

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HEAVEN?

Thursday, September 2, 2010

Text: Revelation 14

The book of Revelation is a book of decision. The Earth's inhabitants must choose their eternity, either they choose life in heaven or an eternity in hell. The choice is between the Creator and the created. The 14th chapter bears out this at the "Midpoint" of the tribulation period. Chapter 13 revealed the spiritual dimensions behind the events taking place on the Earth, leading to the close of the Midpoint and the start of the last half of Daniel's 70th week.

Satan and his angels lose their place in Heaven at the Midpoint. Satan inhabits the Antichrist, and through his kingdom makes his last stand against Jesus Christ. Satan, the Beast (antichrist) and the false prophet form an un-holy trinity and work in unison to bring the remaining inhabitants of the earth under Satan's control. Satan uses his old strategies on a grand scale. Through the resurrected Antichrist and the false prophet; military, political, religious and economic control is exercised on the earth. All who refuse submission to the Beast, his kingdom and person are hunted and killed. There will be little hope for those left on the earth. Except for the select group of Jews who escaped into the wilderness in Revelation 12, the whole world is under Satan's dominion for the last half of the tribulation, leading to the final confrontation in Israel at Armageddon.

God in his mercy intervenes on this seemingly hopeless condition of man. In the first half of the Tribulation period, God opened a door for those "Left Behind". Through the witness of the rapture, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and the two witnesses in Jerusalem, many of Earth's inhabitants hear the Gospel. In the 2nd half, evangelism will be done in secret and under the cover of darkness. The 144,000 Jewish Witnesses will have been martyred, and evangelism of the Gospel will be done with the threat of execution. Under these bleak conditions, God demonstrates his love and mercy for humanity. Three angels are sent to warn the inhabitants of the Earth to make the right decision. The angels proclaim the gospel and warn man of earthly and eternal destruction for choosing the Satan. Finally, in the 14th chapter, the Son of Man, pictured reaping the final harvest of tribulation saints who die in this final persecution. This final period ends as the armies of the earth gather the length of Israel. This last days army of the earth is pictured as grapes entering the winepress of God's wrath, known as Armageddon.

Revelation 14

The 144,000 on Mt. Zion

1 Then I looked, and behold, ¹a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, ²having His Father's name written on their foreheads. ³And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ⁴They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁵These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were ⁶redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁷And in their mouth was found no ⁸deceit, for they are without fault ⁹before the throne of God.

Revelation 14:1-5

Then I looked....John is seeing with his own eyes and is not talking in metaphors. John is simply recording what he sees.

A Lamb standing on Mount Zion... The last time John saw Jesus as a lamb was in the Revelation 7:9 where the a “Great Multitude” from every nation, tribe, language and people stood before the Lamb and the Throne. This multitude was the result of the 144,000 Jewish Witnesses who are pictured on Earth as opposed to Heaven.

John sees the Lamb again standing on Mt. Zion. Mt. Zion is one of the 4 mountains, (hills) the city of Jerusalem is built upon. The hills are Zion, Moriah, Acra, and Bezethah, the walls and buildings of Jerusalem are built around and upon these hills. The question is whether this is a Heavenly Mt. Zion or an Earthly. Those who view this as Heavenly Mt. Zion refer to Hebrews 12:22, picturing Mt. Zion in the Heavenly Jerusalem. The location and time of John vision influences our understanding of the identity of the 144,000 gathered before the Lamb.

With him 144,000... The identity and timing of the 144,000 in Chapter 14 has been a point of discussion by many scholars. Two options presented are:

1. The 144,000 are the same 144,000 Jewish Witnesses from the 12 tribes of Israel in Rev. 7:1-8
 - a. Gathered before the throne of God in Heaven following their Martyrdom.
 - b. Gathered at the end of the tribulation at Mt. Zion, before the Messiah.
2. The 144,000 are part of the Church body before the throne; they are members of the church as opposed to Israel.

Tim Lahaye feels they are part of the Church and are distinct from 144,000 Jewish witnesses (Rev 7:1-8) He sees two distinct groups of 144,000 in Revelation 7 and 14 based on their descriptions^[1].

The differences between the 144,000 in chapter 7 and 14 can be accounted for by viewing the group in 7 as the same as the group in 14, with the 144,000 in 14 being martyred. The scene before Mt. Zion is either taking place in Heavenly Mt. Zion or on Earthly Mt. Zion following the return of Christ at the end of tribulation.

The “Great Multitude” in chapter 7:9-17, is a scene of the saved who been killed for the testimony of Christ during the “Great tribulation”. This multitude will be the fruit of the 144,000 who will also be killed. The 144,000 will fulfill in the 70th week the role that God had planned for Israel.

- 12 *I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed,
And there was no foreign god among you; Therefore you are My witnesses,”
Says the LORD, “that I am God.*
- 13 *Indeed before the day was, I am He; And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand;
I work, and who will reverse it?”* **Isaiah 43:12-13**

His Father’s name... The same promise is made to all who will be in the presence of God throughout eternity.

4They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Rev 22:4-5

I heard a voice from heaven (Gr. *phōnē*...noise, sound, voice) John is hearing the Heavenly choir of the 144,000 gathered in Heaven following their martyrdom. The point of locating the 144,000 is where the difficulty lies. John hears the sound from Heaven, and it's the sound of a new song, which none can learn but the 144,000 if only they can learn the song then they must be singing the song.

The sound of harpists... Those singing are also playing along with harps. Eight and ten stringed harps are noted in Psalms. (Psalm 12, 144:9)

They sang...The 144,000 are singing. This scene is pictured in the 149th Psalm.

*1Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints.
2Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
3Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.
4For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.
5Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.
6Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,
7To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples;
8To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron;
9To execute on them the written judgment— This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!
Psalm 149*

New Songs are mentioned nine times in scripture and in each instance reflects the realization of God's grace and glory.

Before the throne...The 144,000 are located before the throne, before the "4 living creatures" and the elders.

No could learn the song...This song is unique to the 144,000, they are a distinct group. They are the first fruits of redeemed Israel.

Redeemed from the earth (Gr... *agorazō*...to go to market, that is, (by implication) to purchase; specifically to *redeem*:—buy, redeem.) This same word is used in the new song in Revelation 5.

"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." Rev 5:10

Those who sing in Revelation 5 represent the church while these 144,000 represent redeemed Israel. The church and Israel are two distinct groups its for this reason no one could learn the song except the 144,000.

Who were not defiled with women.... The 144,000 will be wholly dedicated to bring the lost to the Christ. The 144,000 will have a short period to serve the Lord, and accomplish the task at hand. Jeremiah faced a similar situation and was not permitted be married.

1The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, 2" You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place." 3For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: 4" They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth."

Regarding their, “not defiled with women” is not to say marriage is defilement (Gr. molunoô ...; to soil(figuratively):—defile.) but that these men are single minded. They will not involve themselves in the concerns of marriage and courtship. They do not have time for those concerns, they come to Christ after the rapture, and the time ministry is short and to the point.

Jesus refers to those who choose to make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 19:12) The idea of complete dedication is mentioned by Paul in I Cor. 7:1-2, he says it’s good for a man not to touch a woman, but because of sexual immorality let each man have his own wife. The ideal is to be completely dedicated to the Lord without anything hindering God’s work. This is the ideal of the 144,000 Jewish males.

Follow the lamb.... Those who are raptured and redeemed will also always be with the Lord.

17Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. I Thes 4:17

Jesus said, 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:3

The tribulation saints from the “Great multitude”, also promised to be with Christ, stand before the throne too. (Revelation 7:15)

Being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb....

This is foreshadowed in the Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:15-22). Two loaves with yeast are waved before the tabernacle. These loaves with yeast represent the church and Israel in a prophetic foreshadowing.

15And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. ¹⁸And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD

They are without faultThey are without fault and redeemed like the rest of those in Heaven as a result of the blood of Christ. The point being emphasized is they lived exceptional lives after their conversion, following the rapture. They ministered to the lost, resulting in the great multitude of Revelation 7:9.

4☒ You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. Rev 3:5

14And I said to him, ☒“Sir, you know.”So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev 7:14

Only thru the blood of Christ are we without fault. These redeemed saints are now without fault before the throne of God, being the first fruits of converted Israel, which came out of the tribulation.

Angelic Intervention (Revelation 14:6-11)

Following the fall of Satan from heaven, the antichrist will dominate the world's political, military realms. The False Prophet will control the spiritual and economic realms. Residents on Earth will be forced to receive the mark, worship the image and the beast. Only death will be the other choice.

God extends his mercy to the Earth's remaining inhabitants. Through angelic intervention, God offers the Earth's inhabitants a clear choice for their future. Three angels intervene, one angel proclaims the everlasting gospel, the second warns of the destruction of rebuilt Babylon and a third warns those remaining of their eternal doom for making the wrong decision. They must choose death to obtain victory over the beast.

These angles warn those dwelling on the earth. Once the Earth's inhabitants are warned, people must choose between God and Satan. With the choice being made by the Earth's remaining inhabitants, Jesus as "Son of Man" is pictured on the cloud about to reap the harvest of the Earth. The fruit of the Earth will be reaped as the wrath of God is poured out on the Earth, and mankind gathers to make war with God.

Three ministering angels

1. The Everlasting Gospel

6Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—7saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Revelation 14:6-7

Another flying angel.... John sees an angel flying between Heaven and Earth. In the 14th chapter we see 6 angels, three are sent to warn and three are involved in the harvest of the earth following the warning. Angelic participation in the realm of man has existed since the fall, but much of the involvement concealed, from our eyes, takes place without our knowledge. A few times in scripture, God reveals angelic intervention in the realm of humanity.

- A fallen angel tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. (Gen 3)
- Angels guarded the Garden of Eden so man could not return. (Gen 3:24)
- Fallen angels corrupted the seed of man so all but Noah and his family were destroyed. (Gen 6:4)
- Two Angels were involved in the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 19)
- Angels were seen by Jacob ascending and descending on a stairway to heaven. (Gen 28:13)
- Angels surrounded the army of Syria when they came to take Elisha (2 Kings 6:15)
- A fallen angel attempts to prevent a message from reaching Daniel for 21 days, another angel intervenes to help. (Daniel 10:13)

Both heavenly and fallen angels tend to work behind the scenes only on a limited selective basis do they to interact openly with humanity. The blueprint of this interaction revealed in Ephesians 6, demonstrates an ordered angelic and demonic realm.

12For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:12

2Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

Hebrews 13:2

Satan's supernatural assault on man is countered by an audible and possibly visible angelic intervention shortly following the Midpoint of the tribulation.

Midst of Heaven (Gr. mesouranêōma ...*mid-sky*:—midst of heaven.) Three angels now make their appearance in the mid-sky to aid mankind, helping people make the right choice in the hour of decision. The angels and their message will at least be heard by the inhabitants of the earth.

The everlasting gospel....(Gr. euaggelion...the good news, glad tidings) This angel proclaimed the message of the Two Witnesses, 144,000 of Israel and the raptured church, the good news, that Jesus died for our sins and by faith we receive redemption from our sins.

3For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, I Cor 15:3-4

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

Paul mentioned the possibility of angelic preaching, and how that preaching by angels must conform to the gospel already delivered.

6I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:6-9

To preach (Gr. euaggelizoō... to bring good news, to announce glad tidings) The angel was announcing a way of escape to the inhabitants living on the earth. He was proclaiming, "The good news" to mankind.

Saying with a loud voice.... The two Greek words for loud voice is the source of the words used in noun, megaphone, mega (Loud, large) phone (Voice, sound, noise). Before God judges he warns those about to be judged, so they have an opportunity to turn and reject the lie.

- Noah preached for 120 years before the flood.
- Two angels came to Sodom and Gomorrah and the men of the city witnessed the angels.
- Jonah warned Nineveh of their impending judgment.
- Jeremiah warned Jerusalem
- Moses proclaimed the Lord to Egypt.
- Daniel read the handwriting on the wall before Babylon's fall
- Jesus lamented the coming destruction of Jerusalem

The first of three angels proclaims to man, “to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” the way of escape. Regardless of the language the message was universal.

The results of the angelic preaching coupled with evangelism leading to this point, finally make an impact on some hard souls. Revelation 15, pictures those who listen to the angelic warning and prefer death to worshipping the beast. Many could have openly persecuted the saints in the first half, but the angelic warning breaks through and they prefer death. These saints are killed for rejecting antichrist and his kingdom, they are in heaven before the throne of God beside (on) the crystal sea.

2And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. Revelation 15:2

2. Declare the fall of Babylon

8And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon⁸ is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Revelation 14:8

Another angel.... This angel is the second of the six angels in the 14th chapter.

Saying,.... The second angel is also visible and audible to the inhabitants of the Earth.

Babylon....The meaning of Babylon “That great city” in Revelation 14 has been interpreted several ways; (More in chapter 18)

1. Babylon is a hidden reference to Rome because of the potential of persecution.
2. Babylon is a reference to the rebuilt city, the future capital of the Antichrist.
3. Babylon is symbolic for the sinful age.

The 2nd viewpoint is the more literal understanding of Revelation and is confirmed by Old Testament prophecies.

Satan is called the “King of Babylon” who will be judged after Israel is restored. The Antichrist is in dwelt by Satan at the Midpoint, and with his capital city being a rebuilt Babylon, Isaiah 14 can be seen as being literally fulfilled when Satan is cast bound and weakened into the abyss for 1000 years after the return of Christ

1For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. 2Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

3It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, 4that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

*9“Hell from beneath is excited about you,
To meet you at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones*

12 *All the kings of the nations.
"How you are fallen from heaven,
O [☩]Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!*

Isaiah 14:1-4, 9, 12

Zechariah looks forward to a future day when wickedness will be built a home in the land of Babylon. (Zechariah 5:5-11) This future city will be the economic capital of the world (Rev 18). The world-wide focus on the re-building of Iraq could very well be a precursor to the fulfillment of this prophecy. The US, UN, Europe and the world are involved in the rebuilding of Iraq. Part of this rebuilding is to make Iraq secular, an outpost of the west in the midst of a Muslim world. The wealth of the world will flow into the region to create stable oil rich region.

Cyrus the Great of Persia defeated Babylon, in 539 BC, but Babylon as a great city slowly disintegrated from its greatness. Alexander the Great died in the city in 333 BC. This Babylon was a foreshadowing of the coming Babylon that will one day rise to be destroyed by the Lord. (Revelation 18, Jeremiah 50, 51)

This angel is warning of the destruction of this future world capital that Satan uses to deceive and force the earth to worship the Image of the Beast.

She made the nations....As a political, military and religious capital of Satan, "New Babylon" will force the nations to submit to the system imposed by Satan. The nations will face the wrath of God because they participated in Babylon's fornication.

Babylon from the time of Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-9) has been used by Satan to oppose God and subvert man, here in the last days, Babylon plays an end time role.

Fornication... (Gr. porneia ...illicit sexual relation), Used metaphorically for idolatry. Those who accept Satan are viewed by God as fornicators, accepting a lie as the truth.

3. Warning to those who receive the Mark

9Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." *Revelation 14:9-11*

A third angel..... Third of the first three angels that warn the inhabitants of the Earth what will happen if they worship the beast.

With a loud voice.... The sound is an audible warning to the Earth's inhabitants. The offense to God is exactly what the Antichrist and False Prophet demand the whole earth to do; Worship the Beast and his Image and receive his mark. God wants people to know what is at stake for submitting to Satan.

They will share in the destruction of the Beast, which will poured out in "full strength" meaning there will be no compassion, no holding back of the wrath of God.

He shall be tormented....(Gr. basanizoô ... to *torture*:—pain, toil, torment, toss, vex.) The individual who chooses Satan will be in pain and toil. They will not cease to exist, but will live to suffer eternally.

fire and brimstone.... The method of their torment will involve fire (Gr. Pur) and brimstone (Gr. Theion) in the presence of the angels and Christ. The cost is vividly demonstrated for those weighing their choice.

The smoke of their torment..... Smoke is visible consequence of their torment. Burning in the lake of fire, yet not consumed, for the rest of eternity is what those who choose Satan will have to look forward too. The Greek word means “Ages and ages”.

The have no rest day or night..... 24 hours a day, there will be no break, no rest from torment to those who choose Satan. The three-fold description of their satanic choice is;

- Worship the beast
- Worship the image
- Receives the mark of his name

The “Lake of fire” will be the final place where these will dwell along with Satan, Antichrist and the False prophet.

*10The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where^{the} the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
Revelation 20;10*

Assurance to the saints

12Here is the patience of the saints; here^{are} are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. 13Then I heard a voice from heaven saying ^{to} me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

Revelation 14:12-13

Patience of the saints...Following the vivid picture of what awaits those who choose to follow Satan. Here is a word of encouragement to those who are about to be killed, or who are in hiding.

John was a model who at an old age was exiled to the island of Patmos for his testimony of Christ; he was patient in his persecution. (Rev 1:9). Patience is the ability to endure. At the time of trial, the Spirit of God strengthens the saints.

Blessed are the dead... The voice could be from God, or one of his great angels that encourages those to make the right choice. This contradicts the world’s view of death. Death is just the beginning for a believer. Death will only be a doorway into God’s heavenly presence for the believer.

2And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and^{the}over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. Revelation 15:2

One scene is of eternal torment with fire and brimstone for ages and ages, the other is standing in the presence of God and all of heaven, with harps declared a victor over Satan.

The difference that separates these two groups is a choice. Satan or Jesus, the same choice people face today. Today the choices are veiled, in the “Great tribulation”, (2nd half of Daniel’s 70 weeks) Satan will openly and demand worship in the person and kingdom of the Antichrist (The Beast). (Revelation 13:8,14)

Yes, says the Spirit... The words are seconded by the Holy Spirit, which further encourages those on earth to make the right choice.

Rest from their labors...One of the greatest hindrances for people coming to Christ is accepting salvation as a gift. You cannot earn or labor your way into the Kingdom of God. Many who go through the tribulation might not feel worthy of salvation, or they may feel the need to redeem themselves, before they can be accepted into Heaven. Maybe many were involved in the killing of saints in the early part of the tribulation. Paul for example watched the coats of those stoning Stephen. Many, who were participants in first half, might feel God will accept them into his Kingdom. Here the Holy Spirit encourages the lost, who have not yet received the mark.

Their works follow them... What is done for the Lord is not done in vain, believers can expect a reward for their works in heaven.

This message is echoed in Hebrews chapter 4:9-10

9There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

The Son of Man reaps the harvest of the Earth

14Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” 16So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Revelation 14:14-16

A white cloud.... The word cloud is significant in both Old & New Testaments. The first appearance of a cloud in scripture follows Noah’s flood. God uses the rainbow in a cloud as sign of His covenant with the Earth. A sign to never use a flood to destroy all flesh. The cloud has meaning throughout scripture;

- The Lord appears in a cloud to lead Israel by day and in a column of fire at night in Sinai (Exd. 13:21)
- When the Temple was built the “Glory of the Lord” filled the Temple in the form of a cloud. (I Kings 8:10)
- A cloud is used to picture the blotting out of the sins of Israel. (Isaiah 42:22)
- The “Son of Man” is pictured coming on the clouds of heaven in Daniel (Daniel 7:13)
- The Father’s voice came out of a cloud admonishing the disciples to hear the Son. (Matthew 17:5)
- Jesus promises to come with the clouds in power and great glory. (Luke 21;27)
- Jesus was taken up in cloud and will return in a cloud. (Acts 1:9)

One like the Son of Man...The title “Son of Man” is used 82 times in the New Testament as a Title for the Messiah. The first occurrence in a Messianic context is in Daniel 7:13;

*13“I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him. Daniel 7:13*

Jesus calls himself the “Son of Man”, meaning he is descendent of mankind, highlighting his humanity. The Son of Man is pictured with a gold crown and a sharp sickle the gold crown represents the kingship of Messiah and the sickle represents his judgship. Jesus referred to harvest as a metaphor for the harvest of souls. Man is pictured as wheat, grain and weeds. The righteous are referred to as the harvest of edible useful grain while the lost are viewed as chaff and weeds. A sickle is an instrument used to reap the harvest. Jesus referred to this future harvest in the parable of the wheat and tares. In this parable, Jesus explained that at the end of the age the tares would be gathered to be burned. The harvest is only at the right time, because if harvested too early wheat may be lost. (Matthew 13:24-30,37-42)

*30Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.””
43Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! Matthew 13:20,43*

The sickle separates the plant from the ground; the cut plant can be harvested or thrown into the fire. Jesus as Son of Man is sitting and waiting for the right time to harvest the field of the earth. Satan is separating the wheat from the tares; by forcing people to make a choice for eternity under the threat of death the weeds (tares) are being identified.

Here Jesus is about to harvest the souls of the Great tribulation, as they choose death and Christ rather than worship of the Beast.

Judgment Angels

Another angel....John watches as another angel comes out of the heavenly temple, which the earthly temple was modeled after (Rev 7:15, Exd 25:8, Rev 14:17). The angel cries with a loud voice to the Son of Man, that the time for harvest has arrived. He is not ordering but heralding the time of harvest.

Thrust in your sickle and reap.....The only reluctance to removing the weeds before the time was in doing so the some wheat may be uprooted. Many children born and saved were born to parents not saved. The time of harvest begins when the plant stops growing and will begin to decay; this will be the situation on earth. This is the situation on earth; angels will need to present the gospel because of mankind’s state.

Harvest of the earth is ripe.....In the 2nd half of the tribulation, the saints will be killed and broken, all hope will seem lost. Most saints, will be dead or in hiding in the 2nd half of the tribulation and at the right time those on earth will be reaped or judged.

The earth was reaped.....The earth will be reaped will be reaped of both saints and sinners. Here the Son of Man has a sickle waiting for the harvest to reap. His harvest is the reaping of souls to eternal life. In verse 17, a second angel is pictured with a sharp sickle, his harvest is the harvesting of those who turn from Christ and reject the warning of the angels. This harvest is reaped at Armageddon, when the nations are gathered and Jesus Christ returns with the armies of saints and angels. (Revelation 19, 20).

Those who choose Satan over Christ will be harvested for judgment.

Harvest of the Vine of the Earth

*17Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.
18And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." 19So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.20And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.
Revelation 14:17-20*

Another angel.... These are the 5th and 6th angels of chapter 14. The angel with a sickle represents the role the angels will play in the harvest of the Earth.

*31And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
Matthew 24:31*

*41The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!
Matthew 13:41-43*

Another angel.... The 6th angel of the Chapter 14 comes from the altar. This could be the same angel who took fire from the altar and filled the censor with it (Rev 8;5).

Power over fire....(Gr. Pur....Fire) this word is used 25 times in the book of Revelation. Fire is used to judge and purify.

Vine of the earth Man left alone to his nature without God's intervention would be putrid. Here the nature of man described as the *vine of earth* has reached the point of judgment. This is in contrast to the *harvest of the earth* in verse 15, which the Son of man reaps.

Great winepress of the wrath of God.... The Earth will be judged. The instrument of Judgment will be Israel. In the end it seems as if Israel as a nation will be like the light to the insect, they will be drawn to the light to make war with it. And somehow Israel, as a nation and people will at the end resist the armies of the world. Zechariah describes this as supernatural power, this might be the draw to the nations.

*8In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them.
Zech 12:8*

Malachi also sees Israel as empowered by the Lord to defeat her enemies, the gentile nations gathered against her. In the end its Israel's coming to Jesus as Messiah that will save her from the satanic inspired nations.

11 Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, "Let her be defiled, And let our eye look upon Zion."¹² But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, Nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.
13 "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; For I will make your horn iron. And I will make your hooves bronze; You shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the LORD, And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth."
Malachi 3:11-13

The nations will be gathered in battle against God. The judgment to follow is described as a winepress

The winepress was trampled... (Gr. leônos... a tub or trough shaped receptacle, vat, in which grapes are trodden)...The way juice was extracted from the vine was to gather the grapes in a vat and to crush them under foot. This separated the juice from the skin and allowed the juice to flow. This is a metaphor for the gathering of the nations, which will allow their judgment.

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
Revelation 19:15

Outside the city..... The city is Jerusalem. Hatred of the Jews and Israel by the Kings of the Earth will be the result of demonic possession. These demonic possessed kings will lead the armies of the Earth to Jerusalem. By their march to Jerusalem, the "Vine of Earth" will be reaped.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.
Revelation 16:13

3 And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.
9 It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.
Zechariah 12:3,9

Blood came out The mass of humanity lead by the Satan will gathered to Jerusalem. Zechariah describes this coming judgment on the nations who gather to Jerusalem. With the return of Christ these armies will literally dissolve. And their blood will begin to flow.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.
Zechariah 14:12

1600 furlongs....A furlong is 600 feet. 1600 furlongs is 181 miles is the length of Israel from the North to the south. Blood will flow as the armies of Earth are dissolved at the return of Messiah.

The height of a horses bridle is about

1 "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations;
Joel 3:1,2

Jehoshaphat was a King in Judah that faced the combined armies of Moab, Ammon and Edom.

With a smaller army less equipped army Judah's defeat looked certain. But King Jehoshaphat took the matter before God in prayer. And the armies ended up destroying each before even reaching each other. The valley of Jehoshaphat could be a reminder to Israel in the end of days to use King Jehoshaphat as an example of what to do.

