

THE REAPING

Revelation 14

In Revelation 14, John describes a scene that begins with the 144,000 singing around the throne in Heaven. This is followed by a number of angels, each in turn, declaring or describing various aspects of mid-Tribulation, providing us further insight to events that we're already familiar with. There are 7 key points covered in this chapter:

1 THE 144,000

The 144,000 evangelists are singing a song in the heavenly Mt Zion - a song that only they could sing. This is a special honour for the first fruits of the martyrs; the first group whose lives have been sacrificed in the first 3.5 years of Tribulation.

2 THE GOSPEL REACHES ALL THE EARTH

“And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

Rev 14:6

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This fulfils Matthew 24:14 in the Olivet Discourse where Jesus says the gospel will be preached in the whole world, and then the end will come. Although Jesus instructs us to preach the good news to all nations, His return isn't dependent on our efforts as He can use an angel to reach every nation and tribe.

3 BABYLON IS NAMED

This is the first time Babylon is mentioned in Revelation and will be revealed as the city of the Antichrist.

4 MARK OF THE BEAST

The mark of the beast was introduced in the previous chapter, described as being essential for any form of commerce, but here, we read the eternal consequences of receiving it.

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If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

Rev 14:9-11

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5 PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Mentioned in verse 12, this describes the **hope** that believers can hold onto during this time - "Blessed are the dead who die from now on!" for it is better to die earlier in the second half of tribulation than struggle to survive.

6 REAPING OF THE BELIEVERS

Throughout the Tribulation, there will be a reaping of believers through martyrdom, but this will increase in the final half of Tribulation as the Lord allows the Antichrist to prosper and have success in killing saints for 3.5 years.

7 REAPING OF THE UNBELIEVERS

In Rev 12:17-20, an angel with a sickle reaps the unbelievers. This group will be placed into the great winepress of the wrath of God to the effect of massive bloodshed and death. This produces a long and deep river of blood.

If this river is to be taken literally, this would be a foretelling of the war of Armageddon at the end of Tribulation which takes place in the Kidron Valley. There, the Antichrist's armies are destroyed in preparation for the return of the Messiah.

SEA OF GLASS

Revelation 15

Revelation 15 is a transition chapter out of the mid-Tribulation period and into the final half of the 7 years. John describes the contents of this chapter as **a sign**, as seven angels holding the final seven plagues prepare to release the wrath of God.

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And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

Rev 14:9-11

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Standing on this sea are those who had been victorious over the beast, i.e. those who were martyred in the Tribulation. Because they have died without giving in to the enemy's demands, they have passed the test and entered Heaven.

They overcame the mark because they never loved their physical life more than the Lord and this is exactly the kind of eternal perspective that all believers are expected to maintain.

After this scene, John sees the Lord preparing to pour out His final wrath upon Israel and the world, as He opens the tabernacle in Heaven as **a sign** of His impending return to the earthly tabernacle.

This is then followed by the 7 angels preparing to pour out their 7 bowls of God's wrath, which brings us into the latter half and towards the end of the Great Tribulation.

