

THE REVELATION

LESSON 23: THE LAMB AND THE REDEEMED (14)

Intro:

BIG IDEA: There is a coming _____ which will see the salvation of the _____ and eternal punishment of the _____.

“God’s people need assurance of their ultimate safety.” **Derek Thomas**⁷⁸

The 144,000 (Again)

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

- John sees _____ with the 144,000 by His side. They don't bear a _____, but God's _____ of ownership.
- There was _____ before the throne, worshiping God.
- Only those who belong to God can _____ and _____ this song.
- Like warriors before _____, they have not made themselves ceremonially unclean thru sex (Dt. 23:9-10).
- They remain with the Lamb, _____ He goes.
- They are the _____, not _____ of the redeemed.
- Unlike the beast, there are no _____ on their _____.

“They are branded as God’s property, under his protection; and they are imprinted with his identity, to share his holiness.” **Dennis Johnson**⁷⁹

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
This passage tells “the rest of the story”. The	This could conclude the previous section	It seems to have no organic connection to	It is disputed as to whether Zion is

⁷⁸ Thomas, pp. 116.

⁷⁹ Johnson, pp. 201.

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<p>redeemed and faithful church (which resisted the papacy) is represented by the 144,000. Some understand Mount Zion to be the heavenly city. Others the true Church. But they are believed to be in heaven, before the throne. That they are undefiled does not necessarily refer to virginity since marital sex does not defile (incorrect, it did make one ceremonially unclean in the OT- see Exodus 19 and Leviticus 15). The firstfruits remind us that they represent the whole.</p>	<p>or begin a new section. Or stand alone. It has elements seen before, and introduces some new elements. It reveals that though powerful, the beasts & dragon are no match for Christ. As in Psalm 2, their rebellion is in vain. Their purity is not physical in nature, but spiritual. They were not seduced by Babylon who is about to be revealed. These saints are those who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem (Adams), the first Christians not the last. Others say they are the Christians and martyrs of the apostolic age.</p>	<p>what is before or after it, but is distinct. It has to do with the end of the Great Tribulation. Many view this group as the same as in chapter 7, a distinctly Jewish remnant in future Palestine. Most view Mount Zion as the mountain is Israel (Walvoord, Morris, Ironside), though a few see it as in heaven (Ryrie). Their virginity is seen as spiritual, not defiling themselves with idolatry.</p>	<p>terrestrial or celestial. Some think the 144,000 are on earth while the harpists are in heaven. Others think the voice is that of the 144,000 in heaven. It is meant to assure the saints still on earth in the midst of persecution. They belong to the Lamb, not the Beast. It is the song of redemption in Christ, which the song which the Song of Moses foreshadows. The suffering saints get a glimpse of their future glory.</p>
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Talk It Out: What are the significant differences between the views? Which makes the most sense?

“This is the song of the Lamb’s redeemed choir-army.” **Dennis Johnson**⁸⁰

“Christ’s faithful followers keep away from Babylon the prostitute and are loyal to him exclusively as his pure bride.” **Vern Poythress**⁸¹

A Warning

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

⁸⁰ Johnson, pp. 201.

⁸¹ Poythress, pp. 148.

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- An angel flies overhead, proclaiming the eternal _____ (“immutable and permanently valid”⁸²) to people on earth without distinction based on _____, _____ or language.
- It warns of the coming _____. It is good news to the _____, who are being oppressed by the beasts.
- Unlike the beast, it calls people to worship the true _____ who has made everything there is.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
<p>This angel is usually seen as the missionary era and the Great Awakening. This happened right before the bowls of wrath are poured upon the papacy in the French Revolution.</p>	<p>The angel represents the church who preaches the gospel. This is often viewed at referring to the preaching of the gospel in the land of Israel prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. Jerusalem’s hour of judgment is coming.</p>	<p>Some suggest that there is a shift to the Gentile world. Some think this is a reversion to the “gospel of the kingdom”, such that there are 2 gospels (kingdom vs. grace) (Gaebelein). Ironside sees this as identical to the church’s gospel. Walvoord thinks it is neither, but that God is about to establish His sovereignty over the world. Non-dispensational futurists see this as all nations being summoned to repent.</p>	<p>The angel is a symbol for the proclamation to repent before it is too late. It is a pronouncement of coming judgment. There is only 1 gospel, as Paul makes clear in Galatians 1:8.</p>

Talk It Out: Which views make the most sense of the text? Are there significant, meaningful differences?

Introduction of Babylon

⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”

- The second angel tells of the coming destruction of _____.
- Babylon is introduced here as the _____ enemy of God.

⁸² Beale, pp. 748.

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Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
<p>This introduces Babylon which will be the focus on chapters 17 & 18. It is often interpreted as Papal Rome.</p>	<p>There is not full agreement on the identity of Babylon. Some think it refers to Jerusalem (Russell, Chilton). Some think it refers to Rome since it occupies much of the 2nd half of Revelation (Clark, Adams).</p>	<p>The destruction is certain, though anticipatory. It could refer to a city, a religious system or a political system. Walvoord sees it as the apostate church which is destroyed in the second half of the Tribulation. It is used later to refer to an actual city, Rome or a rebuilt Babylon to be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation. Ironside sees it as a religious system. Mounce as Rome, a contemporary Babylon. Ladd sees it as the capital of the final apostate civilization.</p>	<p>It is often seen as a symbol for rebellious human society which seduces people. As a harlot, she makes her victims drunk. In talonic form, God makes her drunk as part of his wrath.</p>

Talk It Out: Why are these differences significant? Which view(s) makes more sense?

A Clearer Warning

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

- The third angel warns of the wrath to fall upon those who worship the _____ (see Ps. 75:8; Jer. 25:15-16; 51:7).
- Their judgment includes being cast into the _____ of _____.
- Their judgment takes place in the presence of the _____, and the _____.
- Theirs is an _____ judgment.

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Annihilation vs. Eternal Punishment⁸³

Annihilation	Eternal Punishment
This parallels Is. 34:9-10 in which Edom is annihilated.	In 20:10, the Satanic trio is thrown in the lake of fire. Their torment last forever.
“ <i>night and day</i> ” refer not to the suffering, but the end result. Smoke continually ascends as a memorial to God.	The word used for “ <i>torment</i> ” is nowhere used in Revelation or elsewhere in the sense of ending one’s personal existence.
The “ <i>lack of rest</i> ” is like the smoke, permanent effect of extinction.	It is always used of conscious personal suffering.
	“ <i>Forever and ever</i> ” or “ <i>from the ages of the ages</i> ” is also used to speak of the reign of the saints w/Christ in 22:5.
	“ <i>and they have no rest day and night</i> ” is used verbatim in 4:8 of the ceaseless praise of the eternal God.

“The presence of the Lamb, which brings pure joy and comfort to his redeemed people, will bring unmitigated anguish to those who stake their lives on the dragon’s lies.” **Dennis Johnson**⁸⁴
 “The ungodly suffer the same fate as their three Satanic leaders, who represent them.” **Greg Beale**⁸⁵

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Those who embrace the Papacy suffer eternal damnation. Those who drink her cup, will also drink from God’s cup of wrath.	It may be a reference to hell, or the permanent destruction of Babylon (Jerusalem or Rome). The destruction of Sodom is a type for this destruction. The cup of wrath may represent the practice of giving wine to condemned criminals. Unlike the righteous, there is no rest for the wicked.	This points to the final judgment upon all who worship the beast, and their eternal punishment.	On earth, his wrath is mixed with grace. But here we see unmixed wrath. This verse teaches an eternal judgment.

A Word of Encouragement

¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

⁸³ Beale, pp. 761-765.

⁸⁴ Johnson, pp. 206.

⁸⁵ Beale, pp. 762.

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- There is a voice instructing John to write a word of _____.
- The saints are to _____: obeying God and continuing to trust in Christ despite _____.
- All who die united to Christ experience blessedness, not _____. Whether before or after this proclamation.
- The Spirit speaks as a 2nd _____ establishing the fact.
- They also experience God's promised _____.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Focus on the idea that our good deeds follow us. They are remembered by God.	The idea of blessing may be that prior to their death, they experienced persecution which seems like anything but blessing. Others discuss how Christ's death, ratifying the New Covenant, opened heaven to all God's people.	2 nd of 7 beatitudes in Revelation. The blessing is pronounced on those who die as martyrs in the Great Tribulation.	2 nd of 7 beatitudes from the Lamb. "From now on" could mean from the time of Christ's death, or the point of their own death.

Talk It Out: Are the differences in interpretation significant to understanding the Revelation?

The Harvest of the ...

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." ¹⁶ So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- The harvest begins with Jesus, harvesting the _____ from the earth.
- His work is announced by an angel who has just left the Father with the proclamation.
The Son _____ the Father's command (Mk. 13:32).
- There is an _____ harvest of wheat, which takes place at the proper time.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
This is the consummation of all	The clouds refer us back to the	There is disagreement as to whether this is a	This is the 3 rd picture of the final judgment

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<p>things (hit the FF button). This is the harvest of the righteous. The angel is often seen as representing the prayers of God's people.</p>	<p>destruction of Jerusalem, a sign that He reigns, instead of the 2nd coming (which is later). So this points to the salvation of believing Jews (Mt. 13:30; 24:31-34) while ...</p>	<p>gathering of the saints (Ironsides, Ladd) or judgment (Ryrie, Gaebelien). Moorehead sees this as the resurrection of the righteous. All pretty much agree that this is the future fulfillment of Daniel 7.</p>	<p>found in Revelation. It begins here with the rapture of those who believe in Christ. A few view this as encompassing all humanity, while the grapes are a close up regarding only the wicked.</p>
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The Additional Harvest

¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

- There is another harvest that takes place- that of the _____. He waits until _____ reaches its full _____ (Gen. 15:16).
- _____ were harvested in late _____.
- The 2 harvests are distinct, but we are not sure of the time lag.
- It is described as a _____. Blood will fill the equivalent of Canaan.
- This is a fulfillment of _____ 3:13.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
<p>This is the judgment upon the wicked. They are completely decimated- the slaughter is complete.</p>	<p>This refers to the judgment upon unbelieving Israel (Is. 5). Though the same event, the righteous are delivered before the wicked judged. Josephus records a sea of blood covering the land.</p>	<p>Some see the vine as apostate Israel (Is. 5) (Ironsides), others as all unbelievers (Walvoord). Ryrie & Gaebelien see this as referring to Armageddon. Most think this takes place outside Jerusalem</p>	<p>The vine represents all of wicked humanity. Some use the number as a symbol (the square of 4, which is the number of the earth, times the square of 10 representing completeness) representing the complete earth.</p>

Talk It Out: Why are these differences significant? Which fits better with the overall flow of Revelation? Do you struggle with any of what this teaches?

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“All of this would prove encouraging to the beleaguered Christians to whom John first wrote, but it is also a powerful incentive for us to persevere in the midst of our troubles.” **Derek Thomas**⁸⁶

Conclusion:

⁸⁶ Thomas, pp. 121.