

# Book of Revelation (Chapter 13)

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2026-01-28

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# Chapter 18

## Introductory Episodes for the Seven Bowls (13:1-14:20)

### 18.1 The Beast Out of the Sea (13:1–10)

#### 18.1.1 Characteristics of the beast (13:1-4)

##### Revelation 13:1

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

1. **Then I [he] stood:** An accurate translation renders *he* instead of *I*. So, it refers to the dragon. Unable to reach the woman, the dragon prepares to call his wicked followers into a war.
2. **Sea:** Connecting Dan 7:3 with Rev 11:7; 13:1, and 17:18, the sea could be the bottomless pit.

*Dan 7:3. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other*

*Rev. 11:7. ...the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them ...*

*Rev. 17:8. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit ...*

3. **And I saw:** With the dragon in position, the next scene tells how the dragon is preparing for the war with the seed of the woman. In this section, the seed of the woman refers to the saints (12:17; 13:7).
4. **Sea:** Although the text points to a literal sea, connecting 11:7 and 17:8, as noted above, the sea refers to the abyss. Abyss is the source of demonic powers opposed to God. Many OT portions connect sea, abyss, and the sea monsters to the demonic forces

*Isa. 27:1. In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea*

5. **Beast:** As noted in 11:7, the beast denotes a ferocious creature which stands for chaos against order, evil against good, and death against life. The beast must be a malevolent personal figure as well as the head of an empire. Beast is not the ancient Roman empire, but related to the end time revived Roman empire as prophesied by Daniel

*Dan. 2:40-45. and the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron ... 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever ...*

*Dan. 7:23-25. Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24. The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings*

Beast is a person who is also the ruler of that end time empire and is identified as anti-Christ. The beast is the end time revived Roman empire and also the end time false Christ. Observe the parallelism with the person of Christ:

(a) Beast is in individual like Christ is a person

*Rev. 13:8. All who dwell on the earth will worship him ...*

(b) Their names are written on the followers of both

*Rev. 13:16. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads ...*

*Rev. 14:1. ... a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads*

(c) Both have horns

*Rev. 5:6. ... in the midst of the throne ... stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns ...*

*Rev. 13:1. ... beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns ...*

(d) Both are slain

*Rev. 13:3. And I saw one of his [beast] heads as if it had been mortally wounded ...*

*Rev. 13:8. ... the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*

(e) Both have power over the world

*Rev. 1:5. and from Jesus Christ ... the ruler over the kings of the earth*

*Rev. 7:9. It was granted to him [beast] to make war with the saints ... and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation*

6. **Seven heads** Seven heads are seven empires that ruled the nation of Israel. These empires are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the end-time revived Roman empire. Final seventh head is the last empire and the last one has ten horns representing ten simultaneous kingdoms.

7. **Ten horns:** The horns are emblems of power. Ten horns are the ten kings (kingdom) in that empire.

8. **Diadems (crowns):** The crown on the ten horns indicate that the power is now with the ten horns (12:3, 13:1). Now the focus is shifted to the seventh empire. Here the beast has supremacy over the ten kings

*Dan. 7:7, 24. After this . . . a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings*

*Note: that horn is either a king (Da 7:24) or a dynasty of kings (8:3, 6). Diadem (crown) represent power, authority, and victory.*

9. **Blasphemy:** Beast assumes deity and details of his actions are given in 13:5-6. Many of the Romans emperor's consider themselves as god and can be considered as the shadow of this, but the culmination of the blasphemy is by the beast during the period of great tribulation.

### Revelation 13:2

**And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet [were] as [those] of a bear, and his mouth [was] as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave to him his power and his throne and great authority.**

1. **Leopard . . . Bear . . . Lion:** beast is likened to leopard, bear and lion which naturally connects with the four beasts of Daniel. The fourth one is a combination of the first three. The restored Roman empire will have the combined strength and brutality of three empires. Leopard is known for cat like vigilance and fierce cruelty. Bear is known for the feet that crushes its enemies. Lion has roaring that paralyses enemies with fear. This is what saints will face during the great tribulation

*Dan. 7:3-7. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion . . . 5 And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear . . . 6 After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong . . . different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns*

*Hos. 13:7-8. So I will be to them like a lion; Like a leopard by the road I will lurk; 8 I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs; I will tear open their rib cage, And there I will devour them like a lion. The wild beast shall tear them*

2. **Power:** dragon gives power and authority to the beast. War belong to Satan, but his proxy is the beast. Satan claim to have authority (Mt 4:9; Lk 4:6). Just as Jesus share the throne with Father, the beast share throne with dragon.

### Revelation 13:3

**And [I saw] one of his heads as slain unto death, and the wound of his death was healed. And the whole earth marveled after the beast,**

1. **As slain unto death:** similar to 5:6 where the Lamb carried the scars of death. But, here it is **as slain** indicates it is the dragon's attempt to counterfeit the death and resurrection of Christ.
2. **Healed:** The dragon will do a counterfeit work on the the beast (the false Christ) with something similar to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is possible that it could be a supernatural one which God may permit, or most likely it can be through deception.
3. **Marveled:** The healing of the beast will bring world-wide admiration not only in Israel, but to the whole world.

### Revelation 13:4

**and worshiped the dragon-because he gave great authority to the beast-and worshiped the beast saying, "Who is like the best, and who can make war with him?"**

1. **Worship of dragon:** explicitly mentioned only here, but the worship of beast occurs several places (13:8, 12; 14:9, 11; 20:4) and worship of his image (13:15; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20). Worship of dragon is same as the worship of beast and vice versa.
2. **Who is like the beast:** he is incomparable and is a mocking statement about God

*Ex 15:11. Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

*Ps 113:5. Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high,*

*Is 40:18. To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?*

This is expected since Paul prophesied it explicitly

*2Th 2:4. who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

3. **Who can make war:** his brute force derived from dragon makes him invincible. The implies answer to the question is no one. However, it will be answered and the Lamp is more than able to take the task of challenging the beast (14:1-5; 17:14; 19:11-21).

### 18.1.2 Activities of the beast (13:5-8)

#### Revelation 13:5

**And a mouth speaking great things, even blasphemies against God, was given to him and authority to continue forty-two months was given to him.**

1. **vv 5-8:** the two fold activities of the beast: [i] blasphemy toward God, and [ii] deception of people. Both resembles the activities of the little horn in

*Dan. 7:25. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time*

Here, the providence of God is shown to the saints by calling them to endure only for a while when God allows the beast to persecute, that too with limited degree of authority. This authority is not from the dragon: if it were so, then beast would not have limited the operation to 42 months.

2. **Was given (edothe):** it implies the authority was granted by God (see 6:4, 8; 7:2; 9:5). God allows the beast to blaspheme for a limited time, but still hold him accountable. One of the greatest lessons in Daniel from which John draws so heavily is the sovereignty of God over the world governments

*Da 4:17. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men*

3. **A mouth speaking great things:** the beast will appropriate the name and attributes of God to himself including blasphemies against God.
4. **Forty-two months:** frantic activity will mark the behaviour of the beast for this period. It will be allowed to continue for the last half of Daniel's seventieth week (11:2-3; 12:6, 13; Da 7:25-27; 12:7).

### Revelation 13:6

**And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, those who tabernacle in heaven.**

1. **He opened:** the tense indicate that blasphemy is a continuing characteristic of the beast. He utters the ultimate in unbelief and disrespect for God as he magnifies himself above all and claims to be the sovereign. In this he resembles the man in

*Dan. 11:36-45. Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done*

2. **Blasphemies against God:** it is to demean the name of God directly or appropriating it for oneself. Blaspheming **the tabernacle** of God is derogatory speech about His heavenly dwelling place (7:15; 12:12; 21:3).
3. **Those who tabernacle in heaven:** who are they? Unlikely options include the saints on the earth, saints in heaven, or all angels in heaven. The context of the special animosity of the beast against the inhabitant's of the heaven strongly suggest them to be members of the angelic army who joined their leader Michael in expelling the dragon from heaven (12:7-9, 12).

### Revelation 13:7

**And it was given to him to make war with saints to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.**

1. **Make war . . . to overcome:** the concept is same as that of

*Dan. 7:21. I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them*

where the dismal prospect is counter balanced with the consolation of

*Da 7:22. until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom*

Overcoming the saints in this case is a termination of their physical lives (13:15). Overcome is ironic here, because it is the martyrs who will be the victors at the end (12:11; 14:1-5; 17:14).

2. **Authority was given:** beast's God-permitted authority over every lineage, nation, language group, and radical group is explicitly worldwide in its scope. Note the use of **the whole earth** in Da 7:23. The lamb died to redeem people from the same four groups as this ruler will dominate politically (5:9). The all-inclusive scope of this statement prohibits an application of it to any past ruler or empire.

### Revelation 13:8

**And all those who dwell upon the earth will worship him, whose name are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life from the Lamb slain.**

1. **All . . . will worship him:** The beast will have almost universal success in attracting worshipers. Universal worship of the beast will be the ultimate achievement of those seeking one world-wide religion since they withhold from the true God His central place in their life. However, the only limiting factor will be the refusal of the elect to worship the beast.

*Mt 24:24. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect*

2. **Him:** This masculine pronoun confirms that the beast must be a person as well as a king. That is, this agent of the dragon is a living human ruler.

3. **Those who dwell upon the earth:** They are the enemies of God who will play a role in the last days of this earth (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:14; 17:8). Their hardness against God has been apparent already, but here their allegiance to and worship of the beast is evident.
4. **Are not written:** A key characteristic of the earth-dwellers is that their names are missing from the Lamb's Book of Life. This is a permanent condition—their names do not remain. It reflects a spiritual deadness in those who choose to hoard earthly treasure and worship the beast.
5. Revelation 3:5 suggests that names are removed because of disbelief and disobedience. Originally, everyone's name was written in the book. However, only the names of those who believe in Jesus will remain. For those who do not believe, their names are removed at death

*Ex 32:32-33. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written. 33 And the Lord said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book*

*Ps 69:28. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous*

*Ph 4:3. And I urge you . . . and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life*

*Rev. 3:5. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life . . .*

*Rev 17:8. . . those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world . . .*

*Rev 20:12. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books*

*Rev 20:15. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire*

*Rev 21:27. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life*

6. **Lamb's:** the earth-dwellers have chosen to worship the beast instead of the Lamb. That is why their names have been permanently removed from the book. Note the characteristics of the Lamb:
- (a) only one qualified to open the seals (5:6-12),
  - (b) slain to redeem men to God (5:9),
  - (c) people hide themselves from His wrath (6:16),
  - (d) blood has cleansing power (7:14),
  - (e) receives worship as God (7:10),
  - (f) marriage supper will be celebrated (19:7, 9), and
  - (g) the city of God is illuminated by Him (21:14, 23).

7. **From the foundation of the world:** it occurs in Mt 13:35; Mt 25:34; Lk 11:50; He 4:3; He 9:26; and Re 17:8. Similar expression of *before* the foundation of the world also occur in Jh 17:24; Ep 1:4; and 1Pe 1:20. All refer to the founding of the whole visible order. Here, the grammar suggests, it is the writing of the Book of Life is in view and not the slain of the Lamb. In conclusion, the elect are predestined to refrain from beast-worship and therefore suffer persecution.

### 18.1.3 Submission to the beast's persecution and divine providence (13:9-10)

#### Revelation 13:9

If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

1. **Hear:** This call is an instruction to the persecuted saints on how to respond to their persecution. It differs slightly from the earlier ones (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) where it was explicitly addressed to the churches. The omission of the church here is due to the promise of 3:10 that church will not go through the tribulation

*Rev. 3:13. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

*Rev. 3:10. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*

2. The call here is to a different group of faithful followers of the Lord telling them how to respond to the awful treatment by the beast. The call is to endure in their faith and not to yield to the oppressor.

### Revelation 13:10

**If anyone is for captivity, into captivity he departs; If anyone is to be killed by the sword, [it is necessary for] him to be killed by the sword, Here is the endurance and the faithfulness of the saints.**

1. **If anyone:** It is a warning to the saints of the impending persecution by the beast and urging them to submit to the divine providence. Persecution and death to the faithful is inevitable. Faithful should understand that the action of the this false Christ have been decreed by God, as indicated in the four fold use of **was given (edothe)** (13:5, 7, 14, 15). This meaning also coincide with the emphasis on divine providence in OT

*Jer. 15:2. . . 'Thus says the Lord: "Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity"*

*Jer. 43:11. When he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt and deliver to death those appointed for death, and to captivity those appointed for captivity, and to the sword those appointed for the sword*

2. **Endurance and faithfulness:** These are the personal qualities needed to sustain a believer in the face of the harsh treatment. It focuses on the attitude of submission to the sovereignty of God. It implies the supremacy of God's will which always promotes the ultimate good and blessing of the redeemed though it may include times of temporary hardship.
3. **Endurance (hypomone):** This characterizes John and his contemporaries in their persecution and receives commendation from the Lord (1:9; 2:2, 3, 19; 3:10).

4. **Faithfulness (pisti):** The word mostly translated as faith, and if the context demands then translated as faithfulness. Remembrance that God is sovereign over all that happens and that the dragon and the beast have only a short time, will provide fuel to sustain these two spiritual qualities.

## 18.2 The Beast Out of the Earth (or Land) (13:11–18)

Revelation 13:11

**And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb's, and he spoke like a dragon,**

1. **Beast coming out of earth:** The beast indicate that he is same kind as that of the earlier one. He is as ferocious as the earlier one. However, coming out of earth indicates a supporting or inferior role as the false prophet revealed later

*Rev 16:13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet*

*Rev 19:20. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence . . .*

*Rev 20:10. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are . . .*

2. Identity of the beast: note that this beast is an individual person as evident from 19:20 and 20:10. Still, many wrongly identify the beast as papal Rome, priests of Caesar (who opposed Christians), world-wide anti-God system. Correct identity is that this beast is the main religious assistant of the anti-Christ. The great tribulation period is characterized by counterfeits including the person and works of this beast.

*Mat. 24:24. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect*

Examples of such deception include:

- (a) True prophets (two witnesses) of Rev. 11 and the false prophet of Rev. 13 (the beast out of the earth);
  - (b) performs signs (11:4; 13:12);
  - (c) has special power over fire (11:5; 13:13);
  - (d) connection with resurrection (11:11; 13:14-15); and
  - (e) directs people to worship their master (11:13; 13:15).
3. **Two horns like lamb's:** the first beast has ten horns, but this beast has only two indicating less power. The beast is likened to a lamb showing the counterfeits work of the beast.
4. **Spoke like a dragon:** the beast's mannerism appears so gentle, but his words are satanic. What he lacks in power, he compensates in cunning and corrupting influence.

### Revelation 13:12

**and he exercises all the authority of the first beast before him. And he causes the earth and those who dwell in it that they should worship the first beast, whose wound of death was healed.**

1. **He exercises:** this beast is the effective agent of the first beast. He exercise authority, forces worship, produces great signs, brings fire down from heaven, and causes people to receive the mark of the first beast. Note that the words exercise (12a), cause (12b, 16) and perform (13a) all have the same Greek word (**poieo**) and indicates the habitual practice of the beast in doing these things. This is a satanic imitation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in pointing people to Christ.
2. **Before him:** all the activities of the second beast is fully with the approval of the fist beast. This is similar to the association of Moses and Aaron and between the Lord and Elijah

*Exo 4:16. So he [Aaron] shall be your spokesman to the people ...*

*Exo 7:9. When Pharaoh speaks to you [Moses] ... then you shall say to Aaron ...*

*1 Kings 17:1. And Elijah ... said to Ahab, "... Lord God of Israel ... before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."*

3. **Causes the earth...**: all the inhabitants of the earth, including the faithful, will be pressurized to worship the beast

*Rev. 12:17. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war ...*

*Rev. 13:7. It was granted to him to make war with the saints ...*

*Rev. 13:17. and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name*

4. **Wound of death was healed**: The world worships the first beast because of its miraculous healing. This serves as a counterfeit to the true reason Christians worship the Lamb: His resurrection.

*Acts 17:31. because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead*

### Revelation 13:13

**And he does great signs, that he even makes fire come down out of heaven into the earth before men.**

1. **Great signs**: Jesus performs several signs in His public ministry, but also warned about the counterfeit signs of the false Christs

*Mat. 24:24-25. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand*

*2 The. 2:9. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders*

2. The purpose of these signs is to obscure truth, to confuse people, and to win the wrong orientation for their inner allegiance. They will be pseudo-miracles or miracles with some supernatural elements and will almost deceive elect, but the faithful will recognize them for what they are performed and the doctrine that they seek to prove.

3. **Fire from heaven**: this reminds of how Elijah brought fire from heaven and John requested Jesus to bring fire from heaven

*1 Kings 18:38. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice . . .*

*2 Kings 1:10. So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty*

*Luke 9:54. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?”*

### Revelation 13:14

**And he deceives those who dwell upon the earth because of the signs which it is granted him to do before the beast, saying to those who dwell upon the earth to make an image for the beast who has the wound of the sword and came to life.**

- 1. He deceives those who dwell upon the earth because of the signs:** Signs performed by the beast will cause many to worship the false god. The victims are the unregenerate humanity. The works of the second beast are approved by the first beast. The second one is a faithful and obedient servant of the first beast. Deception is a frequent theme in the bible and we are warned about it (Rev 2:20; 12:9; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3; 20:8; 20:10; 1Jh 2:26; 3:7; Mt 24:11; 24:24).
- 2. Saying to those who dwell upon the earth to make an image for the beast:** The second beast commands the people to make the image of the first best. Image appears ten time in the book (13:15; 14:9; 14:11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). This must be a statue to which people must bow down

*Dan. 3:4-6. Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages . . . you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace”*

- 3. Who has the wound of the sword and came to life:** The first beast came to life from the mortal wound. This is similar to the resurrection of Jesus. The healing in 13:3 and 13:12 means that the first beast was resurrected

*Rev 13:3. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast*

*Rev 13:12. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*

### Revelation 13:15

**And it was given to him to give birth to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might both speak and cause that as many as do not worship the image of the beast be killed.**

1. **It was given:** the second beast has remarkable power on behalf of the first beast. God alone can give life. Here too God alone permitted this act, which could be real or pseudo sign

*Ac 13:6-12. . . [Paul and Barnabas] found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet . . . withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then . . . Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?*

*Ac 16:16. Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling*

*Ac 19:13-20. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed*

2. **Do not worship:** like the situation faced by Daniel's friends, the faithful also will face life threatening situation for not worshiping the image. Worship of the beast and his image is associated with receiving his mark as v16. Receiving the mark is impossible without the act of worship

*Dan. 3:1-11. Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold . . . Then a herald cried aloud: . . . you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace . . .*

*Rev. 14:9-11. If anyone worships the beast and his image . . . 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation*

*Rev. 16:2. So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image*

*Rev. 19:20. Then the beast was captured . . . and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone*

*Rev. 20:4. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those . . . who had not worshiped the beast or his image . . . And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years*

3. **Be killed:** This is not complete wipe out of the faithful. The woman's escape and protection from the dragon (12:13-16) show that the Messianic community in the wilderness will survive unharmed. The rest of the woman's seed will bear the brunt of this massacre. They are destined for greater glory (14:1-5). They are the exception to the **whole earth** because they remain loyal to the Lamb, the Lord Jesus.

### Revelation 13:16

**And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, that they give to them a mark upon their right hand or upon their forehead,**

1. **Cause all:** the second beast adds the obligation of receiving a vision be mark of the first beast to that of worshiping his image. The whole population will be pressurized to receive this symbol.

2. **Mark (charagma):** just as the elect receives a seal to protect them from the coming of the wrath of God (7:?), so the followers of the beast receive the mark to escape his against the followers of the Lamb. The mark must be some sort of branding similar to that given to soldier, slaves, and temple devotees in John's day. the term **charagma** was related to the images or names of emperors on Roman coins. Similarly, it could be the emblem of the best on people. The mark indicates loyalty, ownership, and protection just as the seal given to the slave of God.

#### Revelation 13:17

**and that no one may buy or sell except the one who has the mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name.**

1. **No one may buy or sell:** This is an economic ban. The beast creates a strict rule where no one is allowed to buy or sell anything unless they have a specific mark. This is a severe punishment designed to cut faithful believers off from basic necessities, making it much harder than just living through tough economic times. The goal of this constant pressure is to force people to worship the beast, as taking the mark is a sign of total commitment to him.
2. **One who has the mark, the name . . . the number:** The **mark**, the **name**, and the **number** of the beast are actually all the same thing. The text clarifies that the mark is simply the beast's name, which can also be understood as a specific number. essentially, the mark can be written out as a name using letters or represented by its matching numerical value. (A possibility E.g. Customer service for FedEx is 1-800-GO-FEDEX which translated to 1-800-463-3339.))

#### Revelation 13:18

**Here is wisdom: let the one who has understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.**

### 18.3 The Victorious Followers of the Lamb (14:1-5)

Chapter 14 consist of three scenes: [i] Lamb on the Mount Zion (1-5), [ii] Four announcements about the coming period (6-13), [iii] Harvest and the vintage (14-20).

**And I looked, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred forty-four thousand having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.**

1. **And I looked:** it calls for special attention to the events to follow (16:17-22:5). It also contrasts the victory of the Lamb and His followers after the initial setback. It further serves as an encouragement to those who refuse the beast's mark and a prediction of the destruction of those who receive it.
2. **The Lamb** receives the center of attention. Lamb is symbolic of meekness, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ultimate victory of Jesus. Note the contrasts: [i] ferocity of the beast to the gentleness of the Lamb, and [ii] beast arising from the unstable sea/sand to the firm standing of the Lamb on the Rock. the
3. **Mount Zion** refers to the physical location of the mountain and not figurative for the heaven or new heavenly city. Reasons include: [i] temple of 11:1 was on the mountain, [ii] close connection to

*Ps 2:6. I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain*

[iii] the group connected to literal Jews, [iv] Zion appears 162 times in the Bible and almost every time refers to literal Zion, and [v] prophetic expectation points a literal Zion

*Ps 48:1-2. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain*

*Is 11:9-12. . . 12. He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth*

*Is 24:23. Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously*

*Joel 2:32. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls*

It is possible that Mt. Zion can be used figuratively elsewhere in the Bible (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22).

4. **The 144000:** They are same as the group in 7:1-8 who were selected from the 12 tribes of Israel. Note: [i] they are sealed implies that they will not face the wrath of God; and [ii] they serve the Lamb by their witness and refusing to embrace the lies of the beast, [iii] they might even receive martyrdom for their refusal to bear the mark of the beast (13:15).

### Revelation 14:2

**And I heard a voice from heaven like a voice of many waters and like a sound of great thunder, and the voice which I heard was like harpers playing on their harps.**

1. **Heard a voice:** this voice is not the voice of the saints since [i] they are the learners of the song and not the singers, and [ii] they are on the earth while the song is from heaven. The singers are probably a loud angelic chorus similar to 5:11.
2. **Many waters . . . harpers:** The voice is from heaven and might be from God or angels (Ezk 1:24; 43:2; Dan 10:6; Rev 1:15; 19:6). The voice was loud and at the same time melodious too.

### Revelation 14:3

**And they sing [something] [like] a new song before the throne and before the four living beings and the elders; and no one was able to learn the song except the one hundred forty-four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth.**

1. **They sing like:** The song has lyrics and intelligible to the group. Song indicate joy in heaven over redemption of the saints. The singers are the angelic community, though they don't experience redemption; but they are deeply interested in the subject

*Lk 15:7. I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance*

*Ep 3:10. to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*

*1Pe 1:12. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-things which angels desire to look into*

2. **New song:** It resembles the victory song of the Israelite delivered from Egypt

*Ex 15:1-18. Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the Lord, For He has triumphed gloriously!... 17 You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, In the place, O Lord, which You have made For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. 18 "The Lord shall reign forever and ever."*

The new song in Revelation is in celebration of the new age about to be inaugurated, a victory based on the sacrificial work of the Lamb

3. **Learn the song:** Only this group is able to learn the song because they are spiritually mature.
4. **Who were redeemed:** Their redemption is due to the blood of the Lamb. They now enjoy the liberation from the beast and earth dwellers.

#### Revelation 14:4

**And these are those who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from men, a contribution to God and to the Lamb,**

1. **These are those:** The group exhibited high spiritual standards in the midst of all religious chaos. The grammar indicates the permanent nature of their character.
2. **Been defiled:** Literal meaning is preferred here although relating with woman causes defilement. Note that defilement is not same as sinful in OT. Complete dedication during the tribulation time is necessary

*1Co 7:26. I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress-that it is good for a man to remain as he is*

They all are men as they have to face prison and even death. If Paul could forbid a woman to teach in the local church assembly

*1Ti 2:12. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence*

John could just as well judge that resistance to the beast require a male witnesses.

3. **Virgins:** Figurative meaning indicating moral purity is possible like in

*2 Co 11:2. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*

But John here speaks of standards higher than moral purity. He says that sexual intercourse of any type defiles in the sense that it detracts from the purity of the sacrifice necessary in these times of special stress. So they are celibates as demanded by the peculiar situation. Note that Jesus spoke approvingly of eunuchs

*Mt 19:12. For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it*

and Paul wished all men to have the gift of continence or self-control

*1Co 7:1, 32. Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman . . . But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord*

This is a special holiness of the 144,000 that dictates an entire abstinence because of the nature of the last times. This in no way degrades the institution of marriage, but is in special recognition of the critical times through which this group must pass.

4. **Who follow:** Their past habit was the persistence in following the Lamb. Our Lord wants His faithful to follow Him

*Jh 12:26. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor*

Their obedience has now given them a special privilege of being with Him in the inauguration of the millennium.

5. **Redeemed... a contribution:** They are the first set of people redeemed during the seven year period. They are hence the first set of Israelite turning to their Messiah. However, the word **aparche** translated as first fruits indicates a contribution to the Lord which is of high spiritual quality. This enabled them to accomplish their special mission.

### Revelation 14:5

**and in their mouth a lie was not found; they are blameless.**

1. **Lie:** They are characterized by honesty contrasting the lies spread by the beast and believed by the earth dwellers. They have resisted in believing the lies and deception of the beast and exhibited superior truthfulness.
2. **Blameless:** refers to the blamelessness of Christ and to the blamelessness of Christians in

*1Pe 1:19. but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*

*He 9:14. how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

*Ph 2:15. that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*

*Jude 24. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*

Behind all these usages lies the OT Levitical term for sacrifices without flaw and therefore fit to be offered. These were sacrificially perfect. They lacked any insincerity or duplicity that would make their self-consecration unacceptable to God.

**MAC Notes Introduction:** [i] Victory of the Lamb and His faithful is the theme here; [ii] Best Christians were produced in the worst time (each of these 144000 are like Daniel or Paul); [iii] Lord honours His faithful by participating in His eternal purposes. This becomes a motivation for Christian living.

**1. Power** (v1): They are protected and preserved by the power of God and God owns them.

**2. Praise** (v2,3): is the hall mark of victorious Christian living. Joy is the proper response of a heart that trust in God's sovereign power

*1Pet 4:13. but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy*

### **3. Purity** (v4a): maintaining sexual purity is very important secret of victorious Christian living

*1The 4:3. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality*

*2Tim 2:22. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart*

*1Cor 6:18. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body*

**4. Partnership** (v4b): They followed the Lord everywhere and in all circumstances. **5. Purpose** (v4c): They know why they have been redeemed. They are clear about the goal of their life which to be the witnesses of Christ. **6. Precision** (v5a): They accurately proclaim the word of God and spoke the truth in Love. **7. Perfection** (v5b): They are blameless and above reproach (does not imply sinlessness, but in a practical sense no one could find fault in them).

## **18.4 Four Climactic Announcements (14:6–13)**

The next scene consists of [i] the everlasting gospel (6-7), [ii] the fall of Babylon (8), [iii] the eternal torment (9-12), and [iv] the blessing of the martyrs. All these four announcements serve as incentives to give glory to God by remaining faithful to the Lamb and resisting the tactics of the beast.

### **18.4.1 The Everlasting Gospel (14:6–7)**

**Revelation 14:6**

**And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who sit upon the earth, even to every nation and tribe and tongue and people,**

1. **Another angel:** The angel is the first of six to participate in the announcements and enactments of this chapter (8, 9, 15, 17, 18). The identity of this angel is linked to the Michael and his angels of 12:7. This angel is another one beside Michael.
2. **Flying in midheaven:** The angel was in the sight of all and his announcement was audible to all
3. **Sit upon the earth:** It refers to all the people of the earth which includes both the faithful and followers of the beast.

### Revelation 14:7

**saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come, and worship the one who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters."**

1. **Loud voice:** The announcement is intentionally made loud so that all will be able hear the content of the gospel. The word also refers to the urgency and concern.
2. **Fear God:** Here, there is no command to believe, but only to fear God who brings judgment. Its appeal is specially to pagans who are incapable of understanding anything else about God except their accountability to Him

*Rom 1:32. who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them*

To fear God requires self-humiliation and self-surrender to Him. Same idea is found in OT

*Ecc 12:13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all*

and in NT

*Luk 12:5. I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!*

This fear is the inner state of those who are faithful to Christ.

3. **Give God the glory:** It is an idiom for repentance, acknowledging His attributes, recognize Him as God, refusing the claims of the dragon and the beast, etc. The context suggests, giving glory to God is to reverse the state in the previous chapter.
4. **Because the hour of His judgment has come:** The reason to fear God is the proximity of His judgment. The construct in Greek, indicates that this judgment is definitely going to happen soon and it points to a specific time rather than a season. This is the very last chance for the humanity to accept God.
5. **Heaven and the earth and ...:** This call is the entire humanity and no one is excluded for He is the creator and He has the right to judge.

## 18.4.2 The Fall of Babylon (14:8)

### Revelation 14:8

And another angel, a second one, followed saying, "Babylon the great has fallen, has fallen, who made all nations drink of the wine of the anger of her fornication.

1. **Second angel:** The committing of each new announcement to a new angel increases the dramatic animation of the scene (Alford, Lee). The announcement of each angel builds upon the message of his predecessor, implying a consequence of that message. In this instance, the declaration of the fall of Babylon intimates a rejection of the everlasting gospel just preached.
2. **Followed:** It alludes to

*Isa 21:9. And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen! Then he answered and said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground"*

and it carries an idea of tragic end. The tense indicates the imminence and certainty of the fall. The tense also views a future event as so certain that it is as though it were already accomplished. E.g. include 10:7; 11:18; 18:2.

3. **Babylon the great:** It is an anticipatory announcement about the fate of Babylon. This city is the object of the last bowl judgment (16:17-18:24). The announcement assumes readers have a prior knowledge of the city. The use of Babylon here can be identified as: [i] a code name for Jerusalem, [ii] a symbolic of those who worship the beast, [iii] a code name for Rome

*1Pet 5:13. She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son*

- the basis for this is that the Babylon was the enemy of Israel just as Rome was to the church, and [iv] papacy. Each of them has some merit, but John uses literal cities in chapter 2 and 3 and when figure of speech is used it is explicitly mentioned as in 11:8. Hence, the best solution is to assign Babylon its literal significance of the city on the Euphrates by that name. A reference to the literal city does not exclude further implications regarding political and religious systems connected with the city. What the literal city stands for will become more conspicuous in John's further discussion of it in chapters 17-18. Nebuchadnezzar refers this city as a great city

*Dan 4:30. The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*

and John follows this (16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21).

4. **Who made . . . nations to drink:** Corrupting the nations is the reason for this fall. She **made all nations drink** is another way of saying she exercised coercive power over earth's inhabitants in causing them to choose a path that they in no way would have chosen without her influence.
5. **The wine of the anger of her fornication:** Two concepts are conveyed: (1) the wine that the prostitute gives to intoxicate in seducing someone to fornication (17:2, 4) and (2) the cup of God's wrath that He gives to those whom He will severely punish (14:10). Acceptance of Babylon's wine of fornication entails the drinking of God's wine of wrath. They are inseparable. The imagery here corresponds to that of

*Jer 51:6-7. Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her. 7 Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged*

These ideas will be developed in later chapters. The wine of Babylon is a symbol for not only sexual licentiousness, but every kind of excess that expresses unfaithfulness to God. It eventually turns into the wine of God's wrath (Psa 60:3; 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22).

### 18.4.3 The Torment of the Beast Worshipers (14:9–12)

#### Revelation 14:9

And another angel, a third one, followed them saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives the mark upon his forehead or upon his hand,

1. **Another angel, a third one:** The verses 9–12 is a counter proclamation warning those who are tempted by the threats of the beast to receive the mark (13:11–17). The goal is to persuade the potential beast worshippers to the Lamb and to encourage the faithful to remain faithful.
2. **Followed:** The progression of the first three announcements is from the compulsory fear and worship of God to the fall of Babylon that prompts that fear and worship to the eternal punishment decreed for those who reject the truth.
3. **Loud voice:** Just like the first angel, the third also speaks in loud voice indicating the urgency or importance of this message.
4. **Worship the beast . . . receive the marks:** The warning of this angel is toward the beast worshippers. Receiving the mark also amounts to worshipping the beast. Note that our actions has a close association with what we believe.

#### Revelation 14:10

to even he himself will drink of the wine of the anger of God which is mixed unmixed in the cup of His wrath, and he shall be tormented in fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb.

1. **Even he himself:** Every person who follow the beast are individually responsible of his act.
2. **Drink the anger of God:** In spite of the adverse situation, receiving the mark of the beast is disastrous. These words indicate the fury and the intensity of God's anger.
3. **Mixed unmixed:** It is like wine mixed with strong spices and undiluted by water which has strong concentration. Its intoxicating effect is much greater.

*Psa 75:8. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth Drain and drink down*

*Jer 25:15. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth Drain and drink down.*

Note also that while the faith of God receives open recognition, the unfaithful will receive public punishment.

### Revelation 14:11

**And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and they do not have rest day and night, who worship the beast and his image, and if anyone receives the mark of his name.**

- 1. Smoke of the torment:** Smoke is sign of God's punishment (Gen 19:28; Rev 19:3). They will be tormented by unknown agents.
- 2. Forever and ever:** It expresses the eternal existence of God (4:9, 10; 7:12; 10:6; 15:7) and of Christ (1:18), God's eternal reign (11:15), the eternal glory of the Lamb (5:13), the eternal reign of believers (22:5), the eternal doom of the devil (20:10), and the eternal torment of the lost (here and 19:3). This torment will never end. This doctrine is unacceptable to human sensitivity. Nevertheless, it stands, not just on the word of one NT writer, but of Jesus and other writers (Mat 25:46; Rom 2:3-9; 2The 1:6-9). This truth is not appealing, but it communicates sober reality. No kind of semantic manipulation or recourse to symbolic language can erase the fact of eternal punishment conveyed in this announcement. This is the most horrible picture of eternal punishment in the entirety of Revelation.
- 3. They do not have rest day and night:** is similar to 4:8 to describe the ceaseless worship by the living beings. That is voluntary, but this is involuntary. The unfaithful must pay a different kind of tribute to the one whose power he once ignored.

### Revelation 14:12

**Here is the endurance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.**

1. **Endurance:** This one is an admonition to steadfastness and comes as a warning to the weak who may contemplate defecting to beast-worship and as an encouragement to the faithful to persevere. It is better to be killed by the beast than to suffer eternal torment with him.
2. **Keep the commandments and faith:** The connection of the commandments with **the faith** shows that obedience is not a requirement for sonship, but the result of it. The people of God must have a living faith in Jesus to keep them obedient and sustain them under the severe pressures of persecution.

#### 18.4.4 The Blessedness of Those Dying in the Lord (14:13)

##### Revelation 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now." "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they shall rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

1. **Write:** John is already writing as per earlier command (1:11, 19), but here it shows the Lord's concern for the faithful.
2. **Blessed:** Loyalty to Christ under the beast's reign will mean inevitable death for many (13:15), so John moves immediately from his exhortation to loyalty to speak of the blessedness of those who experience a martyr's death. He is to write the second of seven beatitudes (**macarisms**) in Revelation (1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). Blessedness is an assurance of a future reward for present obedience to God. A special and unique blessing to the martyrs. This adds a further motive for endurance to that of the judgment of the wicked.
3. **Says the Spirit:** The Spirit adds His affirmation in response to the blessing just pronounced. This is the only direct utterance of the Spirit in the Apocalypse except for 22:17. As with the invitation in the seven messages (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), the Spirit identifies with the speaker of the preceding words, whether God or Christ.
4. **Rest from the labour:** Dying in the Lord consists of resting from one's labors. Hence, it is blessed to die. Here is the direct opposite of the beast worshipers who will have no rest day or night. Things are comfortable for the beast worshippers till the grace, but the state changes after the grave. The saints will rest from their troubles and harsh treatment, but at death, the troubles of their antagonists will begin and never end. The labour include not just deeds, but spiritual attitude, steadfastness of

faith, obedience to the commands of God, and firm resistance to the pressures of the false Christ. No one can separate a person from what he has done, even after death. Their works will not be in vain, because the Lord will remember and reward them (1 Tim. 5:24-25; Heb. 6:10)

## 18.5 The Harvest and the Vintage (14:14–20)

### Revelation 14:14

**And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like the Son of Man, having upon his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle.**

1. **And I looked and behold:** The scene has the picture of future judgment alluding to

*Joel 3:13. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the wine press is full, The vats overflow- For their wickedness is great*

2. **White cloud . . . like the Son of Man:** Cloud accompanies Christ in His second advent

*Dan 7:13-14. I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed*

*Mat 24:30. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*

3. **Son of Man** is a title for Christ used often in the gospels in connection with Jesus' suffering, the glory of His Second Advent, and His right to judge the world (Mat 24:30; 26:64; Joh 5:27). Note that angel is not commanding but merely notifying the fulfillment of time.

4. **Crown:** It is a symbol of victory in the impending war over His enemies.

5. **Sharp sickle:** Sickle indicates the role Jesus is going to play when He come. It is symbol of harvest and vintage. The sickle is sharp and points to the swift and complete nature of the judgment.

#### Revelation 14:15

**And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to the one sitting upon the cloud, "Send your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth has become ripe."**

1. **Fourth angel:** This is the fourth angle. The first three announced the coming of the judgment and this one convey the command to execute it.
2. **Temple:** It is the abode of God and angels arrive from here. The initiative to cleanse the earth originate from here.
3. **Send:** The object of sending is to harvest the wicked to punish them. The sharp sickle speaks of the severity of the judgment. Note that the next angle also have the same object. Both angels action highlights the terror. This picture is similar to Joel 3:13.

#### Revelation 14:16

**And the one sitting upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.**

1. **Cast His sickle:** Responding to angelic signal, the Son of Man cast His sickle into the earth and reaped it.
2. **Earth . . . earth:** The object of this harvest is those who dwell on the earth.

#### Revelation 14:17

**And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, himself having also a sharp sickle.**

1. **Fifth angle:** This is the fifth angel and he portrays the future judgment as vintage. He also comes from heaven. Christ did the harvest and this angel collect the crop. The climax of the scene is the fathering of the grapes (v19) and then treading of the wine press (v20).

## Revelation 14:18

And another angel [came out] from the altar, [who] had authority- ty over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Send your sharp sickle and gather in the clusters of the vineyard of the earth, because her bunches of grapes are ripe."

1. **Sixth angel:** This angel announced the arrival of the appointed time to gather grapes.
2. **Came from alter:** the judgment of God proceeded from the alter elsewhere also (6:9; 8:3; 16:17).
3. **Authority over fire:** This angel is minister of wrath responding to the prayer of the saints. It is probable that this angle is the one we saw in 8:3.
4. **Send . . . gather:** These words indicate that it is time for the vintage (crop) to begin.
5. **Clusters of . . . :** Just as God's people are His vineyard to produce the fruit of righteousness, the earth's people are another vineyard that produces evil fruit.
6. **Grapes are ripe:** The fruit of evil has now reached the point of ripeness. The time for the harvest has come. It is time to extract the effects of the growth in wickedness.

## Revelation 14:19

And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vineyard of the earth and cast [it] into the great wine press of the anger of God.

1. **Vineyard:** Vineyard normally points to Israel (Isa 5:1-7), but in this context, it refers to the enemies of God. Since the vineyard has produced wrong kind of fruits, they must be tressed

*Isa 63:3. I have trodden the wine press alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes*

*Lam 1:15. The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me To crush my young men; The Lord trampled as in a wine press The virgin daughter of Judah*

*Joel 3:13. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the wine press is full, The vats overflow. For their wickedness is great*

The redness of the juice, and the pressure applied to get it make this a very suitable picture of the divine judgment.

### Revelation 14:20

**And the wine press was trodden down outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press up to the bridles of the horses from [a distance of] a thousand six hundred stadia.**

1. **Trodden outside the city:** The vineyard account continues to give the gruesome outcome of the judgment process. The context strongly suggest that this city is Jerusalem. The OT predicts that the final battle will happen near there, in the valley of Jehoshaphat which is traditionally located in the area of the Kidron Valley (Joel 3:12-14; Zech 14:4).
2. **Blood came out:** It indicates again the gruesome nature of the judgment of God.
3. **Up to the bridle . . . :** The depth of the blood and the land area covered are both indicative of a massive slaughter and loss of human life.
4. **1600 stadia:** This distance is the length of Palestine, approximately 184 miles. Also, the valley of Megiddo where the war will occur (16:16) is in the northern part of Palestine and drains into the Jordan system. This allows the necessary distance for the prophecy to have a literal fulfillment. So the extended section preliminary to the seven bowls comes to its end on the somber note of judgment. This sets a sad but necessary tone for the entrance of the seven bowls of God's anger.