

09-25-2016

**Message: The Outcome of the Conflict - Part 1**

**Text: Revelation 14:1-13;** (Numbers 31:1-12, 48-49)

## **Introduction**

- A. National security is one of the issues people will consider as they determine for which presidential candidate they will vote. Which leader will provide us with security? Who can keep us safe? Is there anyone in whom we can put our hope?
- B. Citizens who are not naive know that there is no political candidate who can guarantee our safety. But Christians who are made wise by God's Word and Spirit know that there is one ruler who will keep every one of His kingdom's citizens safe for all eternity. He is revealed to us in Revelation 14:1 as the Lamb standing on Fortress Zion with every one of His holy warriors owned and preserved by Him.

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

- C. The visions in the apostle John's "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" are intended, like the signs/miracles in John's gospel, to give us such conviction and confidence in Jesus, God's sacrificed Lamb for our sins, God's resurrected, reigning, returning King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that we entrust all that we are, our present and our future, to His loving, redeeming, protective care.
- D. Revelation chapters 12-14 is a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of visions giving a view of world history from the birth of Christ in humility to His Second Coming in glorious power and victory. (Show slide of Cycles in Revelation)

1. Revelation 12 - The source of the conflict - the devil and his angels. We are at war.

Revelation 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, **a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.**<sup>4</sup> And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.**<sup>5</sup> And **she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.**

Revelation 12:9 And **the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan,** who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ...<sup>17</sup> **So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**

2. Revelation 13 - A call to wisdom, considering the devil's weapons include the state and its institutions.

Revelation 13:1 **And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads,** and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. ... <sup>7</sup> **It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them,** and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

3. Revelation 14 - The outcome of the conflict - Christ returns, preserving His own and destroying all who do not belong to Him.

- E. One of the horrors of war is that even if your side wins, there are fatalities. But imagine being part of an army in a worldwide conflict involving billions of fatalities on the opposing side, but having the promise that none of the warriors on your side will perish?
- F. In Revelation 14:1-5 we have pictured such an army, a portrait of a reality in which we are invited by Christ to participate. If you are not in it already, get in the picture! Embrace Christ!

#### I. 14:1 The Lamb's triumphant army

- A. Believers are standing on Mt. (fortress) Zion as a preserved, victorious army.

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, **the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.**

- B. The first picture of the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8 is intended to answer the question at the end of chapter 6 - Who is able to stand preserved at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ?

Revelation 6:16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; <sup>17</sup> **for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?**"

- C. In 7:1-8 144,000 bond-servants of God are numbered as an army, 1,000 x 12 x 12 from each tribe to be sealed with the seal of God (the Holy Spirit) before the destruction of the world (7:1).

Revelation 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.<sup>2</sup> And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,<sup>3</sup> saying, **"Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their**

**foreheads."**<sup>4</sup> And I heard **the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand** sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

Ephesians 4:30 Do not grieve **the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

- D. The church throughout Revelation is symbolized by Old Testament Israelite imagery - temple lampstands, tabernacle, temple, city of Jerusalem, etc. The number, like other numbers in Revelation (E.g., 1:4; 2:10; 4:5; 5:6), is a metaphor, using Israelite military imagery. 1,000 was a military unit. 12 x 12,000 = a number not limited to 144,000, but rather a great multitude from every nation, peoples, even as 70 x 7 = a number not limited to forgiving a brother 490 times.

Matthew 18:21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, **but up to seventy times seven.**

- E. This miraculously preserved army is like another miraculously preserved army led by the high priest Phineas against the Midianites who had earlier enticed Israelites to defile themselves with Midianite women. After the battle, none was missing, all were preserved from all the tribes.

Numbers 31:3 Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the LORD'S vengeance on Midian. 4 "A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war." 5 So there were furnished from the thousands of Israel, **a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.**

Numbers 31:49 and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a census of men of war who are in our charge, and **no man of us is missing.**

- F. This army in Revelation 7 & 14 is like that army in Numbers 31 in that all tribes are represented and all are preserved. We see in 14:1 that the seal on the foreheads of the 144,000 in chapter 7 is the name of God and His Son, branding us as God's property, placing us under His protection, imprinting us with His image. Every overcomer in Christ has been promised this seal, guaranteeing them a permanent place in the Lord's eternal presence.

Revelation 3:12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and **I will write on him the name of My God,** and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, **and My new name.**

Revelation 22:3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;<sup>4</sup> they will see His face, **and His name will be on their foreheads.**

- G. In contrast to believers, unbelievers bear the mark of the beast. Why a mark and not a seal? Because while a mark indicates ownership, a seal indicated protection, something the beast cannot provide. Get in the picture! Cling to Christ as our only hope of salvation!

Revelation 13:16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given **a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,**

Revelation 7:3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have **sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.**"

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, **having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.**

- H. How does Christ through John further describe those who are sealed with the Lord's Spirit unto the day of redemption?

## II. 14:2,3 The Lamb's triumphant military choir

- A. Believers rightly attribute their preservation to the Lord, and alone by His grace learn and sing a "new song" of their participation in Christ's victory. They are participants because Christ has purchased them for God with His blood.

Revelation 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard *was* like *the sound* of harpists playing on their harps. <sup>3</sup> **And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand** who had been **purchased from the earth.**

Revelation 5:9 And **they sang a new song,** saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for **You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

- B. We learned in our study of the psalms that a "new song" is not a new tune or even new lyrics, but can be a familiar tune and lyrics applied to a new deliverance by the Lord. More specifically, we see the "new song" in the Scriptures is an expression of thanks and praise to God for a new victory over His and His people's enemies. E.g., ...

Psalms 98:1 A Psalm. O sing to the LORD a **new song,** for He has done wonderful things; **His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him.** <sup>2</sup> The LORD has made known **His salvation;** He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Isaiah 42:10a Sing to the LORD a **new song**, Sing His praise from the end of the earth!  
13 **The LORD will go forth like a warrior**, He will arouse His zeal like a man of war.  
He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. **He will prevail against His enemies.**

- C. Only the 144,000 can “learn” the new song, for unbelievers cannot participate in Christ’s triumph over sin, Satan, and the beast - the kingdom of this world. Notice the location of this “military choir” - “before the throne and the 4 living creatures and the elders. They are not on the present earth as in 7:1-8, but now with the war won by Christ are in God’s presence.

### III. 14:4,5 The Lamb’s triumphant image is imprinted on their character.

- A. 14:4a Believers are holy warriors, spiritually pure in heart.

Revelation 14:4a These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for **they have kept themselves chaste** (parthenos).

1. The Mosaic law instructed Israel’s warriors to maintain ritual purity while fighting the Lord’s battles, including refraining from sexual relations. In 14:4a sexual imagery is used to symbolize spiritual purity (which include sexual purity.)

Deuteronomy 23:9 "When you go out as an army against your enemies, **you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.**<sup>10</sup> "If there is among you **any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission**, then he must go outside the camp; he may not reenter the camp.<sup>11</sup> "But it shall be when evening approaches, he shall bathe himself with water, and at sundown he may reenter the camp.

1 Samuel 21:5 David answered the priest and said to him, "**Surely women have been kept from us** as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels *be holy?*"

2. Christ’s holy warriors fight with pure hearts and weapons of righteousness.

2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God ... <sup>6</sup> **in purity**, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,<sup>7</sup> in the word of truth, in the power of God; **by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,**

- B. 14:4b Believers are loyal warriors, dedicating themselves wholly to following the Lord Jesus.

Revelation 14:4b These *are* the ones **who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.** These

have been purchased from among men as **first fruits to God and to the Lamb.**

1. They loyally follow Jesus through times of suffering, hardship, persecution.

2 Timothy 2:3 **Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**<sup>4</sup> No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

2. During the Feast of Weeks, 7 weeks after Passover, Israel was to offer the first fruits of their grain to the Lord. Just as the first fruits of the harvest belonged to the Lord, so believers belong wholly to the Lord.

C. 14:5a No lie (pseudos) is found in their mouths.

Revelation 14:5 **And no lie was found in their mouth;** they are blameless.

1. The image of the Lord, in whose mouth was found no deceit is impressed upon the souls of God's holy warriors.

Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, **nor was there any deceit in His mouth.**

Zephaniah 3:12 "But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. 13 "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong **and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths ....**

2. The Lord puts great stress on this virtue of honesty in the last chapters of Revelation

Revelation 21:27 and nothing unclean, and **no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it,** but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 22:15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, **and everyone who loves and practices lying.**

D. 14:5b They are blameless.

Revelation 14:5 And no lie was found in their mouth; **they are blameless.**

Colossians 1:21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,<sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and **blameless** and beyond reproach--

## Conclusion

- A. Don't you love this picture of the church Christ has given us in Revelation 14, a triumphant army of holy warriors who by God's miraculous grace have suffered no eternal fatalities in the vicious war between God and the Devil?
- B. Don't you love the commander God has appointed as our head, Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain for our sins?
- C. Don't you love the proclamation through this vision the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light?
- D. Don't you love Christ's extending an invitation to all to participate in this army of holy warriors who triumph in Christ through an enduring faith in Christ? If you haven't already, get in the picture! Embrace Jesus Christ as Lord!

Jude 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,<sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.