

GOD'S FINAL CALL TO THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH

SALVATION IS OFFERED AND JUDGMENT IS COMING



- J. I. Packer ... we are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. ¹

¹ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), p.19.

OUTLINE: (Revelation 14:1-20 ESV)

1. BEFORE THE FINAL JUDGMENT A POWERFUL EVANGELISTIC MOVEMENT BY THE SERVANT ARMY OF GOD WILL COVER THE ENTIRE PLANET, 14:1-5.

A. There are 144,000 elite servants who are sealed by God and given special protection, 14:1-5, 7:1-4.

- (Revelation 14:1-5 ESV) Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, 3 and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. 4 It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, 5 and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.
- (Revelation 7:1-4 ESV) After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." 4 And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.

DEAD OR ALIVE
A MARTYR IS A WITNESS

B. There is a great multitude of witnessing servants of God on earth with a more limited protection, 9:3-4.

- (Revelation 9:3-4 ESV) Then from the

smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

C. Of the great multitude who give true witness before the throne of God many are martyred, 7:9-10.

- (Revelation 7:9-10 ESV) After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

D. Two things we must not overlook concerning the great multitude of those who give true witness.

- One, a martyr is a witness by definition, so those in this great multitude of martyrs were themselves witnesses in every nation, and in all tribes and peoples and languages.
- Two, those in this great multitude of witnesses who were not killed will continue to give witness to the truth of the gospel. It's what they/we do.

E. Know that God is sovereign and regardless of the degree of protection not a single witness will be killed until they have finished their testimony.

- (Revelation 11:7a ESV) And when they have finished their testimony.

2. BEFORE THE FINAL JUDGMENT THE ETERNAL GOSPEL OF GOD WILL BE PROCLAIMED FROM THE SKY BY A HOLY ANGEL TO THOSE WHO DWELL ON EARTH, 14:6-11.

- (Revelation 14:6-11 ESV) Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth,

the sea and the springs of water.” 8 Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.” 9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 **he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger,** and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

- A. An angel flying overhead proclaims the eternal gospel to all who dwell on earth, 14:6.
- B. The angel outlines the requisite attitude of the heart for the people of earth to be able to hear and receive God’s eternal good news, 14:7.
 - i. They must ... *fear God and give him glory.*
 - ii. They must ... *understand that God’s final judgment is soon to come.*
 - iii. They must ... *worship God as creator of heaven and earth.*
- C. Note the contrast with those who descend into the darkness and neither honor God nor give him thanks as described in Romans one.
 - (Romans 1:19–22 ESV) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 **For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools.**
- D. A second angel announces God’s judgment on Babylon—the world system of the dragon, 14:8.
- E. A third holy angel warns of the wrath of God and the torment of judgment for those who instead worship the beast, 14:9-11.

- (Psalm 75:6–8 ESV) For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, 7 but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. 8 **For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.**
- (John 18:11 ESV) So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; **shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?**”
- (Mark 14:35–36 ESV) And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. **Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.**”
- F. Christ is our propitiation—our wrath taker.

Jesus Christ is the only person to this point in the history of the world who has drunk the full cup of God’s wrath.

 - (Hebrews 2:17 ESV) Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, **to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**
 - (1 John 4:10 ESV) In this is love, not that we have loved God **but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

Jesus drank a cup of wrath without mercy, that we might drink a cup of mercy without wrath.

J. Oswald Sanders

3. BEFORE THE FINAL JUDGMENT THE BLESSING OF “DYING IN THE LORD” IS PROCLAIMED FROM HEAVEN, 14:12-13.

- (Revelation 14:12–13 ESV) Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: **Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.**” “**Blessed indeed,**” says the Spirit, “**that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!**”

- A. This worst of times in earth history is a unique, once-in-an-eternity opportunity for the saints of God on earth to faithfully endure and bring glory to God.
- B. The saints are the saints of God as they endure and keep the word of God and keep faith in Jesus.
- C. The blessing is proclaimed: *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."*

4. BEFORE THE FINAL JUDGMENT IT SEEMS VERY BIBLICAL AND CONCEIVABLE THAT THE WORLD WILL EXPERIENCE AT LEAST A FORETASTE OF THE EARTH BEING FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF GOD.

Piper ... Behind God's commitment to reign as king is the deeper foundational commitment that his glory will one day fill the earth. ... God's deepest purpose for the world is to fill the earth with reverberations of his glory in the lives of a new humanity ransomed from every people and tribe and tongue and nation (Revelation 5:9). [John Piper. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Apple Books.]

- (Psalm 57:5 ESV) Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!
- (Psalm 72:19 ESV) Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!
- (Isaiah 11:9 NLT) Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD.
- (Habakkuk 2:14 ESV) For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

5. THE FINAL JUDGMENT IS COMING AND CHRIST AND HIS HOLY ANGELS WILL HARVEST THE EARTH, 14:14-20.

- (Revelation 14:14–20 ESV) Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." 16 So he who sat on the cloud

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

- A. Christ will wield his sickle and bring judgment on the earth, 14:14-16.
 - (1 Peter 1:13 ESV) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - (Daniel 7:13–14 ESV) I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
 - (2 Thessalonians 1:7b–8 ESV) When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
- B. A holy angel also brings judgment and the wrath of God on the earth, 14:17-20.