**Revelation**

*Lesson 28 – Revelation 14:1-13*

* We’ve just seen the unholy trinity of evil opposed to the Triune God of heaven and we’ve seen what they cause unbelievers to do and how they attack and persecute God’s church. So now in verses 1-5 we get a picture of God’s people again, from a heavenly perspective, because what we’ve just seen in chapter 13 is quite intimidating and scary. We are coming to the end as this cycle of vision which began in chapter 12 will end at the end of this chapter, which means that in this chapter we’re moving toward the end of time when the world ends at Christ’s return.

*Verses 1-5*

1. What is Mount Zion? In Psalm 2:6, God calls Zion “His holy hill” where he has “established His king.” Hebrews 12:22 says that Christians have “come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem….and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.” Zion represents God’s dwelling place. In the OT, sometimes it refers to His literal dwelling place with His people in Jerusalem and the Temple. At other times, it refers to the entire nation of Israel viewed as God’s people with whom He dwells. So Mount Zion represents God’s heavenly palace and residence and with God on Mount Zion, the apostle John sees the 144,000. Sam Storms says that Zion “is where the Lamb and His redeemed share fellowship and the authority of the kingdom.”
2. Remember from Revelation 7, the 144000 represent all of God’s elect from both the OT and NT. There, John hears 144,000 but sees a multitude that could not be numbered. So from a heavenly perspective, despite all the beastly and dragon attacks that are going on throughout the earth, despite how we are treated as Christians on earth, we are with Christ because we are united in Him. And all of God’s people have their own mark, which we’ve already seen, which contrasts with the mark of the beast. We have the name of our Lord and Father written on our minds, sealing us and preserving us from giving way to the persecution of the beasts (compare Revelation 2:17, 3:12, 22:4).
3. And what are God’s people doing? Verses 2-3 say they are singing and praising God. A “new song” was sang in Revelation 5 because Christ was worthy to open the scroll in the Father’s hand. A “new song” appears several times in the OT and was called for as an expression of praise for God’s victory over the enemy (See Ps 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1). The voice of all of God’s elect together is like the voice of many waters, which contrasts with the water that pours forth from the dragon’s mouth. It’s a sweet and soothing song as it sounds like the dulcet tones of harpists playing a beautiful melody and nobody is able to sing this song except for God’s elect who are those “who had been redeemed from the earth.”
4. Now verse 4 is interesting because it describes God’s people as virgins, those who have not defiled themselves with women. What exactly does that mean? Again, John is seeing a vision and we must understand these things symbolically. Symbolically, to be chaste means that God’s people have not compromised in various ways with the world but have remained loyal as a pure bride to her beloved. 2 Corinthians 11:2 – “For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you [the church] as a pure virgin to Christ.” Ephesians 5:25-27 - “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26**that he might sanctify her,….**27**so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” In other words, that the church might be pure and undefiled.
5. God’s people are further described as redeemed from mankind as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb. This has the OT background of the feast of firstfruits in Leviticus 23:9-14. At the beginning of the harvest, the Israelites were to bring the first of the harvest to the Lord as a sacrifice, acknowledging that He is Lord of the harvest and His ownership of both people and land. Jeremiah 2:3 – “Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest.” James 1:18 – “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
6. Finally, from God’s perspective, as part of seeing His people pure through Christ, we are described as not having a lying mouth so that we are blameless. We have kept the name of our Lord unlike the beast who has blasphemous names written on it and speaks blasphemies and the dragon who is the deceiver.

*Verses 6-13*

1. Verses 6-7 describe a warning of judgment being announced to the unbelieving world.
2. An angel or messenger is proclaiming “an eternal gospel” to “those who dwell on earth” (unbelievers) and all over the earth and this gospel is focused not on grace but on judgment.
3. This gospel is eternal because for 2 reasons: 1) it discloses God’s eternal plan to save His people out of the world and this plan was made before the foundation of the world and 2) it has eternal consequences
4. The message is focused on “the hour of judgment” that has come and it should cause people to worship God by “fearing Him” and “giving Him the glory.” And you want to avoid this judgment because it’s the judgment of One who is so powerful and mighty that He made all of creation. Therefore, He owns all of creation and so all of His creation is obligated to worship Him.
5. Because the content also includes “the hour of His judgment has come” it seems that this angelic messenger is right before the 2nd coming rather than throughout the Church age. There is some discussion over whether this is a genuine offer to repent, that is, one last chance to hear the Gospel message before the judgment, or whether this is talking about coerced acknowledgement of who God is because every knee, even the knee of unbelievers, will be forced to bow and acknowledge Jesus as Lord.
6. This preaching of the gospel goes unheeded so in verse 8, we have the result of not listening to and obeying the Gospel🡪judgment in verse 8.
7. Babylon is used symbolically to refer to all the wicked, worldly systems that are opposed to God. It’s a combination of ungodly government and ungodly religions/philosophies combined together that represent a whole cultural empire. The word for “sexual immorality” is used elsewhere in Revelation for idolatry (Rev. 2:14, 20-21; 9:21; 17:1). Babylon is that worldly system that causes unbelievers to worship any and everything else but the true and living God.
8. Sam Storms writes, “Babylon is the symbol of human civilization with all its pomp and circumstance organized in opposition to God. It is the sum total of pagan culture: social, intellectual, commercial, political, and religious. It is the essence of evil, the “Mecca”, if you will, of heathenism, the symbol for collective rebellion against God in any and every form. It is the universal or world system of unbelief, idolatry, and apostasy that opposes and persecutes the people of God.”
9. Isaiah 21:9 – “And behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!” And he answered, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground.”” Also see Jeremiah 51. We will see more about Babylon’s fall in Revelation 17-18.
10. This earthly judgment in verse 8 then leads to a description of eternal, heavenly judgment in verses 9-11.
11. Despite the warning and judgment in verses 6-8, people continue to worship the beast and his image and still have his thoughts and number imprinted on their words and actions. Because of this, verse 10, they will drink of the wine of God’s wrath. Those who have been drinking the wine of the worldly system (verse 8) now have to drink the wine of God’s eternal wrath. Again the punishment fits the crime.
12. Job 21:20 – “Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty.” Psalm 75:8 – “For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.”
13. This wine is full strength, 200 proof if you will. It’s the fullness of God’s wrath and this wrath is eternal (verse 11) torment (verses 10-11) in God’s presence with fire and brimstone. Beale writes that their torment is primarily spiritual and psychological suffering. We must remember that unbelievers will also be reunited with their bodies at the resurrection and cast into torment. Their bodies will be of such a nature as to go through torment and suffering forever without being destroyed.
14. Revelation 20:10 – “and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and **they will be tormented day and night forever and ever**.”
15. This torment of fire and brimstone recalls God’s punishment poured out on Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. That story if a picture of God’s wrath poured out on a society of great perverseness and immorality and John picks up that picture for God’s eternal wrath poured out on unbelievers. Psalm 11:5-6 – “The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.”
16. All of this is written for believers though so that we can be encouraged to persevere in verses 12-13 and receive our eternal reward, instead of eternal judgment. Do not cave in to the surrounding idolatries and pressures of this world, no matter how strong and powerful they are. Your reward will come that God has promises and you will have true and ultimate rest. Whereas the ungodly will have no eternal rest at all (verse 11).

**Message for Us**

1. “If you choose to serve Satan, you must expect to suffer the consequences. You cannot sin and get away with it. The wrath of God will be visited on those who worship the beast. Here on earth this wrath is still mixed with grace. The Lord makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and unjust (Matt 5:45). By and by, in hell, the wrath will be unmixed. It will be torment with fire and brimstone.” –William Hendriksen
2. “The idea of endless torment is abhorrent to modern Western sensibilities. It troubles many Christians as well as non-Christians, and has caused not a few in our day to look for some escape from the apparent meaning of these verses. Ancient pagan societies, before the coming of Christianity, were shockingly brutal to their enemies, and too few within them had much of a troubled conscience. Christianity showed that such cruelty is heinous because people are made in the image of God. Secularization converted this love for one’s neighbor into a wishy-washy sentimentality. It liked to imagine that everybody is innocent and that suffering is senseless. Thus, we have to separate between what is good and what is bad in modern attitudes. We must purify our hearts and beware of the influence of modern distortions of biblical truth.” –Vern Poythress
3. “The Lord wants us to understand that human institutions, ideologies, and rulers are in the grip of antichrist today. Yet the Lamb stands with His people on Mount Zion in the position of triumph. God has set His King upon the holy mountain and has given Him the heathen for His inheritance.” –Joel Beeke
4. “By the Spirit’s grace, do you fear God? According to John Brown, to fear God means “the fear of offending God,” and for those who fear the Lord, “it matters little to them that the world frowns on them, if he smiles; and it matters little to them that the world smiles, if he frowns.” Such fear is rooted in the conviction that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Fearing God means submitting to Him through Jesus Christ, and to His will for your life in all things. Is this both your desire and your drive in life? Whom do you fear—the Lamb on Mount Zion or the beastly Satan in hell?” –Joel Beeke