2. the gospel of salvation (Eph. 1:13),
3. the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24),
4. the glorious gospel (2 Cor. 4:4),
5. the gospel everlasting,
6. the gospel of peace (Eph. \_\_:15),
7. the gospel of Christ (Rom. 15:19), and a gospel of many other facets.

In fact, this is the very last use of the word in the Bible, which makes it especially significant that the Holy Spirit, through John, here calls it everlasting. It has never been, and will never be, any other gospel.

The gospel is often defined as the substitutionary death, burial, and bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, based on 1 Cor. 15:1-4, where the word is used in its central

occurrence (out of 101 total occurrences). Although this is surely the central focus of the gospel, it by no means exhausts the sweeping scope of its meaning, which encompasses the complete work of Christ from eternity to eternity.

It is significant that the first time the word is used (Matt. 4:23), it is in reference to “the gospel of the kingdom,” looking forward to the great day when Christ will be universally acclaimed as King of kings. The final occurrence is here in Rev. 14:6, where it looks back to the creation. The gospel of Christ (“the good news about Christ”) is that He is

- ✓ the Creator of all things (and therefore able to control and judge all things),
  - ✓ the Redeemer of all things (and therefore able to give the uttermost them that come unto God by Him), and
  - ✓ the Heir of all things (therfore able and certain to bring the kingdom of God to earth as it is in heaven).
1. The creation is the foundation of the gospel,
  2. the second coming is the blessed hope of the gospel,
  3. the cross and the empty tomb constitute the power of the gospel.

A gospel without the creation and the consummation is as much an emasculated gospel as one without the cross and empty tomb. One does not really reach the gospel unless he places and teaches all these together in their true majesty and fullness.

The angel calls out with a tremendous shout, able to be heard over a large region on the earth below each time he speaks. His message is the everlasting gospel but the urgency of the situation demands that he emphasize the coming judgment “on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:8). Most earth-dwellers have repeatedly spurned the love of God, but there are still some who might respond to fear of judgment. “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 23). Therefore the flying angel prefaches his cry with words of warning. “Fear God!” “The time of judgment is at hand!”

God’s right to judge men, of course, is founded on the fact of creation. “Give Him the glory,” the angel shouts, “And bow down to the one who made all things.”

Lest any think it strange or inappropriate that the gospel proclamation of the angel stresses creation, they should realize that the world’s inhabitants had been indoctrinated for several generations with the godless philosophy of evolution which Satan and his followers had adopted as their intellectual rationale for refusing to worship God. Both lost men and fallen angels had rejected God as Creator, deceiving themselves into believing that the universe itself was the only eternal reality, worshiping and serving “the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25). Having deceived themselves with this monstrous lie, they have ever since taught this falsehood to all who would hear until, as the Scripture says, Satan has deceived “the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). And if Christ is not the ...

First<sup>5</sup>, the more closely men walk with God and the more devoted they become to His service, the more likely they are to believe this doctrine. Many men tell us they love their fellow men too much to believe this doctrine; but the men who show their love in more practical ways than monumental protestations about it, the men who show their love for their fellow men as Jesus Christ showed His, by laying down their lives for them, they believe it, even as Jesus Christ Himself believed it.

Second, men who accept a loose doctrine regarding the ultimate penalty of sin (Restorationism or Universalism or Annihilationism) lose their power for God. They many be very clever at argument and zealous at proselytizing, but they are poor at soul-saving. They are seldom found beseeching men to be reconciled to God. They are more likely to be found trying to upset the faith of those already won by the efforts of others,

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<sup>5</sup> Morris, p.269.

than winning men who have no faith at all. If you really believe the doctrine of the endless, conscious torment of the penitent, and the doctrine really gets hold of you, you will work as you never worked before for the salvation of the lost. If you in any wise abate this doctrine, it will abate your zeal.

Finally, do not believe this doctrine in a cold, intellectual, merely argumentative way. If you do, and try to teach it, you will repel men from it. But meditate upon it in its practical, personal bearings, until your heart is burdened by the awful peril of the wicked and you rush out to spend the last dollar, if need be, and the last ounce of strength you have, in saving those imperiled men from the certain, awful Hell of conscious agony and shame to which they are fast hurrying.

But, if they refuse to accept that gift of His grace, then they must remain in their lost condition, eternally deserving, eternally provoking, and eternally receiving the holy wrath of God. The wrath of God is greater toward the smallest infraction that could go by the name of sin than is our wrath toward the greatest villainy that could come from a dictator who would bomb cities, destroy civil and religious liberties, and plunge nations into warfare.

The greatest illustration of this is seen in the actions of Judas. Yet, he was unmoved. He saw no beauty in Christ after all he had witnessed in Him. In the end, caring only for gain, dominated by self, he was ready to sell the Lord for the price of a slave.

God<sup>6</sup> has three choices in the face of human rebellion:

- ✓ One: He can indulge it and allow it to go on forever. But in that case all the cruelty, injustice, hatred, pain, and death

that now prevails on the earth will go on forever, too. God does not want that--and neither does man.

- ✓ Two: God can force man to obey and control the human race as if it were a race of robots. But to take away our free will would be to take away our capacity to give our love to God freely. Love cannot be forced.,
- ✓ Three: This is God's only *real* choice. He must withdraw Himself from those who refuse His love. He must let them have their way forever. Since God is necessary to our existence, the decision to reject God is a decision to plunge ourselves into the most terrible sense of loneliness and isolation a human being can know.
- ✓ Ultimately, it is we who choose whether God will judge us. It is we who decide either to accept or refuse His grace, love and forgiveness. It is we who choose everlasting life--or everlasting death.

Before<sup>7</sup> this book is over, we will look beyond these scenes of judgment, beyond the slaughter, beyond the misery that is to come upon the earth. There is a new day coming after the judgment, after the day of the “winepress.” When “Jacob’s trouble” is finally over, Israel will blossom and spread its branches throughout the whole earth like a vine, and Israel’s Messiah will reign. It will be the long dread-of Utopia.

But before that morning dawns, the long night of the human race will grow darker.

*Much* darker.

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<sup>6</sup> Steadman, p. 266.

<sup>7</sup> Steadman, p. 270.