

The Book of Revelation

By

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FOREVIEWS, WARNINGS and COMFORT

A Bird's Eye View

Let us pause again to get a bird's eye view of Revelation. CHRIST redeemed the world on the Cross, but will not take possession until "**the day of Redemption.**" During these nineteen hundred years and more He is calling out a people to act as kings to rule with Him. Directions are given to this company in chapters two and three.

The taking over of the earth will move on legal grounds and as Satan opposes, CHRIST will appear at the court in Heaven (ch. 4), and take from the Father's hand the title deed (ch. 5). Then breaking the seals (ch. 6), He will come down with open book in His hand and declare possession (ch. 10). Soon there must be a real showdown. This takes place at the battle of Armageddon, recorded in chapter nineteen.

But there are several angles to society and we are shown the end-time conditions in them. The Jewish situation (ch. 12); the political (ch. 13); the religious (ch. 17), and the commercial (ch. 18), are important elements in human history and these are now brought before us before the final and closing scenes.

Ripening the Grapes

It is not GOD's way to destroy the righteous with the unrighteous. Israel could not inherit the land of promise until the iniquity of the Amorites was full (Genesis 15:16). GOD hardened Pharaoh's heart and got him ready for judgment by visiting plague after plague upon him.

And so here, blood will flow "**even unto the horse bridles,**" but not until the grapes of the vine of the earth "**are fully ripe**" will this take place (ch. 14). To bring this festering sore to head and fully ripen men for judgment, GOD will send His vials of wrath and men will gnaw their tongues for pain even while using those same tongues to blaspheme the GOD of Heaven (ch. 15 and 16).

The 144,000 Again

"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" (vs. 1).

This chapter deals with foreviews of succeeding chapters. Here are the one hundred forty-four thousand safe and in Heaven. Just when they seal their fate, we do not know, but what a relief to turn from the scenes of chapter thirteen where we were face to face with the blaspheming hoards of hell, to the joyous and happy scenes of the Lamb on Mt. Sion.

Heavenly Music

"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" (vs. 2).

There is a rippling voice of many waters, and the thunderous tone of a Niagara; and there are the voices of harpers singing the **"song of Moses... and the song of the Lamb."**

What music in these harps of Heaven, no mortal tongue can tell. Music is vibration. The human ear can catch these vibrations from some twenty-five to two thousand per second. Above that there is a great gap until we come to hundreds of trillions. Five hundred trillion vibrations per second is caught by the eye as yellow light. Between these figures there is a gap not bridged by any organ of the human body. What music will greet the ears of the redeemed as these harps of Heaven fill up this great gap and vibrate with music, thousands to millions of times per second.

Oh, how small is man the creature of time; and what glories await him as he enters the future abode of eternity; and how we should praise and thank our GOD who has set His love upon us, and has privileged us to look forward to such a glorious hope of joy and happiness.

A New Song

"And they sung as it were a new song before the throne... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (vs. 3).

There is a note in the song of the redeemed that angels cannot duplicate. The holy angels have never sinned: they have never tasted the bitter dregs of sorrow. Therefore they do not know the joy of redemption and cannot experience the thrill of freedom from a sinful nature. So here the experiences of the one hundred forty-four thousand were such as to give them a subject and a ground for praise that no other can enter into; therefore no other can learn their song.

Spiritual Fornication

"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" (vs. 4).

"Not defiled with women," does not mean they are all men. Neither does the fact they are all **"virgins"** mean they are all women. There is no more impurity in marriage than in non-marriage. This is the time of the great whore of chapter seventeen; the false system of religion.

The church is the virgin bride of CHRIST. For a Christian to court the friendship of the world is to commit spiritual fornication and adultery (James 4:4). Here are those who are "**virgins**;" they have no fellowship with the world, but have kept themselves pure and wholly for their Lord.

There are those who tell us they can take CHRIST with them to the theatre, the dance and the cards. But such is not the Scriptural order. Rather does CHRIST say, "**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me**" (John 10:27). And so here, they follow the Lamb; not that He follows them. The beast and his followers go to perdition - these go with the Lamb wherever He goes.

First Fruits

These marvelous beings are humans and are a "**firstfruits**." CHRIST is the "**firstfruits of them that slept**" (I Corinthians 15:20). But these are the firstfruits of another harvest. At Armageddon, the harvest of the earth will be reaped (vs. 15), but it is evident that these do not belong to that group. Neither are they the firstfruits of the church for it is already in Heaven before these are even sealed.

These may be the firstfruits of a new order; probably of redeemed Israel looking forward to the kingdom age. Paul was as one "**born out of due time**" (I Corinthians 15:8). That is, he was kind of a firstfruits of redeemed Israel. We are saved by the personal testimony of others. But not so with Paul; he was saved by seeing the glorified Lord Himself. And in this way will all Israel be saved in that day when they shall look on "**me whom they have pierced**" (Zechariah 12:10).

Without Fault

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (vs. 5).

To profess CHRIST and live a lie is terrible. Here are those who not only profess truth but so lived that they are without fault before the throne of GOD. Everything about the beast is a lie. Even his miracles are "**lying wonders**." But there is nothing more precious in the sight of the Lord than truth and a faithful profession in word and deed.

The Everlasting Gospel

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (vs. 6).

Angels cannot preach the Gospel of grace. An angel could tell Cornelius to send for Peter, but it was up to Peter to give him the way of salvation. The Gospel of the kingdom is also proclaimed by men.

- The "**Gospel of grace**" is the good news that salvation is the free gift of GOD and is by faith in our Lord JESUS CHRIST.
- The "**Gospel of the kingdom**" is a call to repentance because the King is about to set up His kingdom.

- The **"everlasting Gospel"** is a call to worship God as Creator; to **"worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters"** (vs. 7).

It is called the everlasting Gospel because it is universal in time and scope. The invisible things of GOD have always been **"clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead"** (Romans 1:20).

This is one of the last calls of GOD to an apostate world, for the hour of his judgment **"is come"** (vs. 7). GOD's people are hid away in the caves of the earth; the two witnesses are in Jerusalem and are kept by supernatural power. Now a call goes out from a messenger in the sky.

Doom of Babylon

"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" (vs. 8).

This is a foreview of chapter eighteen. Babylon is the pride of the world. No other such city has ever been erected upon this earth. But it must come down, and here is the warning to those who will receive it. Later another call is issued to **"Come out of her, my people"** (ch. 18:4).

To court the friendship of the world is to commit spiritual fornication (James 4:4). Here people have become intoxicated with the idea to build this great city. Once before on this very site, men said, **"Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven"** (Genesis 11:4). GOD destroyed their plans and **"scattered them abroad,"** so again GOD will bring their city to naught.

Warning from the Sky

The great image of the beast was made to live and cause all to receive a mark. Let us imagine such a scene. Radios announce to all the world; great full page advertisements in every daily. The whole world is thrilled with excitement as the orders go out for every man and woman, rich and poor to appear at their own county seat at eight o'clock next Wednesday morning, to receive a tattooed mark of the beast in their right hand or forehead.

Wednesday morning comes. At five o'clock the cars begin to arrive. At six o'clock the streets about the court house are full; seven and all is excitement as the very air vibrates with shouts and blasphemies against the GOD of Heaven; and with cries and hurrahs for the antichrist.

Seven-thirty and excitement is at white heat. Soon the door will open and men will march through to receive a mark that seals their doom forever. About the door is a score of men who vie with one another to be the first to receive the mark.

Suddenly in the air above their heads there flies an angel, **"saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image... 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"** (vs. 9, 10).

There will be a moment of awful silence. Then a cry of anger as men shake their fists at the messenger of GOD and fill the air with blasphemies and curses against the GOD who lends them breath.

But that warning is not all in vain. Some were already doubting; others were fearing the issues of such a move, and now a dozen or a score of men leave the crowd and dart for an alley. But the hounds of hell are after them and soon they are brought back to meet their fate. Only a moment as they are tied to poles and trees; only an instant and a gallon of gasoline wafts the odor of burning living human flesh upon the quiet morning air, while just behind the scene their souls take flight to enter Heaven as victors over the beast and his blaspheming hoard.

To receive the mark will mean most certain doom.

Imagine if we can what it will mean to suffer fearful torment with JESUS CHRIST standing quietly looking on, and not a hand among all the holy angels moved in our behalf for this torment will be in the presence of the **"angels and... of the Lamb."**

Eternal Hell

"And the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night" (vs. 11).

Men make light of a literal hell, but here is an angel from Heaven, with a message blistering with fire and brimstone - the very elements of hell. **"Forever and ever"** gives us an assurance of an eternity of torment for those who leave this earth with sins unforgiven.

Comfort and Strength

"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" (vs. 13).

This is not merely a funeral text. The word **"henceforth"** has an element of time. A time will have come when from then on, so fearful will be the hatred of hell, that it will be better for a godly person to be dead than alive. In our present time, such is not always true, for to live gives opportunity to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, if indeed the child of GOD uses his time to thus exercise his soul.

In this fourteenth chapter, our Lord pauses as He so often does in this great book, to give foreviews, warnings and comfort. Here is comfort, for whatever they may suffer at the hands of the beast, their rest is sure. What wouldn't the worshippers of the beast give for rest; but it is written, **"They have no rest."**

The very hardships these are to undergo will make their rest the sweeter. Every tear; every testimony and every sigh will find its reward. To come out of Babylon will be a costly thing. It will mean to lose their head, thus there goes out from Heaven a special proclamation to give the

needed courage and strength.

The Harvest

"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" (vs. 14).

This is a foreview of Armageddon; it is chapter nineteen given in another form. In our present time, angels are "**ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation**" (Hebrews 1:14). They are just behind the scene but none the less real. During the tribulation period, angels will be everywhere.

"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 to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (vs. 15).

Evil has a harvest as well as good. "**The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels**" (Matthew 13:39). "**Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap**" (Galatians 6:7).

The one hundred forty four thousand are the firstfruits of another harvest. Here the harvest "**of the earth**" has come. What solemn truths are these. Both the writer and the reader of these words will be somewhere when this time comes. Either reaping the fruits of a misspent life, or bringing in the sheaves from a life of righteous sowing. Verily, let us not be weary in well doing: "**for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**"

Be Not Deceived

"Those impieties of thine; those guilty sports and gaieties will yet have to be confronted at the judgment seat. Those sneers and witty jests at sacred things; those fiery lusts burning on the altar of carnal pleasure are all written down in the account books of eternity to be brought forth in the great day. The mother who destroyed her babe; the neighbor who set fire to his neighbor's goods; the slanderer of GOD's ministers and people, must each answer at the bar of justice" - Seiss.

The Vine of the Earth

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud voice 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" (vs. 17, 18).

GOD "**brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it**" (Psalm 80:8).

"My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill... he... planted it with the choicest vine... and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes... For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel" (Isaiah 5).

Here however, is the "**vine of the earth**" and its clusters are "**fully ripe**." There is also a vine of Heaven. CHRIST is that vine and the "**Father is the husbandman**" (John 15:1).

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (vs. 20).

Here is Armageddon indeed - blood to the horses bridles. Josephus tells us that when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, blood ran so high as to put out fires in the houses. It is none other than our Lord Himself who treads this winepress.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom? ...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... For the day of vengeance is in mine heart" (Isaiah 63:1-4).

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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