

Rev. 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Now John sees a Lamb, Jesus, standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem with 144,000 who have His Father's name written in their foreheads. I believe these are the Jewish witnesses that were sealed in chapter 7. I guess it's possible for this to represent another group of believers; but in my opinion, not probable.

In reading through this section again, I realized that there was no reason to think it out of sequence. The seal of protection for the 144,000 was according to God's purpose to testify of His truth throughout the coming judgments. We were just told in the previous chapter that when Satan was thrown out of heaven and indwells the Antichrist and empowers the false prophet, "**he was given** power to war against the saints and to overcome them." I think the ministry of the 144,000 was completed at that time, as was the ministry of the two witnesses, and that they also died as martyrs shortly thereafter. They will not have to endure the hardships of the "great" tribulation, the last 3.5 years before Jesus returns as King of kings. This would fit in with the precedence established in scripture of God not judging "the righteous with the wicked."

Genesis 18:23–25 & 32 "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?... And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

An upcoming verse states that God sends an angel to declare the gospel. I think this is necessitated by the fact that His previous messengers are no longer on the scene.

I just realized that this is the first time that we are told that the seal of the 144,000 was God the Father's name written in their foreheads.

I decided to do a word search on "Sion" to see if it gave further insight, and I think there is a verse in Hebrews that is applicable.

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels....

To interpret *Sion* in light of this verse, as the heavenly Jerusalem, makes sense with how I see the chronological flow of this chapter.

Rev. 14:2 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:

Rev. 14:3 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.

Now John hears a voice from heaven that again has the description previously associated with Jesus (**Rev. 1:15, 10:3**). There is a verse in Ezekiel that equates this description to the voice of God, which provides another affirmation of Father and Son as one.

Ezekiel 1:24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, **like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.**

He also hears the voice of harpers (a singer, one who plays and sings to the lyre) singing as they play their harps.

Point is made that these men are singing a special worship song that only the 144,000 can learn.

Rev. 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Rev. 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The 144,000 are described as virgins (chaste), celibate men and have been set apart as the firstfruits of redeemed Israel, those who accept Jesus as the Messiah, according to the principal established in Exodus.

Exodus 13:2 & 12 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine. That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S.

“The 144,000, like the young Jewish men who survived the fiery furnace in Daniel 3, prove God’s ability to preserve His people.” --David Guzik

When these servants speak, they are without guile (deceit or trickery). They stand in the presence of God before the throne without fault (unblemished, without blame). They are speaking the truth. There appears to be a verse in Zephaniah that applies here.

Zephaniah 3:13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Rev. 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Rev. 14:7 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.

As always, God provides a witness to the message of salvation. The 144,000 witnesses and the two prophets are no longer on the scene, so God sends an angel to fly throughout the heavens urging the people on earth to worship the one true God, Creator of heaven and earth. This seems to be in fulfillment of **Matthew 24:14** — “*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*”

His message is loud and clear. Fear God—fear, be in awe of, reverence God, the one and only. Give glory (dignity, honor, praise, worship) to Him. Why? The hour / time of His judgment (decision, condemnation, damnation) is come. There is not much time left to make a choice. They should worship God—the one that made heaven, earth, the sea (salt waters) and the fountains of waters (fresh waters).

Note: God does not depend upon man to accomplish His purposes.

Questions arise because of the message preached by the angel. It's not--**Romans 10:9** “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*” The word “everlasting” (perpetual, eternal) indicates to me that the gospel / good news has always been essentially the same. The full revelation of that gospel has come in increments. In every increment the required response of the individual is faith in God's provision—even when that provision is not fully known. I rest in the fact that God is righteous and is the One Who determines whether one has responded in faith to that revelation or not.

The expanded Greek by Kenneth Wuest re the “eternal gospel”: “*...a message of good news eternal in its character....*”

Rev. 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The angel that declares the gospel is followed by another angel that announces the destruction of the city of Babylon, the birthplace of false religion, and appears to be a quote from **Jeremiah 51:7** — *Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.*

When I looked in the Greek, which also made a direct connect to the Hebrew origin, *Babylon* is the word for the capital city we associate with Nebuchadnezzar. Throughout scripture Babylon is specifically identified as

being located in Shinar or Chaldea—not Rome, to which some conclude this verse refers. The prophets declared that Babylon would be destroyed as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah. That has yet to happen.

Isaiah 13:19 *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Jeremiah 50:13 *Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.*

Jeremiah 51:37 *And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, **without an inhabitant.***

The area of ancient Babylon is inhabited even today. This will be discussed in more detail when we reach chapters 17-18; but I believe it will be the rebuilt city of Babylon in the land today known as Iraq.

Rev. 14:9 **And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,**

Rev. 14:10 **The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:**

Rev. 14:11 **And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

Yet a third angel follows loudly warning that anyone that worships the beast or his image and receives his mark in hand or forehead will suffer the wrath of God and be unrelentingly tormented by fire and brimstone forever—time without end. This tells me that no one will be forced to take the mark. It will be a person's choice. The angel will be proclaiming this message in a LOUD voice, and people on earth are going to be without excuse at the time of judgment. No one will be able to say, "But I did not know."

The angels are appearing one after another and declaring their message to "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (v6).

God always warns before He judges.

The next two verses speak of a judgment that is everlasting (determined at the "white throne" judgment). Those who choose to reject the Savior and worship the beast will be "*tormented with fire and brimstone...and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.*" There is an interesting cross reference in Psalms.

Psalms 11:6 *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*

I think it is interesting that the phrase “without mixture” is used. This indicates to me that although the time of judgment we refer to as the great tribulation will be terrible, God’s mercy will still be available for those who will turn to Him. His wrath is poured out *without mixture* on those who choose to accept the antichrist as their lord/master.

In fact, we will learn later on that Jesus will rule for 1,000 years on earth in a time of unequalled peace and justice before allowing Satan one last opportunity to gather a rebellious people. Amazingly, he will be able to gather quite an army “the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea” (**Rev. 20:8**). When Jesus crushes this last opposition, the time of mercy will be over. Each individual’s fate is sealed forever. Those who have rejected Him will suffer the wrath of God “without mixture.”

David Guzik made an important point. “The wine in the cup is associated with wrath (the ancient Greek work *thymos*), which describes a passionate anger....This is the idea behind the cup that Jesus wanted to avoid if possible. **Matthew 26:39** *And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Jesus willingly took the cup of the Father’s wrath that we deserved; here the enemies of Jesus have no choice—the cup is forced upon them.”

It was interesting and comforting to me to know that this punishment will occur in the sight of, presence of (it’s the same word *enopion* that was used in **Rev. 13:12 & 14**) the holy angels and the Lamb. I know we will rejoice that sin is being judged, but it is hard for the human side of me to imagine that we will rejoice at watching friends and/or loved ones suffer that judgment. These people will be tormented (tortured, in pain) relentlessly, without relief. The smoke will be a continual reminder of their judgment.

It is important to understand the totally opposite positions of believers and unbelievers for eternity. Those in the presence of God are at rest; those separated from Him will never know rest.

Rev. 14:12 **Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**

The announcements of the angels are also to serve as encouragement to the saints on earth to persevere in their faith and obedience to God. I believe that everyone that is saved at any time past, present or future is saved by faith. We in the church today are indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Ephesians 1:13–14 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

In Old Testament times that was not true; David feared having the Spirit of God taken from him.

***Psalms 51:10–11** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

It makes sense to me that this 70th week of Daniel is an extension of Old Testament times as were the first 69 weeks. I tend to think (and I most certainly could be wrong) that the seal of the Spirit is unique to the church age. Scripture is clear in declaring that the One that indwells the believer today is greater than he that is “the god of this world.”

***1 John 4:2–4** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

***2 Corinthians 4:3–4** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

It is for this reason that I think John is inspired to add these words of encouragement for people of faith to hold on to their faith just as he did when it was revealed that the Antichrist would be allowed to overcome the saints. The troubles of that time will be so bad that one would be tempted to give up and/or question God’s word. God is so gracious; He supernaturally provides for the gospel to be declared throughout the world with a warning of the dire consequences of worshipping the Antichrist and with extra encouragement for people of faith to hang on and persevere to the end—because there will be an end and the reward is great!

“keep the commandments.....and the faith” - Works and faith go hand in hand.

Rev. 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

John now hears a declaration from heaven that those believers who die during the last half of the tribulation will be blessed; they will be at rest and free from the struggle and suffering that will characterize the life of every believer on the planet during this time—except the Jewish remnant that is being supernaturally nurtured and protected in the wilderness.

I think the last phrase in this verse is a reference to the fact that the works that are done for the Lord and stand when tried by fire will remain with us and result in reward/treasure.

Matthew 6:19–20 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal....

1Corinthians 3:12-15 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

This verse also makes me think of the first couple of verses in **Isaiah 57**: *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.*

Rev. 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

At this point, John seems to be getting an explanation of what is going to happen as the angels pour out the last plagues on planet earth. The judgment will be so great that it will seem like the men of earth are being pressed in a great winepress. He sees one like unto the Son of man, Jesus, sitting on the cloud and wearing the crown of a victor; He has won the right to judge. He is holding in His hand a sharp sickle.

I like these supportive thoughts from Joseph Seiss. "As the destroyer of the works of the devil, and as the judge of the quick and the dead, it belongs for Christ to reap the earth and to clear it of the hellish seed of the great enemy....And to this end, the heaven-crowned King holds 'in His hand a sharp sickle.' There is nowhere such a description or holding forth of the instrument in any harvest scene referring to the gracious home-bringing of the good. The earth is to be cleared of its ill products now, therefore, only a cutting implement is in hand and so conspicuous displayed. The work is one of vengeance and sore judgment; therefore, it is *sharp*. Thus seated in regal majesty, with His terrible instrument in hand for His appointed judicial work as the Son of Man, there goes up to Him a mighty cry to send forth His sickle and reap, claiming that the time of reaping has come, and that 'the harvest of the earth' (not the church) is dried to dead ripeness."

Rev. 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

Rev. 14:16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Yet another angel comes out of the heavenly temple and loudly tells the one on the cloud (Jesus) that the time has come for Him to use His sickle to reap the harvest of the earth. The word for “crying” is *krazo*, which means to scream, call aloud, **intreat**. The angel wouldn’t have dreamed of imploring the Son unless he had been instructed to do so by the Father; he is just the messenger. Jesus complies. He is God the Father’s chosen instrument of judgment.

***John 5:22 & 26-27** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son....For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

Again, it is significant that there is a time that has been predetermined as right for this judgment. It seems that sin has reached its fullness worldwide. I think that God’s statement regarding the withholding of judgment from the Amorites established the precedent for revealing God’s timing for implementing judgment.

***Genesis 15:13–16** And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

Rev. 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Rev. 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

Rev. 14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Now we have another angel coming out of the heavenly temple who also has a sharp sickle. Yet another angel with power over fire comes from the altar and LOUDLY tells the angel with the sickle to put it to use and gather the clusters of grapes from the vine of the earth. The angel obeys and casts the grapes that are gathered into the great winepress of the wrath of God. This is obviously a picture of judgment that I think summarizes the wrath of God being poured out on the wicked and culminating in the last seven judgments. I think this section parallels the teaching of Jesus recorded in Matthew 13.

***Matthew 13:36–43 & 49-50** “Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send*

*forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear....**So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.***

The passage in Matthew also seems to provide a clue as to why the angel in charge of fire is give direction to the angel with the sickle—he is likely in charge of the fires of hell.

I am also reminded of a passage in Joel: ***Joel 3:13*** *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.*

Note: Both uses of the sickle are for judgment.

A couple of things seem to stand out. These angels don't do anything unobtrusively or quietly. Their actions are being announced with confidence and relish. I think that they have been waiting for this time of judgment with "righteous indignation." They love their Lord. They are eager to see Him in His rightful position as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Rev. 14:20 **And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.**

The winepress is identified as being located without the city (of Jerusalem, I believe). I think this verse is making reference to the last great battle at Armageddon in the Valley of Megiddo and appears to include the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Valley of Decision, if (as I believe) verses in Joel apply here.

Joel 3:12-14 *Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

Another set of verses that seems to be related to this verse is found in Isaiah.

Isaiah 63:1-4 *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

The statement regarding the amount of blood indicates the intensity of the battle that will take place. I have a hard time not accepting that the amount of bloodshed stated is not an actual figure since specific definition is given concerning it. It won't surprise me to find that man will again be using horses at the time of this battle due to the capabilities that exist to disrupt the effectiveness of current technology.

Joseph Seiss gives a possible explanation: "The probabilities are...that a line of encamped forces shall extend from Bozrah, on the southeast, to Megiddo, on the northwest. And, singularly enough, this would measure exactly 1600 stadia (furlongs), the distance named in the text as that over which the blood from this great winepress of Jehovah's anger flows."

This meshes with the verses from Isaiah that picture Jesus headed to Jerusalem from Bozrah in garments drenched in blood. Bozrah is a reference to Petra, a place that many believe scripture indicates will be that special place in the wilderness in which God will protect the Jewish remnant.