Chapter 14 – The Firstfruit and the Harvests to Come

1. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Once again, we are provided with an overview that gives us a glimpse into how God has worked, is working, and will work in the events of mankind on earth.

As John is observing the many things to which he is being exposed regarding what will transpire in the future (*hereafter* - Revelation 4:1), periodically the Lord provides him with an overview so that he will be better able to contextualize the events of which he is writing. In this case, he sees the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, standing on Mt. Sion (or Zion). The word *stood* is in the perfect tense, thereby describing a completed action with ongoing results.[1] The writer of Hebrews tells us that we "are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company [*muriasin*, myriads (plural)] of angels" (Hebrews 12:22).[2] As Moses described the events when the Lord came down upon Mt. Sinai in the presence of Israel (the fire, smoke, thunders, the loud sound of a trumpet, and the voice of God), it was a time that instilled fear into the hearts of the children of Israel, and anyone or any beast that touched the mountain was to be killed (Exodus 19:10-20; Hebrews 12:18-21). In sharp contrast, under the New Covenant we come 1) to a heavenly Mt. Sion, 2) to angels without number gathered in joyous assembly (*general assembly*, celebration), 3) to the called-out ones (*church*, *ekklesia*) who were the first into God's family (*firstborn*) and whose names have

[1] Strong's Online, https://onlinebible.net/; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#AORIST.
[2] Stephenaus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks 8*.

been registered (*written*, perfect tense) in heaven (the Book of Life), 4) to God, Who is the Judge of all, 5) to the spirits of the righteous who have been made complete (*perfect*), and 6) to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:22-24).[3] John sees the Lord Jesus standing upon the heavenly Mt. Sion, not the earthly mount; this will become increasingly clear as we continue.

Along with the Lamb, John sees 144,000 who have the Father's name on their foreheads. We first hear of this group in Revelation 7 when four angels are about to cause damage to the earth by restraining the winds. Another angel comes to ask that they withhold their restraint on the wind until the slaves (*servants*) of God have been sealed in their foreheads, and there were sealed 144,000 *of all the tribes of the children of Israel* (Revelation 7:1-3). Following this is a listing of the twelve tribes to which it is referring: eleven of the sons of Jacob and one grandson – Joseph and Manasseh (Joseph's son) are included, while Dan and Ephraim (Joseph's other son) are not. When the allocation of the Promised Land was made, the tribe of Levi received no inheritance (their portion was the Lord and the tithe), and Ephraim and Manasseh each received an allocation giving Joseph a double portion (Numbers 18:20-24; Joshua 14:4). Why are Levi and Joseph a part of this listing while the two tribes of Dan and Ephraim are left out? It was under the Mosaic Covenant that the tribe of Levi received the tithe from their fellow Israelites (Numbers 18:24), held the priesthood through the family of Aaron (Exodus 30:30), and was charged with the care of the tabernacle (Numbers 1:50); however, under the New Covenant, all of that has been completed and removed, thereby placing the Levites on the same level as their brethren. Joseph, on the other hand, is a bit of a mystery; he had always been represented through the families of Manasseh and Ephraim (his only two children whom Jacob claimed as his own – Genesis 48:5). Since Manasseh is named, does this simply put the name of Joseph in the place of Ephraim as a symbolic removal of Ephraim? Perhaps, since we read of Ephraim: "Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone [do not interfere with him]" (Hosea 4:17).[4] Further, the children of Dan blatantly established an idolatrous system of worship centered around an idol fashioned out of silver, complete with their own priesthood (Judges 18:30), thereby demonstrating their complete rejection of the Lord as their God. It seems that these two tribes, more than any of the others, committed themselves completely to idolatry, and their names have been removed from among the tribes of Israel.

[3] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.
[4] Brown Driver Briggs (BDB), *Bibleworks 8*.

Why 144,000 – twelve thousand from each of the named tribes? Is this a number to be taken literally, or is it representative of something else? It seems clear that this is not to be taken as a definitive number. Consider first of all that the number 12 is commonly referred to as being a number of perfection, or completeness (12 sons of Jacob, 12 Apostles, etc.), which would indicate that the number (whatever it might be) that the Lord has sealed out of each of the *tribes of the children of Israel* is complete – everyone has been sealed whose faith in the Lord was enduring.[5] In reality then, we look at the 144,000 not as a restrictive number, but as an indication that not one of the Lord's faithful ones has been left out.

When John sees the 144,000 with the Lamb of God, they have the name of God the Father in their foreheads – they have been sealed as described in Revelation 7, and now we are told that the seal is the name of the Lord. Concerning the Lord Jesus, we are told that God the Father has *sealed* Him (John 6:27): when the Lord was baptized by John, "he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (Matthew 3:16); Jesus bore the seal of the Holy Spirit throughout His earthly ministry. Paul tells us that we, who are *in Christ*, have also been *sealed* with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). Under the New Covenant, when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit, our Seal, takes up residence in our lives for as long as we remain faithful to the Lord (John 14:16). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [faithlessness], in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12);[6] if we *depart* from the Lord (become apostate), then His Spirit is no longer abiding within us – **we** have departed from Him! The *seal* of the Holy Spirit is **not a preservative**, but a mark of identification – we belong to God as long as we live according to His Spirit's leading. Jesus made it very clear: "he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same [this is the one who] shall be saved [future tense]" (Matthew 24:13);[7] it is the one who remains faithful to the Lord unto the very end who will be saved. Our salvation is not established until we have finished the race of life and have kept our faith in the Lord intact (Ezekiel 33:12-13). The Spirit of God marks us as being His own, and there is nothing that can remove Him from us except our own unfaithfulness to the Lord (John 10:27-29; Hebrews 10:26-29).

When Jesus instituted the New Covenant in His blood (Luke 22:20), several things were changed from the traditions of the OT: 1) faith in the Lord now results

[5] Twelve is not a perfect number (mathematically), but is considered to symbolize God's authority and power; http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/12.html
[6] Strong's Online.
[7] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

in God placing His Ten Commandments upon our hearts and writing them in our minds (Hebrews 10:16); 2) the Mosaic Laws are ended (the sacrifices, the priesthood, the temple rituals, etc.) – they were fulfilled and abolished by Christ at the cross (Ephesians 2:11-18); 3) the message of the Gospel is now for all people through faith, the Jews no longer hold an advantage (Romans 10:12)[8]; 4) the Spirit of God now marks us as being His own, and resides within everyone who remains faithful to the Lord (Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 24:13). These are very significant changes, and as we read through the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letter to the Galatians, we catch just a glimpse into how difficult it was for those early Jewish Christians to shift their thinking from their Mosaic traditions to their new life in Christ. For our purposes, let's consider the last one of these noted changes: the Spirit of God abiding within and marking the child of God. This was new! None of the OT saints had been so marked. Therefore, when the angel of God has the task of *sealing* (marking) the 144-thousands, and we later see that they are bearing the name of the Lord in their foreheads, consistency requires that all of the OT saints have now been marked so that they will bear the same identification as the NT saints. Jesus said that He will have only one flock (*poimne* – incorrectly translated as *fold*), and that He is the only Shepherd (John 10:16).[9] With the sealing of the OT saints, they are now identified as being a part of the one flock of the Lord – **everyone** within that flock bears the mark of the Holy Spirit, and the sealing continues today.

We are told that in the new heaven and earth, the *servants* of the Lord "shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4). The translators of the KJV took some interpretive license with this verse; the literal translation is: *and they will see His face and His name in their foreheads*.[10] The only active verb in this verse is *see*; in the new heaven and earth, the servants of God will *see* Him face-to-face **and** they will *see* His name in their foreheads – the mark of God will then be visible to those who have remained faithful (Matthew 24:13). Everyone who is *in Christ* is sealed with the Holy Spirit; this is the promise that is made to those who are living under the New Covenant: "in whom [*in Christ*] also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). Paul describes a mystery that God withheld from the OT saints, but which has been revealed under the New Covenant: *Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Colossians 1:26-

[8] Paul asks the question: "What advantage then hath the Jew?"; to which his answer is: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1-2). The Jews were extraordinary (they had an *advantage*), but it was historical – they **received** God's Laws, and that *advantage* ended at the cross.
[9] Strong's Online.
[10] Stephanus 1550 NT.

27). Christ is in us, and we are in Christ and have been marked by the Holy Spirit. This is new!

As John sees the Lamb of God and the 144,000, he hears a sound out of heaven that is likened to *many waters* and a *great thunder*, and then he hears the sound of harpists playing – out of the roar of the waters and thunder, comes music. As John hears the music, he also hears the 144,000 singing what seems to be a new song; they are singing before God's throne in heaven and in the presence of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. John describes it as a *new song* (*ode kainos*) because no one can learn this particular song except the 144,000 – this is a song that is uniquely theirs.[11] Earlier, we were told that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang a *new song* (*ode kainos*) to the Lamb that acclaimed Him as being worthy to open the seals because He had purchased them out of sin (Revelation 5:9);[12] following this, the angels and all of the creatures of the heavens, earth, and seas expressed their praise to the Lamb, but it did not (nor could it) include any praise for buying them out of sin (Revelation 5:11-13). In like manner, this song, as sung by the 144,000, is distinctly theirs. However, it is quickly noted that they have also been purchased from among those on the earth; i.e., the Lamb of God has also paid the price for their sins. Even though they, like the living creatures and twenty-four elders, have been saved out of sin, there is something about this song to which even their fellow servants of God cannot relate.

We are then given a further description of this group: they *were not defiled with women; for they are virgins*. This bears reference to their relationship with the Lord; the husband-wife relationship is likened to that of Christ with His *ekklesia* (Ephesians 5:22-27).[13] Jehovah spoke of being married to Israel and that they broke their marriage covenant with Him, but a time was coming when a New Covenant would be established that would be different and better (Jeremiah 31:32; Hebrews 8:6). To the Corinthians Paul declared: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). The *ekklesia* is betrothed as the Bride of Christ, and it is as we remain *in Christ* (walking in faithful obedience to His Word) that we also continue as a spiritually pure member of His virgin Bride until the day when we will be joined with Him for all of eternity. The men of Israel committed physical fornication with the women of Moab, which led

[11] Strong's Online.
[12] Ibid.
[13] The *ekklesia* (God's called-out ones) doesn't find the same fit in the OT, however, it is none the less applicable to the OT saints, for, as we have already noted, Jesus is the ONE Shephard Who is over ONE Flock, which is made up of both OT and NT saints (John 10:16).

to spiritual fornication (for they sacrificed to the gods of the Moabites) – they defiled themselves before God (Numbers 25:1-2). If we, who have been born anew from on high, choose spiritual fornication[14] (a participation in what God has declared to be unclean, i.e., disobedience), then we have broken our betrothal commitment to the Lord, and, unless repentance comes quickly, the end is apostasy (Revelation 3:1-5) – a place without Christ, and without hope (Hebrews 10:26-29). These, who are with the Lamb on the heavenly Mt. Sion, remained true to their commitment to the Lord, and they are following Him wherever He might be going. Jesus said: "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24); clearly, these have met the qualifications to be followers of Christ.

Clarification is now made that the 144,000 have been bought by Christ from *among men*, with the additional explanation that they are the *firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*. Under the Mosaic Law, it was required that the children of Israel bring the first of their produce (grain, wine, oil, etc.) unto the temple, for that was the portion given to the Levites as their inheritance (Numbers 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:4-5). Likewise, they were to bring the firstborn of all things to the Lord and it became the property of the priests (who were of Levi), but the firstborn of man and unclean animals they were to buy back (*redeem*), in which case the redemption price became the priests' (Numbers 18:15).

As the Lord established His requirements for the children of Israel, He noted three specific times during the year when they were to keep feasts unto Him. "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the **feast of unleavened bread** … And the **feast of harvest**, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the **feast of ingathering**, *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field" (Exodus 23:14-16). The Feast of Unleavened Bread began the day after the Passover and lasted for a period of seven days during which no leaven was to be kept (Exodus 12:15). The first day of the Feast (the day following the Passover) was a holy day during which no business activity was to take place (*no servile work*, Leviticus 23:5). The day following the seventh-day Sabbath that fell during this Feast, the count of fifty days to the Feast of Harvest began (Leviticus 23:15-16),[15] and the Wave Offering was presented before the Lord marking the beginning of the barley harvest (Leviticus 23:11). The Feast of Harvest was also known as the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy

[14] Ecumenism, as I have shown elsewhere, is *spiritual fornication*. We must acknowledge that, for the child of God, disobedience to the Lord takes two forms: 1) we **don't** do what God has said, which means that we must repent before the Lord; 2) we **won't** do what He has said, which is a willful act, and is apostasy.

[15] https://truthofyahweh.org/harvest.html.

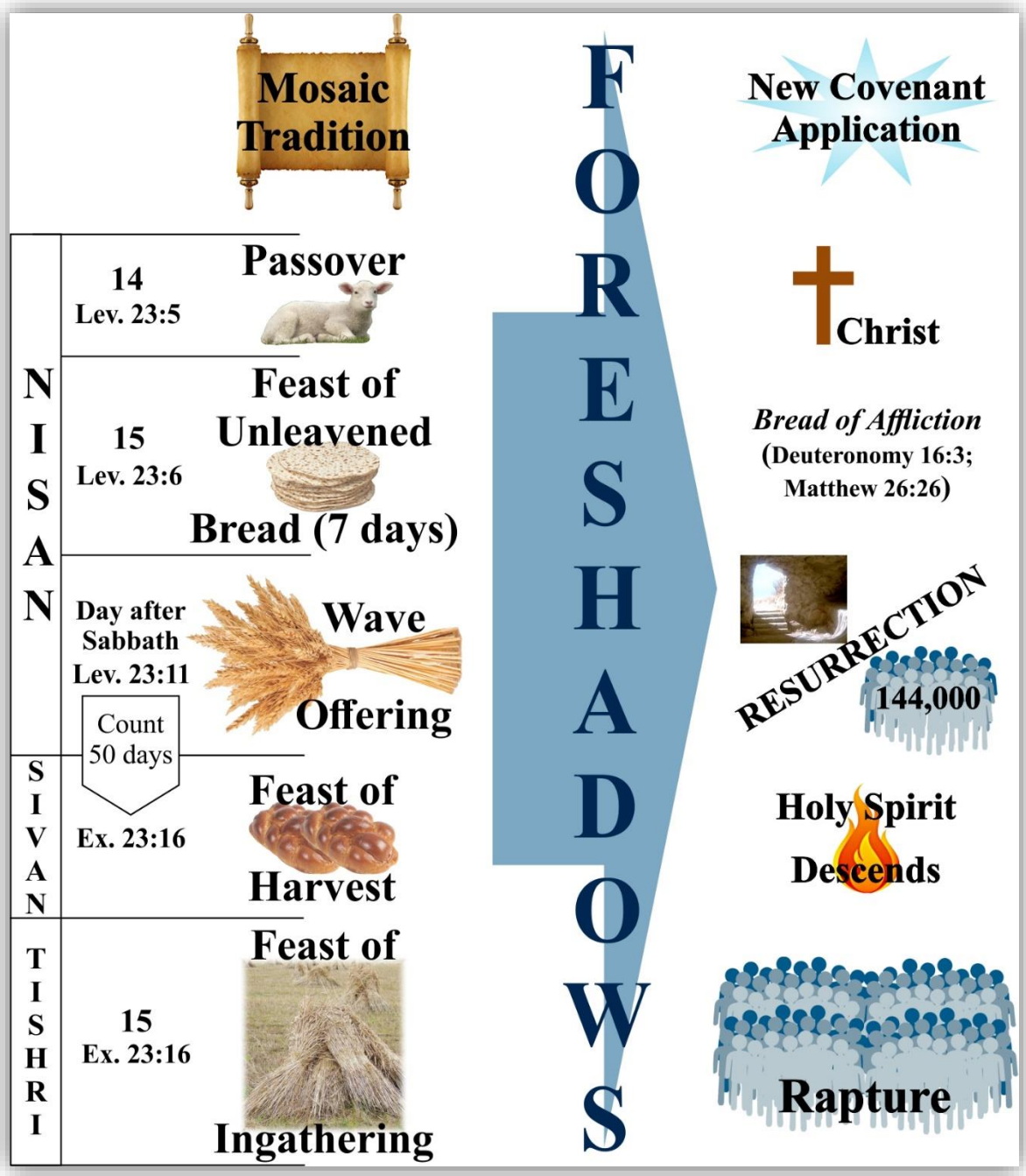
16:16), the Day of the Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26), and later as Pentecost (Acts 2:1), and it also marked the beginning of the wheat harvest.[16] The Feast of Ingathering, or the Feast of Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16:16), was a celebration of the completed harvest season and was set for the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:34).

If we consider these in light of what we are looking at, a very interesting parallel takes shape (see the following Chart). The first Feast is that of Unleavened Bread; unleavened bread was prepared by the Israelites when they fled Egypt, and was associated with their hasty escape from slavery (Exodus 12:39). On the day after the Sabbath that came during this Feast, a sheaf (*omer*, which is also a dry measure and therefore, some contend that this was to be threshed grain) of barley was brought to the temple representing the *firstfruits* of the barley harvest (Leviticus 23:10-11).[17] Jesus was crucified as the Passover Lamb and buried (symbolized by the unleavened bread, which is called the *bread of affliction* [Deuteronomy 16:3; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24]), and rose from the dead on the third day (the day following the seventh-day Sabbath) as the First of the harvest (Wave Offering). Christ, our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7), is called the "the firstfruits of them that slept [died]" (1 Corinthians 15:20);[18] i.e., He is the first to have risen from the dead Who will never die again – He is the first of those who will be raised in similar fashion.

Notice that the 144-thousands are referred to as being the *firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb* – they are the first of the harvest of the saints to be presented to God **and** to Jesus Christ; "the first fruit Christ, after that those of Christ in His presence" (a literal translation of 1 Corinthians 15:23).[19] Christ is the First Fruit, and the 144,000 are the first fruit (the wave offering) **to Him**, heralding the coming full harvest from among men. You'll notice in the chart that the 144,000 have been placed alongside of/below Jesus' resurrection. Only within Matthew do we have a record of what took place during the time of Jesus' death and resurrection: "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves [unqualified] were opened; and many [*polus*, can also mean *all*] bodies of the saints which slept [were dead] arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:51-53).[20] This indicates that when Jesus rose

[16] https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14815-weeks-feast-of.
[17] Strong's Online; https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/9581-lag-ba-omer.
[18] Strong's Online.
[19] Stephanus 1550 NT.
[20] Friberg Lexicon.

from the dead, all of the OT saints were raised with Him – there is no basis to say that the Lord chose to raise only a few. Matthew tells us that the resurrected saints went into Jerusalem and *appeared unto many* there. Remember, this was the Passover season, and Jerusalem would have been filled with Jews from everywhere; added to these multitudes, the resurrected OT saints would have gone without



notice.[21] There would have been some who would have seen their recently departed loved ones (*appeared unto many*), but most of the resurrected saints would have remained unidentified among the strangers – no one would have known who they were. They would have been raised in their glorified bodies, even as the Lord Jesus, Who, although now possessing a glorified physical body, was still recognized by His disciples who, in their fear, thought that He was a spirit (Luke 24:36-37). When Jesus ascended to heaven, these who are the first fruits of His harvest were taken with Him; "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive" (Ephesians 4:8). These glorified OT saints are the 144-thousands – the first fruit of the harvest of the saints!

The Feast of Harvest was held fifty days after the waving of the barley before the Lord, and, hence, from the Greek we get the name Pentecost (*pentekoste* – the fiftieth day).[22] This marked the beginning of the wheat harvest, which was celebrated by presenting to the Lord two loaves of **leavened** bread made from the first of the wheat (Leviticus 23:16-17). Under the New Covenant, the first fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection was when the Comforter, Whom Jesus had promised, came to abide within the disciples of the Lord in the upper room (John 16:7; Acts 2:1-4). This Comforter, our Helper and Intercessor, comes with the intent to remain with us forever (John 14:16), to open our understanding of the Lord Jesus (John 15:26), and to lead us into an ever deeper knowledge of His truth (John 16:13). These are all part of why Jesus sends His Spirit into the lives of those who become His through faith; however, seeing these purposes accomplished is dependent upon the life of the recipient. Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments [live in obedience to Me]" (John 14:15); the writer of Hebrews declared: "Take heed, **brethren** [those who are within **the** faith], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [unfaithfulness, expressed through disobedience], in departing [becoming apostate] from the living God [the product of disobedience]" (Hebrews 3:12).[23] If we have faith in the Lord, then we must live in obedience to His commands; faith always leads, and obedience must always follow (James 2:17-18). The abiding presence of the Spirit of God is dependent upon our obedience to the truth that He has placed before us; when faith in the Lord departs (expressed through disobedience, which is unfaithfulness), so does His Spirit. The Feast of Harvest (Pentecost) brought the

[21] Although there are no firm estimates of the population of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, it is generally thought to have been the home for between 80,000 and 100,000 Jews; however, during celebrations like the Passover, this number would swell to 3 to 4 million people; http://www.bible-history.com/backd2/jerusalem.html

[22] Strong's Online.

[23] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

Enablement to live a righteous and holy life before the Lord, yet, even in this, the Lord will not force His will upon anyone. The invitation to become a follower of the Lord is open to *whosoever* (John 3:16), but the fulfillment is contingent upon a willingness to accept the associated cost (Luke 14:26-27) and live in continual faithfulness (Matthew 24:13). The righteousness of God's Law will be expressed through the life of the one who is living according to His Spirit (Romans 8:4); "the Spirit of truth … will guide [lead] you into all truth" (John 16:13) – the Comforter has come to *lead*, not to drive us into the truth of Jesus Christ.[24] It is the one who is willing to be led by the Spirit who abides without condemnation (Romans 8:1).

The Feast of the Ingathering marked the end of the Jewish harvest season and, prophetically, looked forward to the time when Jesus will come in the clouds to harvest the earth of all who are His, and to resurrect glorified bodies for the spirits of those who have died in Him (commonly known as the rapture). This will conclude the resurrection and glorification of the saints of God – the harvest of the righteous will then be complete! However, within Israel, there was a law concerning **not** harvesting everything from the fields; the *corners* were to be left for the poor and stranger (Leviticus 23:22). Although the rapture marks the Feast of Ingathering (all of the righteous to that day will be harvested), the Millennium will see more come to place their faith in the Lord Jesus, and these will be like the harvest *gleanings* at the white throne judgment – they will enter glory because their names will be found in the Book of Life, unlike the unrighteous (Revelation 20:11-15).

Returning to our text (Revelation 14:3-4), we note that the 144-thousands who have been purchased out of sin, are called the *firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*, and they are singing a song unto the Lord that no one else can learn or truly understand.[25] Since the 144,000 have been saved out of sin like unto the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and all of the rest of us who have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, what makes them so unique? Remember, these are the OT saints – those who looked forward with expectancy to the coming of the Promised Deliverer, but who, through their lifetimes, never saw the fulfillment of the many promises. "And these all [all of the OT saints], having obtained a good report [having been approved] through faith, received not [did not obtain] the promise: God having provided [*foreseen*[26]] some better thing for us, that they [the OT saints] without us [the New Covenant saints] should not be made perfect [*complete*]" (Hebrews 11:39-

[24] Friberg Lexicon.

[25] Ibid.

[26] The word *provide*, etymologically, encapsulates the essence of the Greek: *pro* (ahead) and *vide* (to see); https://www.etymonline.com/word/provide

40).[27] The OT saints held a forward-looking faith in the promises that God had made to His own – namely, the promise of a Deliverer. The Promise began in the Garden of Eden when Jehovah declared to Satan: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed [singular, masculine] and her seed [singular, feminine]; it [He] shall bruise [or grind] thy head, and thou shalt bruise [grind] his heel" (Genesis 3:15); to *bruise* (grind) the head speaks of a fatal action, whereas the same action applied to the heel only involves suffering.[28] Abraham received the promise that through his descendants "shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3); the promised Blessing would be the fulfillment of God's promise to the serpent (Genesis 3:15): the Promise continued. Moses spoke of the day when "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Isaiah spoke of the promised Prophet: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4-6). Down through the generations, the promises of the Lord became increasingly specific, yet, when Jesus came, the Jews refused to believe that He was the Promised One because He did not fulfill **their** expectations.

Although the OT saints are like us in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will never completely comprehend the anticipatory element of their faith – it is something that is unique to them! Their song of praise to the Lamb of God, although it might well contain a similar theme to ours, will also include a tinge of the mystery that they faced for generations. However, as the writer of Hebrews expressed so clearly, **they will not be complete without us**, even as we will not be complete without them: the Lord Jesus is the Shepherd of **only one flock** (Hebrews 11:40; John 10:16)!

The 144-thousands are before the throne of God without blemish (*fault*), and no deceit (*guile*) is found in them. This will be true of everyone who will abide in the presence of God, for heaven will be a place devoid of every form of sin (*without fault*). Regarding this, Paul explains that Christ loved and gave Himself for the *ekklesia* (His called-out ones; feminine, singular) "*in order that He did sanctify her, cleansed by the washing of the water through the Word, so that He made her ready*

[27] Friberg Lexicon.
[28] BDB.

for Himself, a glorious ekklesia *not having fault or wrinkle or any such things, but that she is holy and without fault*" (Ephesians 5:26-27, literal translation).[29] Even though the Lord has issued the command that we are to become holy in all that we do (His work in us; 1 Peter 1:15), He will not force His sanctification upon us; to be sure, His *ekklesia* will be *holy* and she will be *without blemish*, but whether we are a part of this *glorious* assembly will depend upon our willingness to walk according to the leading of His Spirit (Romans 8:1). If we become adept at rationalizing and justifying our disobedience to His Word, rest assured that, in such a case, we remain under His condemnation and will not be a part of His holy *ekklesia*! This is why Paul stated that we are to *examine* ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5) – do we profess to *believe* His Word even while we secretly (or not so secretly) disobey it? Our excuses (the rationalizing and justifying) do not change the tenor of our actions before God; failure to do what He has decreed is still disobedience, no matter how we might paint it. The Lord Jesus Christ willingly gave His life to pay for the debt of our sin, yet so often we are unwilling to be inconvenienced in the slightest in order to honor Him. Those who stand in the presence of God in heaven will be the ones who have chosen to honor the Lord above their own comforts, their family and friends, and even their very lives – they, like this multitude with the Lamb, will be *without fault*.

It is interesting to note that the 144,000 will be without *guile*, or deceit – i.e., no lie will be found in them. Likewise, we are specifically told that there will be no liars (*pseudes*; adjective) in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:8).[30] Let's take a moment to uncover why a lie is so significant. Paul declared, "Wherefore putting away [to separate from] lying [*pseudos*; noun], speak every man truth …" (Ephesians 4:25),[31] thereby affirming that a lie and the truth are diametrically opposed to one another. The *liars* who are excluded from heaven are described as *pseudes* (*psyoo-dace'*) in the Greek; in both cases (*pseudos* and *pseudes*), there is an obvious link to our English word *pseudo*, which means false or "not actually but having the appearance of" – there is a deceptive element to that which is *pseudo*.[32] Jesus made two statements that clarify this matter: 1) "I am the way, **the truth** …" (John 14:6), and 2) "the **devil** … **is a liar** [*pseustes* (noun)]" (John 8:44); moreover, the devil loves to feign truth under the guise of an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).[33] This is why a lie is so significant before the Lord: it is contrary to His

[29] Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.
[30] Strong's Online.
[31] Ibid.
[32] http://www.dictionary.com/browse/pseudo?s=t
[33] Strong's Online.

essence as the Truth; we are specifically told that "[it is] impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18).

John sees the Lord Jesus standing on the heavenly Mt. Sion along with all of the saints of the OT; he sees the *captivity* that Jesus led as captives into glory (Ephesians 4:8). They are one of us, since their sins were also paid for by the Lord, yet they are singing a very unique song of praise to Jehovah – for they alone lived in hope of the coming Savior Who would conquer sin forever.

6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

John then sees *another angel* (*allos aggelos*), which speaks of an additional messenger who is similar to the first one.[34] What John has just described is the Lamb of God with the OT saints on Mt. Sion in heaven, who are singing their personal song of praise to the Lord. How is this *another angel*? There is an element of mystery to this. It could be that since the Lord and the OT saints are all in glorified bodies (physical bodies that have been transformed for heaven) that this might be a messenger in a glorified body (one of the 144,000). Perhaps this is simply another messenger from God, and therein is the similarity. Or, maybe this is figurative language that speaks of the Lord's messengers taking His Gospel message around the world.

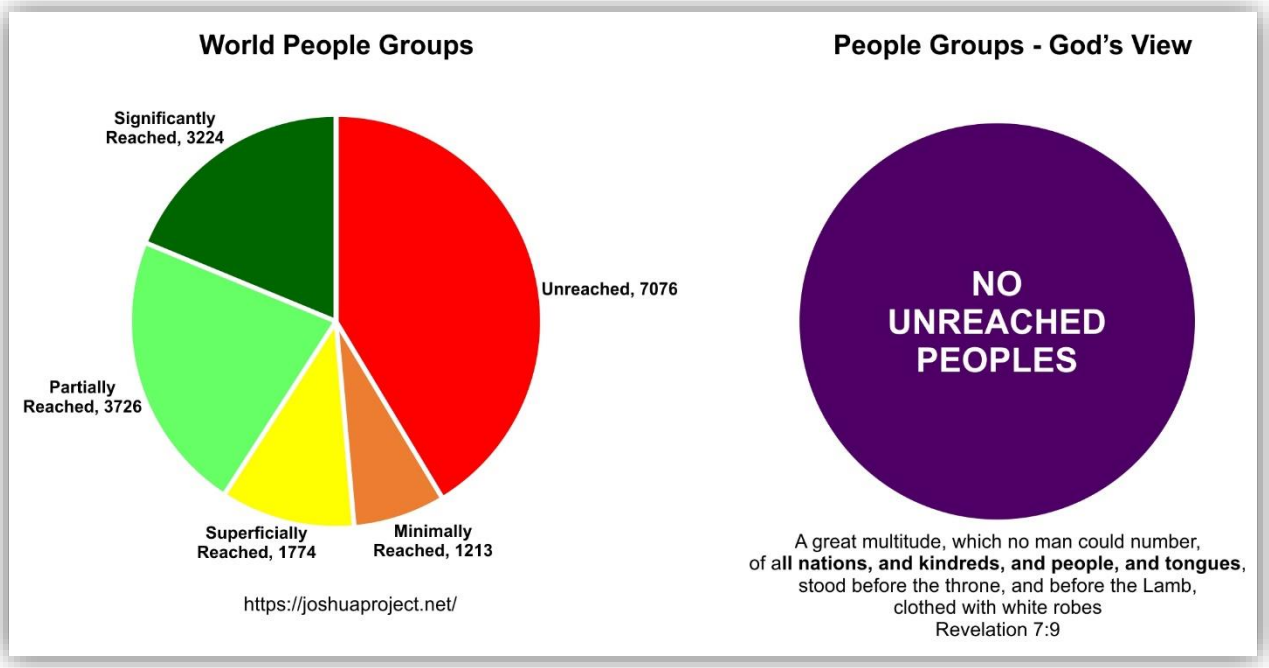
Midst of heaven is from one Greek word that speaks of the zenith, the highest point of the sun during the day, or directly overhead.[35] This angel is flying where those on earth will be sure to hear his message; he is not off in the distance where his message will be lost to those who are his intended audience – everyone will hear it. Tradition tells us that the Apostles of the Lord proclaimed His message from Spain to India – the western and eastern extremities of the Roman Empire.[36] Beginning with the miracles of languages at Pentecost (Acts 2:6), it is clear that the Lord would be sure that everyone would understand the message that was being declared.

[34] Friberg Lexicon.
[35] Ibid.
[36] https://www.quora.com/Where-did-each-of-the-apostles-travel-after-Christs-ascension

We are told that this messenger has the *everlasting gospel to preach* to those who are dwelling upon the earth. The words *gospel* and *preach* are tightly related; the former is the Greek word *euaggelion* (*yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on*), which means good news – God's Message of salvation for men, and the latter is the verb form of the same Greek word from which we get *evangelize*. The Good News of salvation is being proclaimed to everyone who is on the earth – no matter where they are (*nation*), who they are (*kindred*), or what language they might speak (*tongue*). As Jesus explained coming events to His disciples, He said: "And this gospel [*euaggelion*] of the kingdom shall be [*will be*, future tense] preached [*kerusso*, to proclaim openly] in all the world for a witness unto all nations [those who do not believe in the Lord]; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).[37] Paul explained to the Colossians that the work of Christ to sanctify them is dependent upon their faithfulness to "the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached [literally: *Gospel, which ye heard, openly proclaimed* (*kerusso*)] to every creature which is under heaven …" (Colossians 1:23).[38] The Good News of the salvation that God has made available to everyone has been sounded out across the world, beginning with the work of the Apostles.

Today, mission organizations like to speak of *reached* and *unreached* people groups; the *reached* people groups are considered to be those that have "the presence of churches with the intention and ability to share the gospel with the rest of the people group."[39] By default, the *unreached* people groups are the rest – those who have no "Christian" churches and no access to the Gospel. We are told that there are just under 17,000 people groups in the world, and that about 7,000 of these are considered to be *unreached*.[40] Jesus said that His Gospel would be openly proclaimed as a testimony to all of the world, and there are many mission groups that are zealously working to make this happen in our time. However, the vast majority of these same missions are also Ecumenical, and so it is apparent that, despite working to impact the *unreached*, they have departed from the Gospel and are not carrying the Good News to those in need. So, despite their best efforts to identify and contact the *unreached* people groups, they do not have the testimony of the Lord to share with them – all that they have is a religious form of a tainted gospel that is devoid of life. In essence, they are perpetuating the program of the Pharisees, which Jesus soundly condemned: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees [and the

[37] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[38] Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong's Online.
[39] http://www.thetravelingteam.org/articles/unevangelized-or-unreached-why-the-difference-matters
[40] https://joshuaproject.net/



Ecumenical], hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). As they labor to *reach* the *unreached*, we must recognize that they are working strenuously according to the dictates of their own agenda, but that, without the true Gospel, they will never fulfill Jesus' words. Nevertheless, we are assured that "a great multitude … of all nations [every nation], and kindreds [tribes, ethnically similar groups], and people[s], and tongues" will be praising the Lord in heaven (Revelation 7:9); the assurance is that there will be no *unreached* people group when the Lord closes the day of salvation.

The message that is proclaimed to all people is quite simple: have fear for God, give Him glory, and worship Him as the Creator. We might wonder at this for we are told that the messenger is proclaiming the eternal Gospel; yet this doesn't seem to be what we might expect of the Gospel message. The key comes in the two words: *fear God*. *Fear* is not in the active voice (i.e., it is not something that we are to do), rather, it is in the passive form and is something that becomes ours. This *fear* (reverence, awe, respect[41]) that we have for God is not generated by us but is formed within us as we come to know the Lord of our salvation – it is a by-product of our close relationship with Him. This is the Gospel applied! A lack of fear for the Lord is indicative of an absence of the eternal Gospel in the heart: the robe of

[41] Gingrich Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

righteousness and holiness of the Lord has not been donned (Ephesians 4:24) and we are not new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, the *fear* that is noted by this messenger is a natural product of a cultivated relationship with the God of all creation – it is the living Gospel at work in the heart.

The proclamation continues: give to Him *glory* (*doxa*, praise) because the *hour* (appointed time) of His judgment (*krisis*, a separating) has come.[42] There is only one reason to give glory to God during the time of His judgment, and that is because "*there is* therefore now no condemnation [a negative judgment] to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit [living in obedience to the Lord]" (Romans 8:1). It is only as we walk in faithfulness with the Spirit of God that we can have no fear of His judgment. By contrast, those who walk according to the flesh (after their own desires) aspire to the things of the flesh, and "to be carnally minded [*phronhma ths sarkos*, the mindset (way of thinking) of the flesh*] *is* death … because the carnal mind [* exactly the same Greek phrase] *is* enmity against God" (Romans 8:6-7).[43] It is so clear that when the judgment of the Lord comes, there is only one way for us to give Him glory in that moment, and that is if we have been living in faithfulness (obedience) to Him. Jesus told us so plainly: "… he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same [a demonstrative Greek pronoun that means, this one!] shall be saved [future tense, speaking of when *the end* will come]" (Mark 13:13).[44] Once again, to ascribe glory to the Lord in the time of His judgment can only come through an established relationship with Him, which, in turn, only comes through being born anew from on high. When God's wrath is poured out upon the unrighteous who are dwelling on the earth, we are told that they "blasphemed the name of God … and they repented not to give him glory" (Revelation 16:9). In order to give acceptable praise unto God, we must first have appropriated the life-changing message of the Gospel.

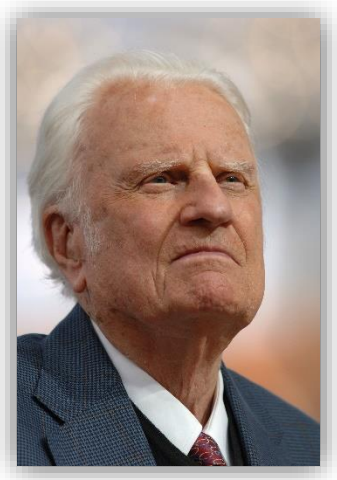
God's judgment – has it come, is it still coming, or both? *Judgment* is from the Greek word *krisis*, which is the noun form of *krino* that means to judge or choose.[45] The essence of *krisis* is separation; within its common legal application, it speaks of a decision or a verdict, and, when it is from an impartial court, of justice.[46] God's judgment (justice) began in the Garden of Eden when He laid penalties upon Adam

[42] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[43] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.
[44] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[45] Strong's Online.
[46] Strong's Online; http://www.preceptaustin.org/2_peter_24-11#judgment

and Eve for their sin (His mercy and grace provided them with a means of salvation) and assured Satan of his future defeat (Genesis 3:14-19, 21). This was clearly demonstrated when the Lord accepted the offering of Abel (because it met His requirements) and rejected Cain's because he refused to submit to what the Lord required (Genesis 4:4-5). However, there came a very specific time when the administration of God's judgment brought Him great glory. The Psalmist spoke of this coming day: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:5), and the writer of Hebrews explained the application of the Psalmist's prophecy: "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2:9). Jesus, as the Son of God **and** the Son of man, broke the power of Satan by willingly giving His life for the sins of the world (Hebrews 2:14). Through His shed blood, death, burial, and resurrection, the Lord Jesus ushered in the New Covenant, under which God now places His Laws (the Ten Commandments) upon our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Hebrews 10:11-17) and takes up residence within us (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-11). Along with the establishment of the New Covenant, the breaking of Satan's power came in fulfillment of God's promise that had been made in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 2:14). The Lord's justice against Satan was sealed at the cross. As Jesus, being God the Son, faced death and separation from God the Father, His prayer was: "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). As the Lamb of God stands in the presence of the Father in heaven, the hosts of angels and all in heaven and earth proclaim that He Who died is worthy to receive *glory* (Revelation 5:12-13). Jesus' sacrifice on the cross fulfilled all of the OT sacrificial practices, sealed God's judgment of the devil, and brought Him glory that is acclaimed by every creature in heaven and earth – but not by the men and women who refuse to acknowledge Him or live in obedience to His will, nor the devil and his demons.

In the future, the judgment of God will also be expressed against the unrighteous when they stand before Him to be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:13). We are considering the message of the angel who is proclaiming the Good News for all to hear, yet we are aware of so many in the world today who have never heard the Gospel – how do we reconcile these? The Lord has assured us that no people will be left out of those who will proclaim His praise in the heavenly realm (Revelation 7:9-10). We understand that the life of the Gospel is open to *whosoever will*, and that the Lord will not force anyone into His kingdom nor will He force anyone to remain in His kingdom, should they choose to *depart* from Him (Hebrews

3:12). He has also clarified for us that the decisions that we make regarding His Message will impact those who follow us: children, grandchildren, etc.: "I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting [appointing, assigning] the iniquity [punishment for sin] of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5; cp. Matthew 12:30).[47] The choices that we make (either to live in obedience to the Lord or not) will impact those who come after us; there are consequences for sin that go beyond the act itself, and reach beyond the perpetrator. Adam's choice plunged all of mankind into sin – we are now born in sin. King Saul chose to act presumptuously and it was declared to him: "The LORD hath rent [torn] the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou" (1 Samuel 15:28);[48] one act, and the Lord removed his descendants from ruling over Israel. The simple choice to depart from the Lord, or to ignore His Word, can plunge generations into spiritual darkness, whether that is gross paganism or self-righteous religious activities, it does not make a difference – both are destined for eternal punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). This has troubled the minds of many so that they are prepared to echo the words of Billy Graham: "I used to think that pagans in far-off countries were … going to hell … I no longer believe that."[49] "What God is doing today is calling people out of the world for His name. Whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the body of Christ because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light they have and I think they're saved and they're going to be with us in heaven."[50] Unfortunately for Billy and those of like mind, ignoring or rationalizing away what the Lord has said, does not change it; there is a judgment coming for the unrighteous who do not accept His victorious judgment that was won at the cross.



Billy Graham

[47] Strong's Online.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Cathy Burns, Billy Graham and His Friends, p. 377.
[50] http://www.ukapologetics.net/11/graham.htm; here Billy Graham voiced an extreme form of Calvinism: God will save whomever He wants, regardless of whether they want to be saved or not.

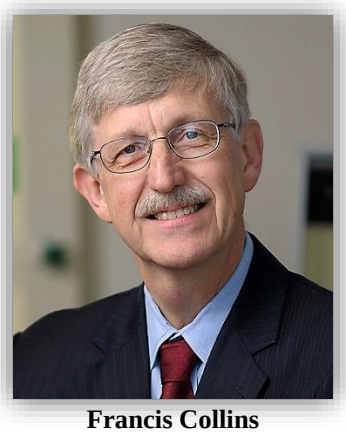
The message is to have a fear of God, to give to Him glory, and, finally, even (*and*) to worship Him Who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and springs (*fountains*) of waters. *Worship* (*proskuneo – pros-koo-neh'-o*) speaks of bowing, or prostrating, oneself in a demonstration of reverence.[51] This is a matter of the created acknowledging the superiority of the Creator of all things. It is a sure promise that everyone will bow before God: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear [oath of allegiance; acknowledging God's superiority (Romans 14:11)]" (Isaiah 45:23).[52] There are three occasions when this will hold true: 1) for the faithful child of God there is a willing submission to the Lord expressed through a life of obedience to Him, 2) when the Lord Jesus rules the earth with a rod of iron (the Millennium), everyone will bow before Him even though their hearts may not be changed, and 3) when the unrighteous dead are raised to stand before God for their final judgment – they will bow, with a full understanding of the righteousness of God, but it will be too late for their salvation. In truth, as God has declared, every knee will bow before Him; the only question is: will we do so freely in faithful submission to His will, or will we be numbered among those who will only bow before Him when they face His judgment? Why would we not willingly bow before the Creator of all things? The simple answer is that if you do not acknowledge that God is the Creator of the universe, then why would you bow before Him?

The development of the universe, plants, animals, and man, without a Creator, is not a new concept. In fact, there is evidence that several centuries BC, various concepts of natural selection and cross-species development were proposed among Greek, Roman, and Chinese philosophers.[53] During the peak years of Islamic control, their philosophers also explored the idea of mineral to plant to animal advancement.[54] What has become known as Darwinism is merely a refined version of a philosophy that has been around for millennia – a philosophy that is based upon man's wisdom and a rejection of the personal God of the Bible. A theory of life (evolution) that we might be inclined to dismiss as being anti-Christian has been taking on a new appeal as Satan works his magic to meld evolution and religion together; the interesting thing is that he is actually working this project from both sides – not just the godless side. In 1948, Harold Ockenga proposed a New

[51] Strong's Online.
[52] BDB; Friberg Lexicon.
[53] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_evolutionary_thought#Islamic_philosophy_and_the_struggle_for_existence
[54] Ibid.

Francisco J. Ayala

Evangelicalism that he envisioned would open the doors to a "reexamination of theological problems such as the antiquity of man, the universality of the Flood, God's method of creation, and others."[55] His proposal was, in effect, an admission that believing that God created the universe in six days is a problem; therefore, before even opening a dialogue on the matter, he virtually conceded that a created, young-earth view is wrong. On the other side are men like Francisco J. Ayala, an ordained Dominican priest who pursued a career in genetics, and who advocates the need "for scientists to engage religious people in dialogue."[56] Clearly, such a dialogue with Ockenga would give Ayala considerable advantage since Ockenga made it known that he was looking for something other than what has traditionally been considered to be a Biblical view of creation. Ayala states that never, during his five years of study to become a Dominican priest, was Darwinism ever considered to be an enemy to his Catholic faith.[57] Likewise, Evangelicals, picking up on Ockenga's proposal, have joined the ranks of those who are merging evolution and "faith." Francis S. Collins, a geneticist who is identified as being an *evangelical Christian*,[58] theorizes that "God chose to create the world by way of evolution," and he is hopeful that his philosophy will "replace intelligent design, which he derides as 'not a scientific proposal' and 'not good theology either.'"[59] However, consider his explanation of what it means for man to be created in the image of God: "human-like creatures had evolved to the point where they had the mental capacity to reason; God then endowed them to distinguish between good and evil."[60] This bizarre scenario might seem to


Francis Collins

[55] Harold J. Ockenga, *Foreword* to The Battle for the Bible by Harold Lindsell.
[56] https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-christian-mans-evolution/
[57] Ibid.
[58] http://www.pewforum.org/2008/04/17/the-evidence-for-belief-an-interview-with-francis-collins/; even though Collins says that he is not a Catholic (http://www.explorefaith.org/faces/my_faith/dr._francis_s._collins_on_faith_and_science.php), Pope Benedict XVI appointed him to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Collins), clear evidence that he is very Ecumenical and only religious at best.
[59] http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1895284,00.html
[60] Ibid.

C. S. Lewis

be completely unbelievable, and yet this is what Collins, as an Evangelical, proposes, and this is a heresy that the revered Evangelical theologian C.S. Lewis embraced as being true.[61] As God is lowered within Evangelical thinking, it becomes less likely that they will see any need to submit to Him; nevertheless, God's Word assures us that everyone will bow before the Lord, whether in this life or when they are judged and condemned to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:12-15).

The message of the Gospel of God will reach to all peoples; however, Jesus also told us that the pathway to life is narrow, and that there will be few who will find it (Matthew 7:14). Yet, there is another factor that we also need to keep in mind. Within three generations, we have seen the demise of God's Message of salvation among Evangelicals: when Ockenga first made his proclamation of a New Evangelicalism (NE) in 1948, the truth of the Gospel was still well known, but his heresy "received a hearty response from many evangelicals"[62]; the next generation may have heard the truth but they were primarily raised on the fallacies of NE; the third generation has never heard the truth, and they believe that the lies of NE are, in fact, the true Gospel. Very quickly the Gospel has been stripped of its life, and those who are now convinced that they are saved are spiritually no better off than the darkest pagan; actually, they are worse off for they believe that they are destined for heaven when, in fact, their faith, which has been placed in the devil's teaching, has set them firmly on the road to hell – their delusion of being saved prevents them from ever seeking the truth of God.

Therefore, people groups that have had the message of the Gospel in the past, may not have it any longer – yet they have not been overlooked in receiving the message of life. An example would be the Waldenses of northern Italy/southern France. For

[61] http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1895284,00.html.
[62] Ockenga, *Foreword*, Battle.

centuries they held tenaciously to the true Scriptures, and were severely persecuted by the Roman Catholics because they would not submit to them; today they are as liberal as everyone else (being members of the World Council of Churches) and have welcomed Pope Francis who extended an apology from the Roman Catholic Church for their historic persecution.[63] How quickly stalwarts of the faith can become liberals who have departed from the faith. Nevertheless, the assurance that we have from God's Word is that no people group will be missed: "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). Even though people groups today may well have lost God's message of salvation, it seems clear that they will be represented in heaven – perhaps not by their present members, but by their ancestors who knew and accepted God's truth.

8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

John now tells us of another (*allos*, similar) messenger bringing a very different message; first there is a proclamation of the Gospel, and now a declaration of the state of the religion of Satan.

Earlier, when we looked at the destruction of the false religious system over which the False Prophet will preside, we saw that Jesus declared Babylon to have fallen, and that it became the home of demons (Revelation 18:2). Here, the fallen state of Babylon is again proclaimed, and, once again, *fallen* is in the active voice, which means that it is Babylon that actively pursued this fallen state.[64] The reason for this fallen state is spelled out: she has given (*made drink* – perfect tense, it was completed in the past, with ongoing consequences) to all peoples (*nations*) of the intoxicating (*wine*) passion (*wrath – thumos*) of her spiritual fornication.[65] Remember that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned [all sin]" (Romans 5:12).[66] Sin

[63] https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-turin-waldensians/pope-asks-pardon-from-waldensian-protestants-for-past-persecution-idUSKBN0P214F20150622
[64] Strong's Online.
[65] Strong's Online; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#AORIST.
[66] Friberg Lexicon.

entered once and, from then on, is an inherited part of everyone who is born into this world; the spiritual fornication of *Babylon* took place with Adam, but the impact has touched all of his children.

As Eve was deceived with the promise that she and Adam would *be as gods*, the religion of *Babylon* (which means *the gate of the gods*) entered into the heart of man; Adam chose to place his faith in something other than Jehovah (which is spiritual fornication), and the religion of the devil was born (Genesis 3:5).[67] When Cain killed Abel, it was out of jealousy because the Lord showed favor to Abel's offering and rejected his (Genesis 4:3-5); the first murder was committed because of the devil's religion. Cain, under the influence of *Babylon* through which he was considered to be a god, brought of the fruit of his labor to Jehovah. His offering was after the manner of the fig-leaf clothing that Adam and Eve had fashioned; from the perspective of *Babylon*, it appeared to be effective, but, before God, it was unacceptable. Therefore, Cain's murder of Abel was carried out under the influence of *Babylon*. "And in her [Babylon] was found the blood of prophets, and of saints [earlier she is noted as being 'drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus' (Revelation 17:6)], and of **all that were slain** upon the earth" (Revelation 18:24). Although this *Babylon* is particularly responsible for the shed blood of those who have been faithful to the Lord, ultimately she is responsible for everyone who has been killed on the earth – murder and death are a part of who she is. Satan sold the concept of *Babylon* to Adam and Eve as an opportunity, but it proved to be the gateway to sin, death, and misery.

This angel follows after the one who proclaimed the Gospel; here are the two options that everyone faces in life: Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30). The fallen attraction of *Babylon* will seldom appear to be something as distasteful as spiritual fornication; for Eve, it carried the prospect of greatness, goodness, and appeared to be something altogether desirable (Genesis 3:6). Do the positive, feel-good pep-talks of Joel Osteen appear to be spiritual fornication? Do the smooth words of Chuck Swindoll betray the barb that they contain? Does the love, fellowship, and unity of the Ecumenical come across as bearing everlasting destruction? Of course not! Yet in each case there has been a departure from the truth of God's Word, and **any and every deviation from His truth is an act of spiritual fornication**. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [keep an eye on, or watch out for] them which cause divisions [standing apart; the context identifies this as a separation from the Truth – Christ] and offences [stumbling

[67] https://www.ancient.eu/babylon/

blocks] contrary to [*para* – alongside of] the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid [turn away from] them. For they that are such serve [*douleuo* – to perform the duties of a slave, obey] not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly [desires]; and by good words [smooth speech] and fair speeches [flattery] deceive [*completely delude*] the hearts of the simple [naïve, unsuspecting]" (Romans 16:17-18).[68] This is very significant, for it is not a warning against the world at large, but against those who will proclaim teachings that are, in many respects, quite close to the truth of the Scriptures (they are *alongside of* the truth, not diametrically opposed to it). This is particularly true of Ecumenical Evangelicals; they know the language of Christianity and can make their position appear to be kind, loving, and Biblically based. However, they have placed the unity and loving fellowship of Ecumenism ahead of the Lord – they do not *serve* the Lord Jesus, but are obedient to their own passions (a broad unity and fellowship). God has unequivocally declared: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3), yet they have casually placed their Ecumenical love and unity ahead of the Lord, which is nothing other than spiritual fornication – the true character of Babylon. The fact that they refuse to separate from error demonstrates their willful spiritual fornication and their violation of God's Word (2 Corinthians 6:17). Spiritually, we are to have no part with them – to do so is to become tainted by their uncleanness before God and to face His rejection.

The everlasting Gospel and the lure of *Babylon* have both existed since the Garden of Eden. We've just seen that the devil's religion began when Eve succumbed to the temptation to take of the forbidden fruit. The expression of the Gospel came in the form of the *coats of skin* that Jehovah made for Adam and Eve; this was the first blood that was shed in order to provide a covering for sin. However, the basis for this first sacrifice was established even before God spoke light into being. The Book of Life is said to belong to the "Lamb [Who was] slain from the foundation [*katabole* – beginning] of the world" (Revelation 13:8), which can only mean that the Word (Who became the Lamb) was identified as being the sacrifice for sins before man was created.[69] God chose the elect in Christ (those who remain faithfully in Him) "before the foundation [*katabole* – beginning] of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).[70] That's why the Gospel message is everlasting – it was in the mind

[68] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

[69] Gingrich Lexicon.

[70] Ibid.; This is NOT predestination as the Calvinists understand it; this is God establishing, before the creation of the world, that only those who are *in Christ* will be counted as His elect; therefore, the *elect* are those who, in faith, choose to follow Christ **and** remain faithfully *in Him* unto the end (Matthew 24:13). *John Smith* was not predestinated to eternal life by God, but he can enter into His glory by placing his faith in Christ and then living in

of Jehovah before He began the creation of the world. God was not caught unprepared by the deception of Eve and the sin of Adam; God's covering for their sin was simply the **everlasting** Gospel being applied. The shed blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, "was foreordained (*foreknown*; perfect tense – completed in the past with ongoing results) before the foundation [*katabole* – beginning] of the world" (1 Peter 1:20).[71] The skins that God gave to Adam and Eve as a covering for their sin was the first sacrifice that was made for sin (the first blood shed), which foreshadowed the sacrifice that Christ, the Lamb of God, would make upon the cross for the sins of all of mankind. God desired a people who would choose to commune with Him; through disobedience, Adam broke the fellowship that had been in place ever since he had been created in sinless perfection. Nevertheless, the Lord immediately implemented the blood sacrifice through which there might come a restoration of fellowship with Him – the willing sacrifice to be made by the Word as the sinless Lamb, was already in place.

9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

A third messenger appears; these angels come sequentially: first with a declaration of the Gospel of God, then a reminder of the fallen state of the false religion of the devil, and now we are told of the fate of those who yield to the agenda of the Antichrist. As Jesus began to explain end-time events to His disciples, He opened with the warning: "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4); in other words, He gave them (and us) the command to be continually observant and discerning with the intent that no one will be able to lead us away from the truth.[72]

faithful obedience to Him to the end of his days on earth. It is *John Smith* who must believe (have faith), and, thereby, he is a member of the *elect* as long as he remains faithfully *in Christ*.

[71] Strong's Online; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#AORIST.

[72] Strong's Online.

One messenger bears the truth of God, and two are sent to warn of those things of which we need to remain aware. When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we do not enter a pathway that is free of care or concern; rather, we enter a battlefield where we must wear the armor of God in order to faithfully stand against the cunning attacks of the devil (Ephesians 6:11). Most Christians today have bought into the fallacy that once they have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus for salvation, that there is nothing more; on the contrary, that is just the beginning of a lifelong struggle against the wiles of the devil, and, unless we are adequately prepared and equipped, it will not end well. Jesus very clearly stated: "he that shall endure [to remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same [this is the one who] shall be [future tense] saved" (Matthew 24:13).[73] Hence, there is great significance to the warnings that are proclaimed by these last two messengers!

The first two angels proclaim a message that is applicable to all ages; however, this angel has a message specifically for those who will face the rule of the Antichrist. When we studied the role and activities of the False Prophet, we learned that he will come to rally the world around the Antichrist; he will present the need to honor the Antichrist with an image to which everyone must bow, and he will use that image and the Antichrist's mark (which is a means to monitor personal activity) to close the net around those who are not supportive of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:14-17). This angel provides a glimpse into what lies in store for those who will comply with the demands of the Antichrist and his henchmen. The future of the Antichrist's supporters is sandwiched between two declarations of what it will take to receive God's judgment in this case: bowing before the Antichrist and his image, and receiving his mark.

Some have raised the hypothetical scenario of a Christian unintentionally receiving the mark of the Antichrist. It seems evident from Scripture that no one will receive the mark without understanding what it is, and that it represents allegiance to the agenda of the False Prophet and a commitment to the Antichrist. The False Prophet will make it very clear that there will be great temporal hardship for not taking the mark, but the eternal consequences for doing so will not be mentioned. Remember that when the Antichrist comes, he will appear to be the savior of the world – he will be the harbinger of peace in the midst of great turmoil. Every rational argument will be made to support him, but the child of God is called to remain faithful to the Lord alone (Exodus 20:3; Matthew 24:13). Jesus warned us of false messiahs and prophets who would come, and, if they are sufficiently persuasive,

[73] Friberg Lexicon.

they will be able to lead the child of God away from the truth (Matthew 24:24); "*The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords" (Psalm 55:21). Will a child of God receive the mark of the Antichrist unintentionally? – no! However, very convincing arguments will be made that might sway those who are not adequately grounded in the Truth. You will recall that some Seed from the Sower fell among thorns, and even though there was spiritual life (the Seed grew into a plant) it was choked out by the cares of this life (Luke 8:14); there will be those who will begin their journey with the Lord, but, through the oppression and persuasion of the False Prophet, they will fall away and be lost. It is against this possibility that Jesus issued His warning so that we might be prepared for such a time (Matthew 24:25).

The message that this angel brings is an explanation of what the future will hold for everyone who bows before the Antichrist and his image, and receives his mark. It is first noted that he will "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." *Drink* is in the indicative mood, which means that this is a statement of fact – this will occur! The wine that he will drink is the *wrath* (*thumos*) of God; *thumos* speaks of the expression of God's anger (*orge*) against sin.[74] Paul warned: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath [*orge*] of God upon the children of disobedience [*apeitheia*]" (Ephesians 5:6).[75] John the Baptist declared: "He that believeth [*pisteuo* – a present tense persuasion that is life-changing] on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not [*apeitheo* – to be disobedient; refuse to comply (unbelief)] the Son shall not [absolute] see [future tense] life; but the wrath [*orge*] of God abideth [*meno* – remains or continues] on him" (John 3:36).[76] The *orge* of God (His abiding wrath against sin) rests upon all who are living in disobedience to Him (even professing Christians!), i.e., they are living under God's wrath (*orge*) even while they might be enjoying the pleasures of this world; however, there will come a time when God's wrath (*orge*) will be expressed (*thumos*) against sinful mankind. "The Lord is not slack [slow] concerning his promise, as some men count [regard as] slackness [delay]; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9);[77] God's wrath (*orge*) is subject to His longsuffering patience for the repentant sinner, but, in His time, His wrath (*thumos*) will be expressed against the ungodly.

[74] Strong's Online.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Strong's Online; Liddell-Scott Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.
[77] Strong's Online.

The promise that is given to those who bow to the Antichrist and receive his mark is that they will partake of the expression of God's wrath that will be *poured out without mixture*. *Poured out* comes from the Greek word *kerannumi* (*ker-an'-noo-mee*), which primarily means to mix or to mingle. Within the Mediterranean region, it was difficult to have unfermented fruit juice; unless it was consumed right after being pressed, the juice would rapidly ferment and become extremely thick and strong.[78] Therefore, it was common for wine to be diluted with water in order to make it more palatable. On the flip side, it was also common to add wine to the typically stagnant and foul-tasting water so as to purify it and make it more pleasant. The essence is that wine needed to be prepared for consumption, and, in this case, we are told that such preparation has been done (*poured out* is in the perfect tense) *without mixture* – the wine will remain undiluted so that there will be nothing to reduce the sting of what the followers of Antichrist will receive.[79] The *thumos* of God has been prepared in its full strength in the *cup of his indignation* (*orge*); completing the figure of drinking the wine of God's wrath, His *thumos* will be served out of the cup of His wrath (*indignation*).[80]

The angel then goes on to explain exactly what the expression of God's wrath will mean for those who have bowed to the Antichrist and received his mark. They will be *tormented with fire and brimstone*. *Tormented* is from the Greek word *basanizo* and means to rub on a touchstone, which was used to test the purity of gold and silver.[81] The same word came to speak of torture being used to extract a confession, and we might wonder at its application in this matter.[82] As the fifth and sixth vials of God's wrath (*thumos*) are poured out upon the earth, we are given the response of those who are being burned by the sun (fifth vial) and who endure the painful blackness of the Antichrist's kingdom (sixth vial): they "blasphemed the name of God" and "blasphemed the God of heaven" (Revelation 16:9, 11).[83] They are being tested but are not coming out as being pure. The followers of the Antichrist, as they endure the torment of God's wrath, will blaspheme the One Who is subjecting them to His *thumos*. In this case, *fire* and *brimstone* are identified as being the source of the torment or test. They are synonymous with God's judgment; God poured these upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24), and Gehenna, the final

[78] http://www.wineinvestment.com/wine-blog/2015/11/wine-throughout-history-what-were-ancient-wines-really-like/
[79] Friberg Lexicon.
[80] Strong's Online.
[81] Strong's Online; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touchstone_(assaying_tool)
[82] Liddell-Scott Lexicon.
[83] Strong's Online.

destiny for the devil, his angels, and the unrighteous, is called the *lake of fire and brimstone* (Revelation 20:10).

The torment of those who submit to the Antichrist will be in the sight of (*presence of*) the holy angels and the Lamb, and the smoke from their torment will be ascending to ages of ages (*for ever and ever*). Within terms to which we can relate, they are absolutely *not having rest day and night*;[84] there will be no reprieve from the torment that they will endure, and, throughout this time, they will be blaspheming the name of the Lord God (as exemplified by their response to the plagues of God). Does this mean that those in heaven will forever be able to see the smoke of their torment rising? Could it be that even those in Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, will be able to observe the holiness and righteousness of heaven? The former would deepen our gratitude for the grace and mercy of God and forever dim the cost of following the Lord in this life. For the latter, it would intensify the misery of their existence with the devil and his hordes.

It's difficult to say why the torment of those who bow to the Antichrist and receive his mark is spelled out so explicitly, for their torment is the same as that which will be meted out to the Antichrist and the False Prophet (Revelation 19:20), to the devil (Revelation 20:10), to his angels (Matthew 25:41) and, in fact, to all of the unrighteous whose names will not be found in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15). Perhaps it underscores for us the absolute importance of knowing the Lord and His Word so that we might be dressed in His armor and prepared to test all things according to the Scriptures (1 John 4:1). Jesus warned us that it is possible for the *elect* to be lured away from His truth (Matthew 24:24), and the Antichrist will come with great eloquence and charisma as the savior of the world. Possibly, if we know how the Antichrist will come and the eternal cost of submitting to him, then we will be motivated to remain steadfast in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Within our English translation, this seems to be an ill-fitting comment that lacks any link to what has come before or to what follows. However, if we dig into the Greek just a little, perhaps we can understand its intent.

[84] Stephanus 1550 NT.

Patience is from the Greek word *hupomeno*, which speaks of faithful endurance through trials; *keep* is *tereo* (*tay-reh'-o*), meaning to attend carefully to something.[85] *Here* (*hode – ho'-deh*) can refer to a place (*at this place*, or *to this place*), or, less specifically, *under these circumstances*, or *on this occasion*.[86] From this we can have: *on this occasion* [when Antichrist is imposing his worship and his mark] *is the faithful endurance of the saints* [evident], *under these circumstances*, [the saints are] *attending carefully to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*.[87] It will be during the time of the Antichrist that the saints of God will be severely tested, and it will be those who remain faithful who will be the enduring saints, those who are keeping the commands of the Lord. Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep [*tereo*] my commandments" (John 14:15);[88] those who *love* the Lord will remain faithful to Him, carefully attending to what He has commanded, even through times of great trials. As we anticipate the coming of the Antichrist, it must become our habit to carefully follow the Lord's commands (beginning with the Ten Commandments that He has placed within our hearts – Hebrews 10:16) and to cultivate our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ through His Word. If we waiver in our faithfulness now, how will we be able to remain faithful when the price for doing so will be so much higher? "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5a); "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

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.

A voice from heaven specifically instructs John to write these words; therefore, they must be significant at this moment. This message comes on the heels of clarifying the end of those who submit to the Antichrist, and identifying the call to faithfulness in the face of tremendous temptation – so we must think of it within that context.

[85] Strong's Online.
[86] Gingrich Lexicon.
[87] Stephanus 1550 NT.
[88] Strong's Online.

Happy (*blessed*) are the *dead* who are dying *in the Lord* from the time of the Antichrist onward (*henceforth*).[89] First of all, it is very obvious that the *dead*, in this case, refers to the redeemed who have physically died, and not to those who are spiritually dead, since they abide under the wrath of God and are not *blessed* (Ephesians 5:6). However, lest we misunderstand upon whom God's wrath remains, let's take a moment to investigate this matter.

Three months after the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand, they heard Him speaking with Moses and they made this commitment: "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8). However, within 40 days of this, Aaron *fashioned* a golden calf for them and called it their god who had led them out of Egypt (Exodus 32:1-4); because of their actions, God's wrath was raised against them, and it was only Moses' careful intercession that saved them (Exodus 32:10-13). Israel's disobedience to the Lord incited His wrath against them.

When Josiah, king of Judah, discovered the Word of God while cleaning and repairing the temple of the Lord, he recognized that the Lord's wrath was against them because "our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, **to do** according unto all that which is written concerning us" (2 Kings 22:13). Once again, it was Israel's failure to be obedient to the Lord that had brought His wrath against them: "And **they left** the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and **served** groves [*asherah* – a goddess and partner of Baal] and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass" (2 Chronicles 24:18).[90] What is so evident through the example of Israel is that God's wrath on them followed their willing departure from His ways; when they turned away from following the Lord (i.e., became disobedient to Him), then His wrath would come against them.

John the Baptist said: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36); he describes the situation where God's wrath will abide upon someone. *Believeth* (*pisteuo*) means to be persuaded of, or to rely on, which means that it must impact how we live – we cannot demonstrate that we believe something unless we live in keeping with that conviction (James 2:18).[91] If we are simply inclined to believe something, then we are not truly persuaded and, so, we still do not believe it and it is not a conviction. Furthermore, *believeth* is in the present tense (which means that it is a continuous action); therefore, *he* who is believing *on the Son* (it is in the

[89] Strong's Online.
[90] Strong's Online; BDB.
[91] Strong's Online; Liddell-Scott.

active voice: *he* is doing the believing) must also be living in accordance with His commands (James 2:17), and, while he is so living, *he* is having (*hath* – present tense) everlasting life. However, *believeth not* is **not** *apisteo* (*not believe*, as we might think, and as used in Mark 16:11), rather it is *apeitheo*, which means to be disobedient, or to refuse to be compliant.[92] For the one who is being disobedient to the Lord (this, too, is in the present tense and active voice), there is no life, and God's wrath (*orge*) remains on him. The warnings of Scripture are very clear that the one who *believeth* can become *he that believeth not* (Hebrews 3:12). Keep in mind that anyone who is simply inclined to believe, really does not believe, and therefore, they, too, remain under God's wrath.

"For if we sin [present tense] wilfully [active disobedience] after that we have received [accepted, come to believe] the knowledge [a precise and correct, or full knowledge, which is what we receive when we place our faith in the Lord] of the truth, there remaineth [continues to exist absolutely] no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain [only] fearful looking for [an expectation] of judgment [condemnation] and fiery indignation [fierceness of fire (divine action)], which shall [is about to] devour [consume] the adversaries [those who stand against the Lord (Matthew 12:30)]. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses [Deuteronomy 17:6]: Of how much sorer [greater] punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy [deserving], who hath trodden under foot [treated with disdain; despised] the Son of God, and hath counted [regarded] the blood of the covenant [the blood that Jesus shed in order to bring cleansing from sin and to establish the New Covenant], wherewith he was sanctified [made holy], an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto [to insult or treat spitefully] the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:26-29).[93] What is so clear in Scripture is that the one who is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ can turn away from Him to their eternal destruction (Ezekiel 18:24); the writer of Hebrews is describing someone who has been made holy through the blood of Christ and the indwelling Spirit of God (*he was sanctified*)! Peter understood this, and, concerning such as these, wrote: "For it had been better for them not to have known [to know thoroughly; perfect tense – this happens only once when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for then God places His Law within us, along with His Spirit to mold the ongoing results of our one-time decision] the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:21).[94] Why would Peter say that it would be better

[92] Strong's Online; Liddell-Scott.
[93] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon; Liddell-Scott; Gingrich Lexicon.
[94] Strong's Online.

to have never known the Lord, than to have known and then turned away? The writer of Hebrews tells us that if we turn away from the Lord, there is then no possible way left for us to have our sins cleansed – we have turned away from the only means of salvation. "For it is impossible [something that cannot be done] for those who were once [one-time, only once] enlightened [cause to fully know; imbue with saving knowledge] … If they shall fall away [*having fallen away* (there is no *if* in the Greek)], to renew [restore] them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify [are crucifying] to themselves the Son of God afresh [again], and put him to an open shame [public disgrace] (Hebrews 6:4-6).[95] The foundation for saying that apostasy (falling away from the Lord) is a final condition from which there is no hope of recovery is this: Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world **only one time** (1 Peter 3:18), we can come to thoroughly know the Way **only once** (Hebrews 6:4), therefore, if we turn away from the Lord after having received the Truth (John 14:6), then there is absolutely no sacrifice available to atone for this sin (Hebrews 10:26).

This was also true under the Mosaic Laws: "But the soul that doeth *ought* presumptuously [high-handedly, arrogantly, willfully], *whether he be* born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth [blasphemes] the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people [the death penalty was applied]. Because he hath despised [perfect tense – completed action] the word of the LORD, and hath broken [perfect tense] his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity [punishment] *shall be* upon him" (Numbers 15:30-31).[96] Under the Mosaic tradition, despite the multitude of sacrifices that were prescribed, there was nothing to atone for the willful sin. The Lord made it very clear: "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned [be remembered]: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die" (Ezekiel 18:24).[97]

God's wrath (*orge*) abides upon those who have never accepted the truth, upon those who are only leaning toward believing, and upon those who have turned away from believing. We must be clear that, among those who have never accepted God's Truth, there are many religious people, even Ecumenical Evangelicals who profess to believe and yet refuse to practice the spiritual separation that the Lord requires (2 Corinthians 6:17, cp. John 3:36). We must also realize that being *inclined to believe*

[95] Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.
[96] Strong's Online; BDB.
[97] Strong's Online.

something does not embody true belief; all that it means is that we are leaning toward believing something but are not prepared to commit to it – we think that something may be right (even that it probably is right) but we are not prepared to live by it. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith [this is to ensure that we are not simply professing faith while not believing it]; prove your own selves [this requires us to test what we believe according to the unalterable truth of Scripture – are we genuine?]" (2 Corinthians 13:5a).[98]

The children of God who are on earth at the time of the Antichrist will face great persecution: "And it was given [appointed] unto him [the Antichrist] to make war with [against] the saints, and to overcome [conquer] them …" (Revelation 13:7).[99] You will recall that the Antichrist receives his power and authority from the devil (Revelation 13:2) who commissions the Antichrist to take up the fight that he is engaged in against those who are faithful to the Lord (Revelation 12:17). We have seen that, through the efforts of the riders of the red, black and pale-green horses, the population of the world will be dramatically reduced; however, throughout the decimation of the people, there will be a particular focus upon those who are the Lord's. The voice from heaven assures John (and us) that the faithful, who will be dying during the Antichrist's reign over the earth, will be happy for two reasons: 1) they *may rest from their labors*, and 2) their *works do follow them* – let's consider these two.

The life of a disciple of the Lord is one of difficulties and hardship (*labors*); the child of God has not been promised a life of ease (John 16:33), which is why Jesus carefully explained that we must first count the cost of following Him (Luke 14:28-33; cp., Luke 8:12-15). We are called to strive to enter through the narrow gate to the way of life (Luke 13:24), we must take up our cross (Luke 14:27), we must develop a singular focus on what the Lord desires (Luke 14:33; Hebrews 12:2), we must separate from all that is spiritually unclean (2 Corinthians 6:17), we must commit ourselves to knowing His Word (2 Timothy 2:15), we must live in obedience to the Lord's commands (John 14:15), we must be prepared for difficulties (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12) and we must be continually alert so that we are not deceived (Matthew 24:4; 1 Peter 5:8). None of these brings to mind a life of ease and relaxation; nevertheless, all of these are vital to living a life that is faithful to the Lord, and, without a continual faithfulness to the Lord, none of us will be saved (Matthew 24:13).

[98] Strong's Online.
[99] Friberg Lexicon.

Despite all of this, Evangelicals have allowed themselves to be duped into believing that if they pray a prayer for salvation, then they are guaranteed a place in heaven with the Lord; they choose to ignore God's call to obey, to bear their cross, to be separated to the Lord, to know the Scriptures, and to remain continually alert to error. In fact, they have committed their eternal destiny to the highly educated theologians and preachers of the day; all that they want to hear is the *simple gospel* of believe-and-receive and no more – unfortunately, that *simple gospel* is devoid of life because it is not found in Scripture. "For the time will come when they will not endure [bear, accept] sound doctrine [teaching]; but after their own lusts [desires] shall they heap to themselves [surround themselves with] teachers, having itching ears [they only want to hear what scratches their itch]; And they shall turn away *their* ears from [refuse to listen to] the truth, and shall be turned unto fables [tales, myths; i.e., lies]" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Turning away from the Truth only leaves the half-truths and untruths of the devil, which may often sound a lot like the Truth to the undiscerning. We have been warned to avoid those who have a message that is *alongside of* the truth of the Scriptures (Romans 16:17); truly, much of Evangelicalism holds to many things that are only a part of the truth of God's Word, but there is a consistent, stubborn refusal to separate from those who are in error – the *love* and *unity* of Ecumenism seems to hold them captivated. A faithful life to the Lord will be one that is fraught with difficulties, persecutions, and it will require tremendous energy and commitment to remain true to Him. As the faithful die under the hand of the Antichrist, they will leave all of their *labors* behind and find their rest in the Lord. This is true for every child of God, but for those who go through particularly difficult times, the *leaving* will be that much sweeter.

Of the faithful who die under the rule of the Antichrist, we are told that their deeds are following them.[100] It is always interesting to consider the contrast and close association between works and faith. Without question, we are saved by faith and absolutely not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16). However, and this is much less popular within Evangelical circles, it is equally true that unless works of obedience follow our faith, then it is dead (James 2:17), which simply means that it is of no effect. Even if we profess to be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but do not live in obedience to Him, then we are **not** saved (Matthew 7:21-23). We are told that Abraham "believed in the LORD; and he [the Lord] counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6); it was Abraham's faith that made him righteous before Jehovah – there is no mention of works. However, this declaration came **after**

[100] Stephanus 1550 NT.

Abraham had fulfilled God's requirement to leave country, kindred, and his father's house (Genesis 12:1). Although Abraham immediately left his country, he took his nephew with him; when the competition for water and grazing became too great in Canaan, he parted from his nephew (Genesis 13:11-12) – it was after this that Abraham's faith in the Lord was commended. The Lord clarifies that Abraham's faith was living because he "obeyed my [Jehovah's] voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5). The challenge that James lays down is this: "shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18); in other words, the only evidence for a living faith is works (obeying God's commandments).

We are very familiar with: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Yet Jesus openly declared: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth** the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21); and, again, "he that shall endure [remain faithful] unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).[101] What becomes abundantly evident is that even though we are saved through faith alone (without works), it is faithfully doing the will of God that will see us enter into heaven. To the Philippians, Paul stated: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12); after faith comes a necessary demonstration of that faith through appropriate works. After assuring the Ephesians that salvation comes by faith and not by works, the Spirit adds: "For we are his [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto [for the purpose of] good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).[102] "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24) – the works of the *new man* are *righteousness* and *holiness*. We have been saved by faith for the predetermined purpose of living out the good works of righteousness and holiness that God has prepared for us; faith first, and then works must follow. Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15); these are the *good works* that God has *ordained* for us, and we are to attend to them carefully (*keep*).[103] What is unmistakable is that our salvation is completely founded upon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, AND that our entrance into heaven is subject to a life

[101] Strong's Online.
[102] Friberg Lexicon.
[103] Strong's Online.

of obedience to the Lord. We are absolutely not saved by our works, but our failure to do the will of God will render our faith dead, and our salvation lost.

The *works* of those who will die during the time of the Antichrist will be following them; it will be how they live that will keep them *in the Lord* (Romans 8:1). Once more we are reminded that how we live is very important. Faith without obedience to the Lord is dead – there is no salvation in such a faith; that is not the faith that is taught in God's Word. Likewise, works without faith is legalism, which Jesus thoroughly condemned in the Pharisees (Matthew 23:23-24). Do not miss Jesus' words on this matter: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). The order is clear: faith, then works. Works that do not flow out of faith in the Lord Jesus (even those that are done in His name) will be identified as being sin (*iniquity*).[104]

14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

When we looked into the opening of the sixth seal, we included a study into Jesus' words to His disciples in Matthew 24 where He makes reference to the *sign of the Son of man* (Matthew 24:30). Without an explicit statement as to what this *sign* might be, it became apparent that the *cloud* (probably a very unique one) would be the sign. Once again, we have reference to a *cloud*, and it is *white* (*leukos* – a brilliant white).[105] Sitting upon this brilliant white cloud is Someone Whom John identifies as being *like unto the Son of man*. At the time when John was first called to write the Revelation, he heard a voice speaking to him, and when he was turned to see Who it was Who spoke, he saw Someone *like unto the Son of man* standing in the midst

[104] Friberg Lexicon.
[105] Strong's Online.

of seven lampstands (Revelation 1:13). In the Gospels, the phrase *Son of man* is used 80 times in reference to Jesus, compared to 27 times when He is called the Son of God. However, in the Revelation, there are only these two instances where the phrase *Son of man* appears, and both times John says that Jesus resembles (is *like*) *a son of man* (the Greek does not include a definite article).[106] It would seem that John, who was the disciple who was the closest to Jesus (John 13:23-24), should have been able to recognize the Lord; he was with Him for the three years of His ministry, and he saw Him in His glorified body after His resurrection, yet the One Whom John sees in these two instances in Revelation seems to be very different from the One Whom He had known on earth, and yet He retains His human form as *a son of man*.

In the first instance (Revelation 1:13), John saw Jesus in great brilliance and, most notably, out of His mouth came a large sword. This is not a weapon made for defensive fighting, but a large sword that is used in aggressive warfare; the Word of the Lord is used to draw that line of separation between the righteous and unrighteous – all things are open to Him (Luke 12:51; Hebrews 4:12-13). However, John now sees Jesus wearing a *golden crown* and holding a *sharp sickle* in His hand. A crown is typically an indication of an accomplishment (as a victor's crown), or it identifies the wearer as bearing royal authority.[107] For Jesus, it represents both, for He is the Victor over sin and the devil, **and** He is Jehovah, a member of the great I AM! Moreover, John sees the Victor with a harvesting tool in His hand. The picture of Jesus that was undoubtedly indelibly imprinted upon John's mind was that of His suffering and crucifixion; despite seeing Him resurrected and in His glorified body, the evidence of the cruelty that He bore would have overshadowed all else. Now John sees Him in glorious brilliance and wearing a victor's crown, yet, at the same time, retaining His body of flesh – He still appears as *a son of man*.

Jesus, sitting upon the cloud (the sign of His returning – Matthew 24:30) and displaying the crown of His victory, is prepared to harvest – He is holding a sharp sickle. Notice the timing of His readiness for the harvest: it comes after the OT saints have been sealed into God's everlasting kingdom (Revelation 14:1), after the Good News of God has been declared to the world (vs. 6-7), after the warning concerning the false religious system of Satan (v. 8), and after the pronouncement of the devastation that will come to those who follow the Antichrist (vs. 9-11). The harvest does not come before the Antichrist, but after he has established his reign over the earth and during the time when the children of God are being killed by him (v. 13).

[106] Stephanus 1550 NT.
[107] Friberg Lexicon.

As the Lord waits in readiness for the harvest, another (*allos* – another of the same kind) *angel* (messenger) comes out of the temple in heaven. The context would indicate that this is a messenger from among the 144,000. Jesus has been specifically identified as being like unto a *son of man*, which places an emphasis upon His identification with the sons of Adam. Therefore, consistency would require that this messenger, likewise (*allos*), should have a glorified physical body – one of the OT saints who are among the *firstfruits* of the harvest of the righteous (Revelation 14:4). The message of this *angel* is for Jesus, and it is that the time has come to reap. To His disciples, Jesus explained: "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32); He was speaking specifically of the time when He would come with great power and glory to gather His elect together. Everything is in readiness for the ingathering harvest of the righteous – those who have remained faithful to the Lord unto the end. The message that the angel brings is from the Father (*out of the temple*): "the time is come for thee to reap." The time is right, according to the Father, and the harvest is ready.

Thrust comes from the Greek word *pempo*, which primarily means to send – to move something from one place to another;[108] unlike our English word *thrust*, there is no concept of force or violence in *pempo*.[109] The thought is that the Lord will apply His sickle to the harvest of the earth; the task will be accomplished without force. The harvest will begin suddenly at the time determined by the Father, but it will not be carried out forcefully.

Then we are told that Jesus *thrust in his sickle on the earth*. However, *thrust*, in this case, is a different Greek word: *ballo*, which means to cast, or to put.[110] Giving consideration to the context, this means that the Lord placed His sickle onto the earth, and *the earth was reaped*. It is the Lord Who carries out the harvest of the earth, and, therefore, this is speaking of the time when the Lord will come with His angels to gather His own from the uttermost parts of heaven and earth (Matthew 24:31). This is all a part of the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6), keeping in mind that the harvest of the righteous includes both the first fruits and the ingathering of the full harvest. This is the time when the seventh seal is opened and heaven falls silent.

[108] Friberg Lexicon.
[109] http://www.dictionary.com/browse/thrust?s=t
[110] Friberg Lexicon.

17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

After the Lord has accomplished the harvest of the righteous from the earth, we are told that *another* (*allos*) *angel* comes out of the temple in heaven and he, too, is holding a *sharp sickle*. Following this, yet *another* (*allos*) messenger appears, coming from the altar that is in heaven. Earlier we noted that it is the altar of incense that is in heaven – that place where the prayers of the saints come before the throne of God. This angel (who has authority over the fire that is upon the altar of incense) comes away from the altar with instructions for the angel with the sickle. He tells him to *thrust* (*pempo*) in his sickle to gather in the grapes of the earth; again there is no thought of force in this action (see above).[111] This is a second harvest, but it is very different from the first one.

This is the harvest of grapes; the main harvest of grain has already been completed – i.e., the first resurrection, the ingathering of the righteous.[112] The prophet Joel wrote of the grape harvest: "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat [meaning, Jehovah has judged]: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full [where the grapes are trodden to release their juice], the fats [that into which the strained juice flows] overflow;

[111] Strong's Online.
[112] https://www.gci.org/law/festivals/harvest

for their wickedness *is* great" (Joel 3:12-13).[113] What is evident is that the Lord is using the grape harvest processes to symbolize His future dealings with the wicked. There will be a gathering of the unrighteous to a place where God will judge them, and, because of their great wickedness, the evidence of their judgment will overflow.

We are told that the harvested grapes will be *cast* (*ballo*) into the *great winepress of the wrath of God*.[114] In keeping with Joel's prophecy, the winepress speaks of the judgement of God (*Jehoshaphat*). *Wrath*, in this case comes from the Greek word *thumos*, which speaks of an expression of anger; this is contrasted with *orge*, which is a constrained and long-enduring anger. God's *orge* against sinful men will find expression at a future date when the vials of His wrath will be poured out (*thumos*) upon unrighteous mankind (at the end of Antichrist's reign; Revelation 16). This second harvest will be another one of the times when the *orge* of God will be expressed (*thumos*).

We are told of two great judgments that will come against the wicked on earth in the latter days (see the summarizing chart at the end of this study). We have already looked at the first one: it is the defeat of the armies that the Antichrist and the False Prophet will lead into the Valley of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16; 19:17-21). As the Lord Jesus descends from heaven to defeat these armies and establish His millennial reign, we are given a glimpse into the two judgments that He will inflict upon the unrighteous on earth: "[**Judgment One**]And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: [**Judgment Two**] and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness [*thumos*] and wrath [*orge*] of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:15).[115] At the battle of Armageddon, the birds are called to come and feast on the flesh of all kinds of men; the Lord slays the armies, and the *fowls were filled with their flesh* (Revelation 19:18, 21). This is a relatively localized judgment of the armies coming against the Lord; we read nothing of blood flowing. However, in the second judgment it is noted that the Lord will tread the winepress of God's wrath; you do not tread a winepress without the juice flowing – this will be a judgment that will make the blood flow. It is of this judgment that we read in our passage.

We are told that this *winepress*, which now contains the unrighteous, will be *trodden* outside of the city, which undoubtedly refers to Jerusalem. This is another evidence that sets this apart from the judgment that the Lord administers in the

[113] Strong's Online.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

Valley of Armageddon where there is no city to speak of. However, after the millennial reign of Jesus, Satan will be loosed to deceive the peoples of the earth and he will gather them together from all over the earth – an innumerable host that will come and surround Jerusalem, the Lord, and His saints (Revelation 20:7-9). We then read that fire will come down from the Lord in heaven and will destroy (*devour*) these multitudes, which does not sound much like the treading of a winepress. However, as Moses prepared Israel to take the land of Canaan, he said this: "Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee; ***as* a consuming fire he shall destroy them**, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee" (Deuteronomy 9:3). Even though it was Israel who was to fight the wicked of Canaan by doing battle with them, Moses states that if they will remain faithful to the Lord, then He will destroy the nations like a *consuming fire*; it is metaphorical language used to illustrate just how effective the Lord will work on their behalf. As Satan draws his people together as a noose around Jerusalem, the angel bearing the sickle, on the pronouncement of the angel who has authority over fire, harvests those who have made Satan their god. Although Satan seeks an opportunity to wage war against the Lord, we see that this spells his end and the end for the unrighteous: Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire, the present heavens and earth vanish, and the dead are called to stand before God (Revelation 20:10-15). This will be the last blood that Satan will cause to flow, and, considering that the number of the people with him is *as the sand of the sea*, it is no wonder that the blood will be deep around Jerusalem.

As the dead stand before God, they will be judged *according to their works* and the Book of Life: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works … And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:12, 15). It is apparent that the Lord will review the works of the unrighteous so that they will clearly understand their failure before Him – their condemnation to the Lake of Fire will be true justice, and they will understand that. For those who are born during the Millennium, and come to salvation, a check will be made in the Book of Life for their names and they will enter the eternal glories of the new heaven and earth. "For by grace are ye saved through faith … not of works …" (Ephesians 2:8-9); our salvation comes only through an abiding faith (Matthew 24:13), for no justification is gained by doing good deeds (Galatians 2:16). Our names are entered into the Book of Life by faith

in the Lord Jesus Christ (Old Testament, New Covenant and Millennium saints), and it is as we remain faithful to Him while on this earth that our names are kept in the Book.[116]

* * * *

Revelation 14 provides an overview of significant events that lead up to the coming, separate harvests of the righteous and unrighteous. We read of the first-fruit harvest of the OT saints, which includes the promise of the completed harvest ahead (Feast of Ingathering). Then comes the world-wide proclamation of the Good News, a warning against spiritual failure, and the need to stand against the coming Antichrist in order to avoid the wrath of God. This is not just for those who enter the time of the Antichrist and False Prophet, for John also made it clear that an antichrist expression was already present in the world in his day – namely, a denial of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 4:3); today, this is so fitly exemplified in the Ecumenical movement. The culmination of all of these will take place when the Lord comes to gather His own from heaven and earth so that they may abide with Him forever. It is after the saints have been gathered to the Lord that the two harvests of the unrighteous will take place – before the millennial reign of Jesus when He will defeat the armies of the Antichrist and False Prophet, and after the Millennium when Satan rallies his supporters for one last attempt to gain full control of the earth. This provides us with a sequential order of significant events from the resurrection of the Lord through to the final judgment of the devil and everyone who follows his leading.

Once again, we have seen that the rapture of the saints of the Lord will take place after the activities of the Antichrist have begun. Despite the carefully crafted theologies of Evangelicals that provide assurance that they will not have to face the tribulation of the Antichrist's rule, the Scriptures tell us that we must be prepared to stand faithfully in the Lord, clothed with His armor (Ephesians 6:11) so that we will not have to face the *wrath* of God. The Revelation of Jesus Christ has been given so that we might adequately prepare ourselves to be *overcomers* – those who will remain faithful to the Lord through the trials that will come. It is only then that we can be assured of a place in glory with the Savior of our souls (Matthew 24:13).

[116] For a more detailed examination of the *Book of Life*, see my study of Philippians 4:3.

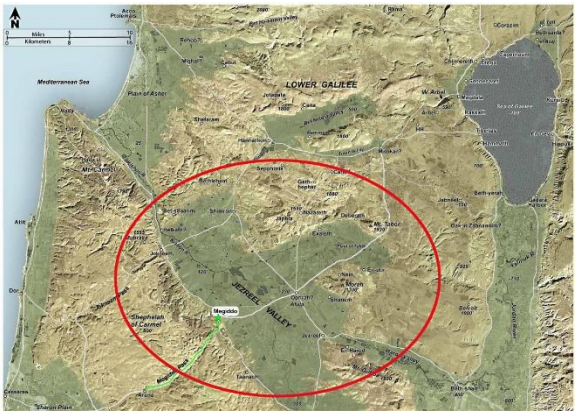
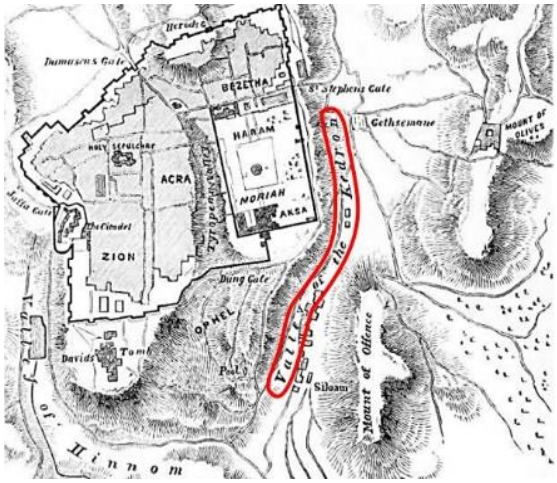
The Two Judgments of the Unrighteous on the Earth

"And out of his [Jesus Christ's] mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should **smite the nations**: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he **treadeth the winepress** of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Revelation 19:15

These are two very different word pictures of what Jesus will do to the unrighteous who are upon the earth.

Jesus will smite the nations	***Jesus treadeth the winepress***
"And he [the Lord] gathered them [the armies of the Antichrist] together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Revelation 16:16 "And I saw the beast [Antichrist], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him [Jesus] that sat on the horse, and against his army." Revelation 19:19 "And I saw an angel … cast him [Satan] into the bottomless pit … till the thousand years should be fulfilled. And I saw thrones, and … the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:1-4	"Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat [the Kidron Valley that lies between Jerusalem and the Mt. of Olives[117]] … for the harvest is ripe … for the [wine] press is full, the fats [vats for catching the pressed liquid] overflow; for their wickedness *is* great." Joel 3:12-13 "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed … and shall go out to deceive the nations … to gather them together … the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. And they … compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" Revelation 20:7-9

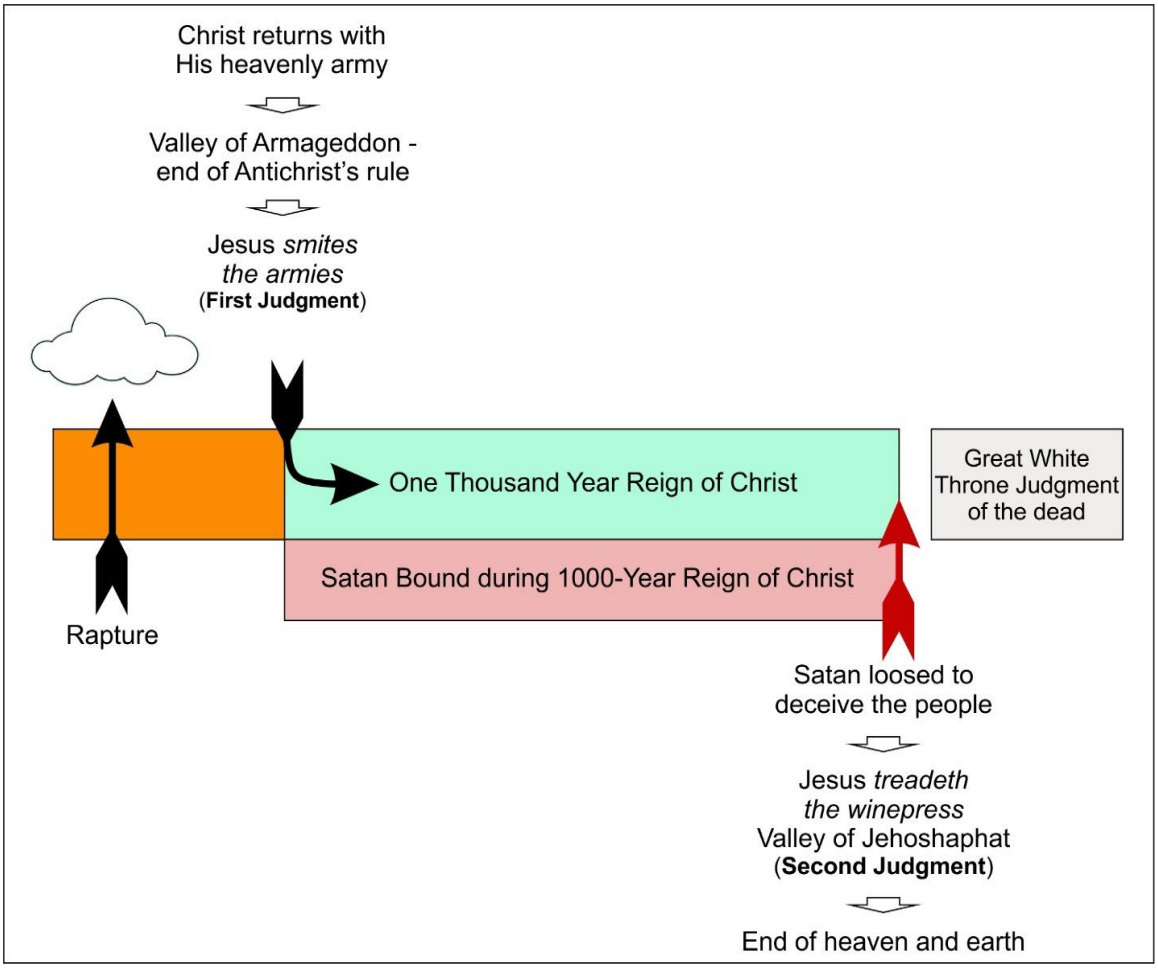
[117] https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/jehoshaphat-valley-of/

Jesus will smite the nations	***Jesus treadeth the winepress***
"And the beast … and … the false prophet … were cast alive into a lake of fire … And the remnant were slain with the sword of him [Jesus] that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." Revelation 19:20-21	"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs." Revelation 14:19-20
Area of Valley of Armageddon (Jezreel)  The Valley of Armageddon (Jezreel) is a broad open plain that has, through the centuries, seen many armies do battle.	Jerusalem with Valley of Jehoshaphat (Kidron) on its east side.  The Valley of Jehoshophat (Kidron) borders Jerusalem on the east side; Jerusalem is the focus of Satan's final attack on the Lord Who will rule out of Jerusalem for 1000 years.

Jesus will smite the nations	***Jesus treadeth the winepress***
As noted, the Valley of Armageddon and the Valley of Jehoshaphat are very different and far from one another. The distance between Megiddo and Jerusalem is about 56 miles ("as the crow flies"), but, more significantly, the elevation where the Kidron empties into the Dead Sea is well over 1,500 feet lower than the Jezreel Valley.[118] These two valleys are the locations for the two expressions of the Lord's wrath against the unrighteous who are on the earth and align themselves against Him.	
We are told that Jesus will *smite* the armies that are gathered together under the leadership of the Antichrist and will then rule the earth with a *rod of iron*. The armies will be destroyed and Jesus will establish His millennial kingdom on earth.	The Lord destroys those whom Satan leads against Jerusalem (after the millennial reign) and that will be the end. Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire and the unrighteous dead (all of them) will be raised to stand before God at the Great White Throne to be shown why they will join Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet in the Lake of Fire.

[118] Data taken from Google Earth Pro.

Jesus will smite the nations		***Jesus treadeth the winepress***
When the Lord destroys the armies of the Antichrist, the birds of the air are invited to feast on the carnage; the unrighteous, who made up the armies, will be devoured by the birds. This is not a messy battle; Jesus will speak the word (the sword coming out of His mouth) and they will be dead – the birds will then come to clean everything up. There is no mention of the blood flowing, and this is followed by Jesus' millennial reign.		When Satan brings his innumerable multitudes against the Lord at Jerusalem, *fire* will *devour* the unrighteous – this is the same *consuming fire* that preceded the Israelites into the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 9:3, cp. Jeremiah 14:12; Hebrews 12:29). The thought is that of total destruction, but Joel 3 and Revelation 14 make it clear that this will be a *winepress* judgment of the unrighteous that will fill the Valley of Jehoshaphat with blood, which will flow for 180 miles beyond that. The Kidron empties into the Dead Sea; therefore, as the *winepress of the wrath of God* is trodden, the blood will flow out of the Kidron and will fill the Dead Sea and much of the Jordan valley.


Christ returns with
His heavenly army
Valley of Armageddon -
end of Antichrist's rule
Jesus *smites*
the armies
(**First Judgment**)
One Thousand Year Reign of Christ
Great White
Throne Judgment
of the dead
Satan Bound during 1000-Year Reign of Christ
Rapture
Satan loosed to
deceive the people
Jesus *treadeth*
the winepress
Valley of Jehoshaphat
(**Second Judgment**)
End of heaven and earth