

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of *The Revelation*. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Last week we exegeted in part Rev 14:14-16. When time expired we were reviewing the harvesting and separation of unbelievers when the Lord returns.
2. Before we continue I want to provide "1Jo 1:9 time" as may be necessary.
3. Let's first look at an expanded translation of Rev 14:9-13 and then we will return to the study of Rev 14:14-16.
4. I want to review some of that learned and then begin new material on page five.

Expanded Translation

Rev 14:9 A third angel followed the first two shouting as it flew behind the other two angels: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand,

Rev 14:10 they will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the elect angels and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God.

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment will rise and never end. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

Rev 14:12 The trials and tribulations of this age call for patient endurance on the part of the saints; these saints will obey God's commandments and remain faithful to the Lord Jesus.

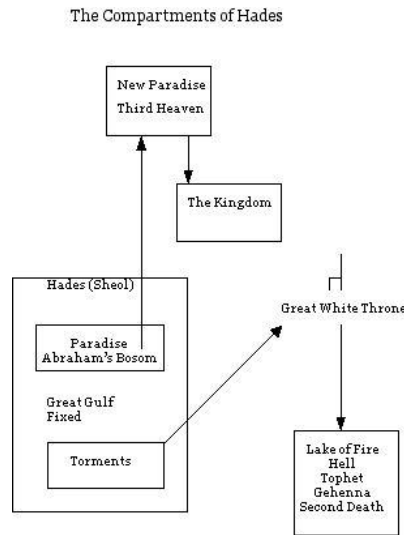
Rev 14:13 Then I, John, heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." "Yea!" says the Holy Spirit of God, "they will rest in heaven from their labors on earth; their divine good which was so hard to come by in the economy of the Tribulation will follow them as an eternal reward."

5. Last week I taught a review of the *Doctrine of Sheol* as an appropriate nexus with the judgment described in Revelation Chapter 14.

Doctrine of Sheol

1. **Sheol** is a Jewish term for a place where all the pre-resurrection dead once resided.
2. **Sheol** had two compartments, one for the pre-resurrection believers and one for all unbelievers. **Sheol** is best thought of as a duplex, where on one side we find the beggar Lazarus being comforted by Abraham, and on the other side we find the rich man in terrible pain and suffering, begging for a return trip to Earth to warn his brothers.

3. Let's look at a chart describing the compartments of **Hades** and our Lord's trip to the Paradise side of **Sheol**, and then I will comment.



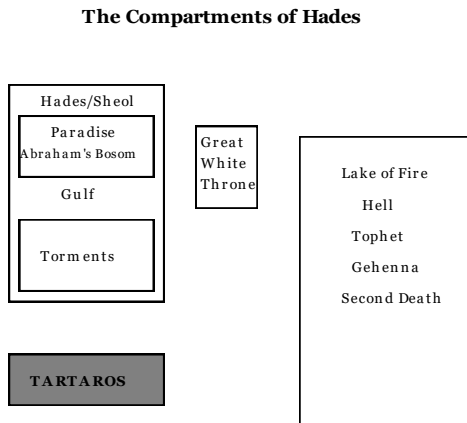
4. During the three days in the grave, Christ made two trips. He went to **Sheol**, or **Hades** as it is also called, to transport the souls of the believers from Abraham's bosom to heaven. He also went to **Tartaros** to let the fallen angels who had left their first estate know His victory was complete

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

5. The trip to **Tartaros** was made to tell those imprisoned there that the appeal phase of the angelic conflict was over and Christ was victorious. Let's add **Tartaros** to our first chart.



6. **Sheol**, or its New Testament counterpart **Hades**, is mentioned several times in Scripture.

7. I want to review some of that learned last week and then begin new material on page five.

8. Rev 14:12-13 which might be entitled "The Blessing of the Saints."

KJV

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

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.

Principles:

1. The stern warning addressed to all worshipers of the beast is also an encouragement to those who put their trust in Christ in the time of tribulation.

2. Though some of them will face martyrdom and others will need to go into hiding, they are assured that their lot is far preferable to those who accept the "easy way out" and worship the beast.

3. The saints of the tribulation are described in verse 12 as those who will need special patience and endurance which can only come from "keeping God's Word in faithful obedience."

4. Special people are selected for special jobs in special ages. Such is the case for the brave saints of the tribulation. God in His omniscience knows exactly who needs to be where and more importantly He knows how much His saints can handle. 1Co 10:13

4.1 Given the promise of 1Co 10:13 we must conclude that the tribulation saints will be really tough folks with edification complexes of the soul which would choke a horse. Said another way, these people will be super Christians placed in the thick of battle because God knows they will not cut and run.

5. In verse 13 John hears a voice from heaven pronouncing a blessing on those who die in the Lord.

Rev 14:13 Then I, John, heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yea!" says the Holy Spirit of God, "they will rest in heaven from their labors on earth; their divine good which was so hard to come by in the economy of the Tribulation will follow them as an eternal reward."

6. The reference to the blessing of those who die in the Lord from this time on is not a general reference to all saints who die, but specifically to those who die in this period, that is, as martyrs of the faith.

7. It is far better to be dead at the hand of the beast than to have favor as his worshiper. The statement "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth" is followed by the expression "Yea, saith the Spirit."

8. Those that die in the Lord are described as resting from their labors with the rewards of their work following them.

9. Now let's see what we can learn of John's vision of Christ Himself; Christ is seen participating in the climatic judgments relating to His Second Coming:

KJV

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.

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.

NIV

Rev 14:14 I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

Rev 14:15 Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Rev 14:16 So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

Principles:

1. Verses fourteen through twenty describe two kinds of harvest or two descriptions of end time judgments. The timing is the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. The place is outside the city of Jerusalem.

2. Verses fourteen, fifteen and sixteen cover only the first harvest. This preview occurs in John's first vision; it is a harvest scene. The first vision uses terminology that would be applicable to the reaping of wheat. It is superintended by the Son of Man, just as was predicted in the Matthew 13 parables.

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.

3. John in his vision sees "One like the Son of man sitting on a white cloud wearing a golden crown and having in his hand a sharp sickle." It is none other says John Walvoord than:

"Christ Himself participating in the divine judgments of God upon the wicked of the world."

4. As predicted in Mat 13:28-30 Jesus urges special care in gathering the wheat and the tares: "let both grow together."

Mat 13:28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

Mat 13:29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Mat 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

5. Jesus does not do the dividing Himself but instead carefully supervises the separation of wheat and tares so that not one believer (wheat) is judged with the tares (unbelievers).

6. This separating work is done by angels and happens at the Lord's triumphant reappearance back to the earth at the end of the tribulation. The opportunity for salvation is at this time ended for the unbelievers of the tribulation. After Jesus returns there will be believers and unbelievers born during the millennial reign of Christ. Unbelievers of the Millennium will find their place in the torment of **Sheol**.

7. Believers surviving the tribulation will be carefully protected from the final holocaust so that they can go directly into the Kingdom and repopulate the Millennium that's coming.

8. It is interesting to note this harvest occurs just after the reassurance to the saints of their ultimate reward described in Rev 14:12 and 13.

Rev 14:12 The trials and tribulations of this age call for patient endurance on the part of the saints; these saints will obey God's commandments and remain faithful to the Lord Jesus.

Rev 14:13 Then I, John heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Holy Spirit of God, "they will rest in heaven from their labors on earth; their divine good which was so hard to come by in the economy of the Tribulation will follow them as an eternal reward."

9. Walvoord in speaking to the identity of Jesus as the one on the cloud has written: "This is reinforced by the golden crown speaking of His glorified state and His royal dignity."

10. John says He is like the Son of Man, a reference to the Jesus he knew on earth, but not exactly the same. The differences are self-evident given the Lord is in His resurrection state with a gold crown on a cloud and holding a sickle.

11. Alford writes,

"This clearly is our Lord Himself. The sharp sickle indicates this is the time of harvest, referring to the climactic judgments relating to the second coming."

12. As John beholds the vision of the Son of Man having a sharp sickle, he sees another angel come out of the Temple crying to the Son of Man to thrust in His sickle and reap, declaring that the harvest of the earth is ripe.

13. It is remarkable that an angel should thus address the Son of Man, but it should be regarded as an entreaty of a holy angel serving Christ as the Son of Man in His victorious and well-earned position as judge of all things.

Joh 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Joh 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Joh 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

Joh 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

14. The fact that the angel comes from the Temple seems to allude to this judgment as proceeding from the righteousness and justice of God. It is in the Temple on earth where the love, justice and righteousness of God were taught.

14.1 Further, the angel urges judgment at this time. Angels are the ministers of God and in God's sovereign plan He makes it known to the angel, it is now time for Christ's judgment.

14.2 It would seem to me we are going to have two judgments here: the first being separation of the wheat and the tares when the tares are burned and the wheat are taken into the Millennium; the second will be the judgment of the armies of the world at the last battle of Armageddon. The Armageddon judgment is described in Rev 14:17-20.

14.3 The angelic conflict recall is about to be abruptly ended and angels as such are major players in this saga of Satan and his fallen angels versus God and His elect angels. The expression "the harvest of the earth is ripe" seems to imply that judgment is overdue.

Rev 14:15 Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

14.4 The phrase "is ripe" is a translation from the Greek verb **Exeraino** parsed as a 3rd person singular aorist passive indicative meaning "the harvest had received the action of drying or withering." The verb has a bad connotation. (See Mat 21:19 20; Mar 3:1 3; Mar 11:20; Luk 8:6 and Rev 16:12)

Mat 21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee hence forward for ever. And presently the fig tree **withered away**.

Mat 21:20 And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

Mar 3:1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a **withered hand**.

Mar 3:2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Mar 3:3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

Mar 11:20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree **dried up** from the roots.

Luk 8:6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it **withered away** because it lacked moisture.

Rev 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was **dried up** that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

15. The picture here in Rev 14:15 is of a fruit or vegetable that has become so ripe that it has begun to dry up and wither. The rotten moral condition of the world is dealt with now with a sharp sickle.

16. Verse 16 indicates that the Son of man does as the angel requests, possibly using the angels themselves to accomplish His end as in Mat 13:36-43 earlier seen.

Mat 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Rev 14:16 So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

17. Some commentators like Alford distinguish between the figure of reaping in Rev 14:14-16 and the vision of reaping which follows in verses 17-20, holding that the first harvest is that of the saints in contrast to the second harvest which is obviously of the wicked.

18. As Alford has written:

“The verdict of Commentators is very much divided. There are circumstances in the context which tell both ways. The parallelism with the vintage which follows seems to favour a harvest of the wicked: but then on the other hand, if so, what is the distinction between the two in-gatherings? And why do we read of the casting into the wine press of God's wrath in the second case, and of no corresponding feature in the other? Again, why is the agency so different the Son of man on the white cloud with a golden crown in the one case, the mere angel in the other? Besides, the two gatherings seem quite distinct. The former is over before the other begins.

“On the whole then, though I would not pronounce decidedly, I must incline to think that the harvest is the ingathering of the saints, God's harvest, reaped from the earth: described here thus generally, before the vintage of wrath which follows.”

18.1 Alford is correct that the passage does not tell us what the first harvest is and there is no comparative analysis in Scripture.

19. Given the Matthew thirteen parable and the need to separate the wheat and the tares which are growing together in the same field, it would seem Alford's position has a great deal of merit, however given the very specific description of carnage found in verse eighteen, I think the second harvest mentioned is highly specific to Armageddon and the armies of the world.

20. The careful cutting would seem to be the selection and cutting of the wheat "out from the tares" as the Greek of Matthew thirteen indicates; it would seem to describe a believer's selection for the Millennium; the latter cutting would seem to describe that which is done to the unbeliever a gathering for destruction.

21. Now let me give you an expanded translation of verses fourteen, fifteen and sixteen:

Expanded Translation

Rev 14:14 I, John looked up and suddenly, right there in my face was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was the Lord Jesus Christ; He looked much like as when I knew Him on earth but there were differences. He wore a crown of gold on his head and He held a sharp sickle in his hand.

Rev 14:15 Then I saw an angel, like those earlier seen, he came out of the temple and screamed in a loud and excited voice; he was screaming at the Lord Jesus who was still sitting on the cloud, The angel cried out "Take your sickle and reap, because God the Father has said it is time to harvest both the wheat and the tares, the tares are over ripe and more than ready for judgment."

Rev 14:16 So Christ swung his sickle over the earth, and the wheat was harvested out from the fields leaving only the over ripened tares separate and ready for destruction. The wheat represents the believers who were taken into the Millennium to enjoy perfect environment.

22. Let's see what we can learn from the last four verses of our chapter fourteen.

KJV

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.

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.

NIV

Rev 14:17 Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.

Rev 14:18 Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe."

Rev 14:19 The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath.

Rev 14:20 They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

1. The use of angels to assist in the harvest of the earth is now stated explicitly in verse 17. What is to be harvested has been in my view missed by many.

2. The angel of verse 17 is the ninth to appear in this chapter and, like the angel of verse 15, he is said to come from the Temple in heaven. The harvest here in my opinion is a reference to the armies of the world gathered to destroy Israel and not the general judgment of unbelievers already mentioned in verses 14, 15 and 16.

2.1 There are ten angels mentioned in this chapter:

Rev 14:3 And I also heard a new song being sung before the throne of God; standing before that throne were the **four** special **angels** earlier seen and the church age saints earlier raptured. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been preserved through the awful Tribulation.

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 14:8 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.

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 14:15 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 14:17 And another **angel** came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

3. Like the Son of man this angel of verse 17 has a sharp sickle indicating the severity of the judgment.

4. This angel is exhorted in verse 18 by another angel, the tenth in the chapter, to thrust in his 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.

5. The angel making this request is described as coming from the altar and having power over fire.

5.1 The noun comes from **Thuo** meaning to slaughter an animal.

5.2 This would seem to indicate the altar is the one outside the Temple as over against the Altar of Incense were it not for the fact that Rev 8:3 which clearly speaks of the Altar of Incense and uses the same **Thusiasterios**.

Rev 8:3 And another came and stood at the altar, (**Thusiasthrios**) having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

5.3 There are those like John Walvoord who believe the actions of the angel here would seem to be a response to the prayers of the saints. Such is quite possible, however, the Greek does not make it clear which of the Altars is in view. Walvoord would seem to base his opinion on a positive identification that the altar in view is the altar of incense; this in my view cannot be supported quite so dogmatically from the passage, although, I too choose the Altar of Incense as the most viable of two very plausible alternatives.

6. Walvoord writes: "These allusions seem to indicate that the angel is acting in response to the prayers of the saints for divine judgment of wickedness in the earthly scene, and the fact that he has power over fire indicates the purging judgment of which he is capable."

End Lesson Taught 8-9-2017

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