

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #34
4/25/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath

Chapter Fourteen - An Interlude

1. **The Lamb on Mt. Zion With the 144,000 Saints**
2. **The Everlasting Gospel**
3. **Pronouncement of Judgment on Babylon**
4. **Pronouncement of Judgment Upon Those Who Receive the Mark of the Beast**
5. **Praise for Those Who Die In the Lord**
6. **Preview of Armageddon**

John's vision, which began in verse one, continues through verse thirteen.

With the **"here,"** note 5602, a demonstrative adverb of place, God lets John know that He is going to introduce some vivid contrasts and comparisons between those who serve Satan and those who are faithful to Him. The word "here" is used in much the same way that we might use **"now, here"** as an expression following one statement or description when we wish to indicate that we are going to introduce a comparison or contrast to the statement preceding it.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

In verses 10-11 of this Chapter God focused on the followers of Satan who had so willingly accepted the **"mark of the beast"** (13:16-17). This allowed them to receive the momentary privileges offered by Satan such as being allowed to engage in commerce, but these privileges would be brief while other consequences of their choices would be eternal. They may have satisfied their "needs" momentarily, but receiving the **"mark of the beast"** also marked them as targets of God's wrath. They were to be **"tormented with fire and brimstone"** and **"the smoke of their torment"** would last **"forever and ever, and they would have no rest day or night."**

God aptly described such people. Their ego-centric motivated choices have self-destructive consequences.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"
(Philippians 3:18-19).

In stark contrast to the scene of God punishing those who had given their lives over to Satan, our attention is directed to those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. They are set before us as a great contrast to those who serve Satan. They have been faithful to Jesus in spite of the sufferings that resulted from their faithfulness to their Lord. They are commended and praised for three things.

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First is **“the patience of the saints.”** The word used for **“patience”** is **hupomone**, 5281, better translated as **“endurance.”** It refers to **“endurance in things or circumstances.”** It is almost impossible for those of us who have not been called upon to go through the horrifying, torturous experiences of these tribulation saints to have any understanding of how their **“staying power”** had been tested. We have some difficult circumstances today which we are expected to endure. Indeed, God tells us that we, who are His, will benefit greatly if we learn to endure difficult and trying circumstances: **“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”** (James 1:2-4). Even so, **“the patience of these saints”** is so much more than we could ever know; God has a special blessing for them.

Second, **“here are they that keep the commandments of God.”** The followers of Satan and the followers of God are direct opposites. The followers of Satan blatantly disobey God's commandments. The followers of God cherish them, keep them as treasures, obey them and treat them as verbal expressions of the will and wisdom of their beloved Lord. For this, they will receive a special blessing.

Third, **“they keep ... the faith of Jesus.”** The word **“faith”** is a noun, referring to the doctrines of their Lord. They refuse to compromise the holy, perfect doctrines of their Lord as presented in His holy Word. They **“keep,”** guard and protect, them even as their lives are governed by them. For this, they will receive a special blessing.

Most, if not all, of those who are so characterized by these three things, are to be killed by the devil and his followers. Thus, John heard **“a voice from heaven,”** undoubtedly God's voice, saying to him, **“Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”** Several things about what is said in verse thirteen warrant our closer look.

First, John is commanded to **“Write”** what follows in verse thirteen because it is very important to those who read this Word of God. It is so emphasized by God for He wanted His followers who would read this to know He had them in mind. They are the ones who are living in Him and thus have a living relationship with Him, receiving their life from Him as pictured by Jesus in the allegory of the vine and the branches in John 15. Some of the things John has heard and seen he has been told to **“write not,”** (Rev. 10:4); therefore, the command to **“write”** what follows is significant.

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What John is to write has to do with those who are **“blessed.”** This word **“blessed”** has been used repeatedly and needs no commentary; however, there is some difference of opinion regarding the identity of the ones **“blessed.”** Many commentators see this as referring only to those who die during the Tribulation Period. Alternately, many preachers see the reference as applying to all those of all ages who are **“in the Lord.”** R C H Lenski, a noted commentator, is likely correct when he says: *“This verse in all of its detail has always been understood far better by the preachers, who have used it often as a text for funeral sermons, than by the commentators who create needless confusion through the questions which they introduce.”*

Of course, the ones who die during the Tribulation Period, while they are faithfully serving the Lord, are **“blessed”** as verse twelve surely referred to them and contrasted them with those serving Satan. One can easily agree with Dr. J. Vernon McGee's comments that he does not see it as applying to “those in comfortable, affluent America.” We would quickly agree that, if anyone could deserve this, the tribulation saints deserved to be **“blessed”** because of all they had to endure. However, this is not about what is deserved for no man can deserve the blessings of heaven. It is about the nature of what is received because of God's grace by those who **“die in the Lord.”** In addition, the blessings which are spoken of will belong to all who **“die in the Lord,”** regardless of the time or circumstances, as we shall see.

Even as those who died serving Him during the Tribulation Period are to be blessed, those who die later in His service and because of their faithfulness to Him are also to be blessed.

Second, there is a key expression in the statement which should not be passed over. The **“from henceforth,”** **ap arti**, which literally means **“from now on,”** clearly giving a point of time reference and looks forward to the future from that point. Following the expression **“the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth”** it could read as follows: **“following the point of their death, those who die in the Lord are blessed.”** Also, it could read as if it meant **“from the time of this command to write, those who die in the Lord are blessed.”** Either would be a consistent interpretation with the first alternative being preferred.

In various places God has provided some insights into the blessings which await those who **“live in the Lord,”** and consequently **“die in the Lord.”** In doing so He emphasized the future glorious benefits prepared for those who belong to Him as He contrasted the temporal things of this world with those eternal, everlasting and totally different rewards He has prepared for His

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own. The nature of the blessings is not only that they are everlasting, but, being eternal in nature, are different in character from anything that can be experienced here on this earth. The communication of this truth is difficult, not because of any limitations on God, but, rather, because of our limitations. We think and experience all things in a temporal, material setting. It is beyond the ability, even for those "living in the Lord," to comprehend the "otherness" of eternity. However, God has given us some analogies to which we can cling. In addition to the passages found in John 14:1-6, 2 Corinthians 15 and Philippians 3:21 God used Paul to compare and contrast between **"the here and now"** and eternity. Earlier in Philippians Paul had written *"... to die is gain"* and *"... I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better"* (Phil. 1:21,23). Paul, in addition to being such a spiritual giant, had one other advantage over us in that he had already been allowed to look at the eternal nature of heaven, though he was not allowed to tell us what he saw and heard (2 Cor. 12:1-4). Since Paul lived and died **"in the Lord"** he anticipated with confidence that he would receive a **"crown of righteousness"** (2 Timothy 4:8). We can share in that same confidence if we live in the Lord.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 4:17-5:1).

The voice John heard continued to explain two characteristics of the blessings to be experienced by those **"dying in the Lord."** **First**, there would be **"rest from their labors."** The word translated **"rest,"** in its basic meaning, conveys the idea of cessation. Something would stop, exist no longer. It would be the **"labors."** **"Labors"** refers to the weariness, the pain which results from certain activity. In other words, in eternity, when we serve the Lord, it will not weary us or cause us pain.

The **second** characteristic of these **"blessings"** delineated here is that **"their works do follow them."** **"Works"** would be the deeds of value accomplished while enduring the **"labors"** here on earth. Some of the things done here won't make it into heaven, but some will. For those deeds those who **"die in the Lord"** will be rewarded (1 Cor. 3:11-15).