

# Fallen, Fallen Is Babylon The Great

Revelation 14 Notes

## ***The Lamb And The 144,000 On Mount Zion (vss. 1-5)***

- In John's vision, the redeemed have, in one sense, reached Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem pointed to by the prophets. In another sense Zion still lies ahead (21:2). John is not describing a final scene in heaven, but the Zion of the Messiah to which the saints of this dispensation have come. The scene symbolizes security, permanence and a victorious spirit of rejoicing enjoyed by the church on earth at any time, because the Lamb is in their midst. There is no valid reason not to accept the 144,000 as the same group that was sealed in 7:1-8.
- The voice which John hears is from heaven, the source of an earlier voice (10:4) and from where another voice will be heard later (18:4). The qualities of the voice which John heard indicate majesty, volume and the melody of praise.
- The voice from heaven is probably that of the multitude who came out of the great tribulation, who cry before the throne with a great voice ascribing their salvation to God and the Lamb (7:9-17). They have five identifying characteristics in vss. 3-5: 1) they have been purchased out of the earth, 2) they have not been defiled with women, 3) they follow the Lamb wherever He goes, 4) they were purchased from among men and were the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb and 5) there was no religious falsehood in their mouth and had not subscribed to nor taught anything untrue.

## ***The Angel's Message And Warning From Heaven (vss. 6-13)***

- "And I saw" introduces the second section of the chapter, which contains the messages of three angels and a voice from heaven. It is not a special gospel or announcement of the gospel by an angel "in the latter times," but it is the everlasting gospel, the gospel formulated in the mind of God before the beginning of time, pointed to by the prophets and summed up in Christ (Romans 16:25-27). The vision of an angel proclaiming the message is symbolic of God's messengers, His saints, preaching the gospel to the whole world (Matthew 24:14; Colossians 1:23).
- The gospel calls upon all nations to respect and reverence God that they may give Him glory in their acceptance of and obedience to the

faith of the gospel (1 Peter 4:11). Reverence for God and glory to Him through accepting and obeying His truth leads to faithful devotion to Him in worship (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Judgment should motivate and bring men to repentance (Acts 17:30). The judgment referred to here is the hour in which God is to judge Babylon.

- Babylon is here introduced for the first time, and the second angel announces the good news that as an act of divine judgment Babylon is fallen. The wine of Rome, as of Babylon, was the intoxicating influence of her vices and her wealth; but viewed from another point it was the wine of wrath, the wrath which overtakes sin (cf. Psalm 75:8).
- The third angel's message declared the consequence of worshiping the beast and his statue; it is a voice from heaven crying against the idolatry of emperor worship supported by the Roman system (13:14-18). The message is announced to deter all men from false worship, but to those of John's day it laid special emphasis on the cult of emperor worship.
- The wrath of God is His righteous indignation, which is warned against many times in the epistles (Romans 1:18; 3:5; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6), and which the worshiper of the beast and his image must now drink. Now these shall be tormented with fire and brimstone instead of the sword as in the message of Jeremiah (25:27-29).
- As the day of the righteous is a glorious, eternal day, the night of the wicked is a dreadful, eternal night; the two abide side by side, continuing simultaneously. This was a terrible price to pay for rejecting Christ and bowing to Caesar as Lord.
- The opposition of the beast in demanding worship of the emperor image supplied the trial of faith that worked patience, as the saints kept the commandments of God and the faith which has Jesus as its object. These words of encouragement and assurance to the saints are from the Lord, not John.
- The third angel sets forth the consequence befalling those who would prolong their life on earth by worshiping the beast and his image. There is next revealed by the voice from heaven the destiny of those who refuse to burn the incense demanded by the empire; their earthly life may be terminated by force, but the real life continues in glory.

### ***The Vision Of Harvest And Vintage Of The Earth (vss. 14-20)***

- Some aspect of judgment is symbolized by the white cloud. The victorious Christ is enthroned upon it (cf. 1:13), and He has in His hand a sickle, an instrument of harvest.

- The word "ripe" indicates a dried condition as when the season for growth has ended, a time determined by the Lord. He is the "Lord of the harvest," who sends forth laborers into the fields (Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2). These laborers may be human agents or angels (Matthew 13:39, 41).
- "Another angel" identifies this one as equal in rank with the one in vs. 15 who had come out from the temple, the inner sanctuary of heaven. Though this angel bears a sharp sickle, as did the Son of man, Christ is not the angel. Angels are ministers of God, messengers of the divine will, whereas the Christ is King and Judge.
- From this altar an angel had taken fire and cast it upon the earth, indicating a judgment from God upon the ungodly world in response to the prayers of the saints (8:3-5). It is he who brings word to the angel bearing the sharp sickle to send forth the sickle and gather the clusters for the grapes are fully ripe.
- The "clusters of the vine of the earth" is the vine or vineyard of the earth. The fruit, not the vine itself, was cast into the winepress. Two Old Testament passages immediately come to mind (Joel 3:13; Isaiah 63:1-6). The winepress of God's wrath must eventually be experienced by those that leave God out of their lives and thinking. All fruit of man's rebellion and sin against Him must be trodden under foot. The vine of the earth and its fruit stand in contrast to the true vine and its fruit (John 15:1-8).
- The city is probably the holy city, spiritual Jerusalem. As the bodies of the sin-offerings were burned outside of the camp, and as a sin-offering Jesus "suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:11-12); so it is appropriate that the world that rejected Him and His salvation should be trodden without the city. This picture indicates the magnitude and completeness of the judgment. God's treading the winepress of His wrath symbolized judgment against the heathen nations of earth at that time. Treading the winepress of God's wrath in time brought the Roman Empire, its provincial kings and Roman paganism to an end. Similar judgments may be repeated in the history of nations, but the finality of judgment against the beast and false prophet is shown in 19:20.