

“Voices of Victory”
Revelation 14:1-20
Steve Mood

Introduction

- I read a book a couple of weeks ago that started 10 years before the actual story line. I said, okay the author is just trying to provide some background information. No problem. After a couple of chapters, it went back to present time. Then three chapters later it went back ten years for three chapters, and then back to the present. This happened for the whole book until the very last chapter. This was giving me whiplash. I didn't know what was happening or what was important. I like stories that develop in a chronological way. A happens, then B happens, then C, and so on to then end. I just want a nice sequential story that I can see how things develop and how the characters learn, and grow, and handle the obstacles that the author puts in their way.
- Back in my youth I enjoyed going to the movies. My mom would drive me and my friends down the street and drop us off for a few hours on a Saturday afternoon at the local movie theater. I really liked the double feature, two movies for the price of one. Each 90-minute movie, before it started, had ten minutes of previews that were shown. I realized later in life that the previews for the movie that was coming were generally from the end of the movie and were the best parts of the movie. In fact, the coming attractions were much more entertaining than the movie I had gone to go see. When I saw the movie that was actually previewed weeks or months earlier, it was often disappointing.
- Today's passage before us, Rev. 14, has both of these two thoughts in the passage: (1) They are not chronological and (2) They are previews before the final scenes that are coming. We have to realize that often in prophetic books details are not laid out chronologically and the individual pieces are not chronological either.
- Let's review where we have been so far. **Rev. 1:19** *Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.* The things “*you have seen*” was the vision from chapter 1. “*Those that are*” indicates the current churches at the time that John wrote about in chapters 2-3. “*Those that are to take place*” are future to John and to us and are presented in chapters 4-22. We have seen the throne room of God and Jesus who was worthy to open the scrolls. Then we saw the seal judgments, the 144,000 sealed from every tribe of Israel, the trumpet judgements, the two witnesses, the woman and the dragon, and finally the two beasts.
- The lesson before us today is the preview of coming attractions for the rest of the book of Revelation. The idea for this organization comes from Chuck Swindoll's commentary **Insights on Revelation**.

Lesson

- **Attraction #1: 144,000 triumphantly standing on Mt. Zion (14:1-5)**
- **Rev. 14:1** *Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads.*

- **(1) Then I looked, and behold**
- These words indicate a new section in the book (Rev. 4:1; 6:2, 5, 8; 7:9; 14:1,14; 15:5; 19:11). The author is moving from one subject to new startling and dramatic events. The writer is calling our attention to the fact that we are to pay attention. What John saw was awe-inspiring.
- Secondly **(2) Lamb and 144,000 standing on Mt. Zion**
- John sees Mt. Zion in Israel and on the top of Mt. Zion was the Lamb, Jesus Himself! This is a monumental moment in redemptive history. Jesus has returned to the earth. When does this happen? It occurs at the second coming. What was promised in Acts 1:7 (*This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.*) has been fulfilled. This is a future event and is not fulfilled until Rev. 19. What we see in Rev. 14 are future attractions that are fulfilled later in the book.
- Who was with Jesus? The 144,000 who had been sealed by God. How many had been sealed? **Rev. 7:4** *And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.* 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. How many are on Mt. Zion? 144,000. How many had died during the tribulation? None. Zero. Zip. Why had they not died? They had the name of Jesus and His Father on their foreheads. They belonged to the Lamb and He had protected them throughout the great tribulation.
- Thirdly **(3) New song sung before the throne**
- **Rev. 14:2-3** *And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.*
- What was heard? A loud voice was heard, a voice roaring. It was like loud thunder. John heard a new song being sung before the throne, by the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders. Only the 144,000 that stood on Mt. Zion could learn the song. Why? Because *they have been redeemed from the earth.* Even though all saved people have been redeemed from the earth, these 144,000 know in a more profound and meaningful way than others that have been redeemed. They had been saved after the Tribulation had started. They had been saved in the midst of a worldwide persecution unlike any that the earth had seen. They had seen the greatest judgments from God in all of history. It was greater than the time of Noah, or the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the plagues of Egypt, or the time that Israel and Judah were exiled, or the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D 70. They had been chosen and set apart for the Lamb and for the Father. They had been redeemed and they were there to meet Jesus as He came back at His second advent.
- **(4) 144,000 had been faithful to God**
- **Rev. 14:4-5** *It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.*

- What do we learn about the 144,000? (a) They had not defiled themselves sexually with women. They remained sexually pure and devoted to the Savior. The worship of Antichrist during the Tribulation will be vile and profane. It will be a time that will be more vile and horrendous than our own time. It will be a time of rampant sexual perversion. Do you think it is bad now? You have seen nothing yet. Remember that this is a preview of what is going to happen, but the bowl judgments are still to come and many will die for their faith, and many who have rejected Jesus as their Savior will die. What are we called to do? **1 Th. 4:3** *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality*. We are also to be sexually pure and flee from sexual immorality.
- Secondly (b) They followed the Lamb wherever He went. They will be completely loyal to the Lamb, no matter the cost. They will allow no rivals to displace Jesus from their lives. They will go wherever they are sent. They will go even where it is dangerous and moral filth abounds. They will go where the Lamb wants them to go.
- Thirdly (c) No lie was found in their mouths. Their speech was pure. They did not propagate Satan's lies. They did stand up for truth and speak truth only. They were blameless. They lived their lives characterized by purity, loyalty, trustworthiness, and a lack of sin. No one could point a finger at them and claim they have done or acted wrongly. They did remain strong against the attacks of the evil one. They had been redeemed by Jesus. They were like the first fruits of the Old Testament and were set apart for divine service. They were chosen by God to do God's will. They are the firstfruits of the Messianic Kingdom.
- **Attraction #2: Final warnings from the angels (14:6-13)**
- **Rev. 14:6-7** *Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come, and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."*
- **(1) Then I saw**
- These words indicate that we are moving to another section. Remember that these sections and sub-sections are not chronological in nature, but deal with themes and events that stretch across the Tribulation period.
- **(2) Proclamation #1: Fear God and give Him glory**
- This is the first of seven proclamations that are made from heaven by the angels. Notice here that first the (a) Angel made the proclamation to those upon the earth. It was made to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He was high over the earth and he proclaimed in a great voice, literally a mega voice. It was a voice that all could hear. How could all have heard? I don't know, but it will happen. The people on the earth will have no excuse that they hadn't heard.
- Secondly the (b) Angel proclaimed the eternal gospel, the good news that leads to eternal life. Notice that the angel made the proclamation between the seven trumpets and the seven bowl judgments. There was still a chance to repent and turn to God. But many did not want to repent. They did not want to turn to God. God is merciful, kind, and loving. But He is also a holy and righteous God who will judge sin. Final judgment is fast approaching.

- Thirdly the (c) Angel called to fear God and give Him glory. God has made us for a purpose and that was to honor, to glorify, and to worship Him. He made the whole universe. He made us. He deserves our honor, praise, and worship. Turn to Him before it is too late.
- **(3) Proclamation #2: *Fallen, fallen is Babylon***
- **Rev. 14:8** *Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”*
- This is a future event that we will see fulfilled in Rev. 17-18.
- First (a) Babylon’s doom is certain. The repetition of the word “fallen” indicates that it is certain and going to happen. The evil Satan inspired through the one-world government and religion is doomed. No matter how mighty and powerful they seem, they will be destroyed.
- Secondly (b) Babylon had deceived the world. It had deceived the world through their passions and sexual immorality. They had not followed what God wanted and decided that their ways were better than His ways. And they were wrong. Dead wrong.
- **(4) Proclamation #3: *If anyone worships the beast...will drink...God’s wrath***
- **Rev. 14:9-11** *And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”*
- This proclamation is also future and we will see it fulfilled in Rev. 15-16.
- Notice the (a) Contrast with the mark for the 144,000. The 144,000 had the mark of Jesus and the Father and have eternal life. Those with the mark of the beast are doomed. Those who take the “easy way” during this time seal their own doom. If you missed the rapture because of unbelief, or the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation, and you are alive during this time period: Don’t take the mark of the Beast. It is better to die for rejecting the mark than being judged eternally for taking the mark.
- Notice that this (b) Wrath will be poured out in full strength. They will receive the full fury of God’s wrath. They will be tormented forever. Their torment is not for a moment or a period of time. Their torment is forever. **Swindoll** states that: *In fact, the strongest language of damnation in all of Scripture is reserved for those future worshipers of Satan in the Great Tribulation*. This reminds us once again that the decisions that we make in this life have eternal ramifications. Once you have died the decision has been made and it is too late to change your mind. Hell is eternal. **Matt. 25:46** *And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*. The same word used for eternal life is also used for eternal punishment. It is αἰώνιον, meaning “*without end, never ceasing*.” There is no indication that this punishment is for a specific time, or the person/soul ceases to exist. Punishment is never ending. Torment will not end.
- **(5) Call to endurance**

- **Rev. 14:13** *Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*
- Believers are called to endure to the end; to be faithful to Jesus. We are to keep the commandments and follow in obedience. This is how God wants His people to live. Here is a truth that we need pay attention to: Living the Christian life is more than a one-time profession of faith. If you have truly been saved, then you will endure until the end. MacArthur states in his commentary on **Revelation** that: *God keeps His own saints by sustaining their faith to the very end, no matter what occurs. True saving faith in its very nature is eternal and cannot be lost or destroyed.* What God has started, God will bring to completion.
- **(6) Proclamation #4: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord**
- **Rev. 14:13** *And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"*
- Here is the fourth proclamation from the angels. Have you ever thought about that you are blessed when you die? Blessing refers to God's favor, spiritual joy, fulfilment, and satisfaction. What does this passage say? If you are in Christ, you are blessed if you die. It is not a punishment. It is a blessing. As Paul says in **Phil. 1:22-23** *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*
- **(7) Proclamation #5: Blessed indeed...that they may rest**
- Here is the fifth proclamation from the angels. Those that die have rest from their labors. They have fought the good fight, they have been faithful, they have proclaimed His name to those around Him, and they were willing to stand up for Him, even if it meant their death. Their suffering and pain has ended. The ridicule and shame has ended. Their torture and deprivation has ended. They are now with their Lord and will be with Him forever.
- **Attraction #3: The reaping and harvesting of the earth (14:14-20)**
- **(1) Then I looked, and behold**
- **Rev. 14:14a** *Then I looked, and behold*
- We are moving to another section in Revelation, and the last section of our passage.
- **(2) Seated on the cloud – Jesus**
- **Rev. 14:14b** *Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand.*
- What did John see? (a) He saw Jesus, where the white cloud indicates God's glory and power (**Matt. 17:5** *He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."*) He is the Son of God, the Messiah, God's Son who came to this earth to die for our sins, and we see Him with a crown on His head. This is not any ordinary crown, not the crown of rulership, but the *stephanos*, **στέφανος**, the crown of triumph, a victor's wreath.

- (b) In His hand was a sickle. This was like a sickle that was used to reap the crop. The angel comes from heaven and says:
- **(3) Proclamation #6: Put in your sickle, and reap**
- **Rev. 14:15-16** *And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.*
- Some commenters think that this reaping refers to removing believers from the earth, but I think it is better to think that this is a (a) Judgment that is about to occur – starting in the next chapter.
- Secondly (b) He put in a sickle and the whole earth was reaped. "Fully ripe" in this passage means "dried" or "withered" suggesting that the condition of wicked humanity has become "overripe." It was time. God in His mercy had delayed judgment for as long as possible and now it is time. This reaping points to the seven bowl judgments that are fulfilled in Rev. 15-16. The seven bowl judgments come in a very quick sequence and are devastating in their results.
- **(4) Proclamation #7: Put in your sickle and...harvest**
- **Rev. 14:17-18** *Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe."*
- First (a) Another angel came with a sharp sickle to harvest the earth. The word "ripe" means "to be at the prime." The wickedness of the earth has reached its highest point. The grapes are ready to be harvested.
- Secondly (b) The angel swung his sickle and harvested.
- **Rev. 14:19-20** *So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.*
- The angel swung his sickle harvesting people into the great winepress of God and it is exceedingly bloody. There was blood for a distance of 1600 stadia, almost 200 miles, from north to south in the land of Israel. Some commentators think that the passage indicates that the blood would reach up to the horse's bridle, some think that the blood will splash that high. Whichever it is, the battle will be a bloody mess.
- Thirdly, is the (c) Battle of Armageddon. The great harvest represents the great battle in the valley of Har-Megiddo or the battle that is better known as the battle of Armageddon that is described in Rev. 16:16 and 19:15-21. This was prophesied in **Isa. 63:3,6** *I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.* It is also prophesied in **Joel 3:13-16** *Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. Multitudes,*

multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord roars from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to His people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

- The battle is going to be brief. It is going to be bloody. It is going to be decisive. It is going to be led by Jesus. Remember the plea from those under the altar in **Rev. 6:10** *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"* The time had finally come.
- We have seen in our coming attractions: (1) The 144,000 on Mt. Zion with Jesus at the second coming; (2) The final warnings given to mankind to repent before final judgment; (3) The final reaping and harvest before it is all over. Now we know the roadmap and over the next few weeks we will see these all fulfilled as presented in Rev. 15 -22.
- **Application**
- What can we take away from this passage? Three things come to mind:
- Like the 144,000 (1) **Let us keep our lives pure and without sin.**
- **Matt. 5:14-16** *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*
- Let our witness before believers and those that need to be saved not be marked by the corruption of the world. Remember that we are to be lights in the world. We are proclaiming and showing forth the glory of His name and nature.
- Secondly, (2) **Let us be bold in proclaiming the gospel to those who desperately need it.**
- **Matt. 24:14** *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*
- We are called to tell all the gospel, the good news that God has sent His Son, who died on a cross, so that our sins can be forgiven. It is only by the name of Jesus that we can be saved.
- Thirdly, (3) **Let us be ready and looking forward to the return of Jesus.**
- **Matt. 24:43-44** *But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*
- Let us be faithful, looking forward to the return of Christ. Be alert. Be ready. Be eager. Be faithful. Come soon Lord Jesus! Maranatha.
- Finally, let us read the first five verses of this chapter together:
- **Rev. 14:1-5** *Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice*

I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

- Let us pray...

Revelation Chronology: