

# Bible Studies

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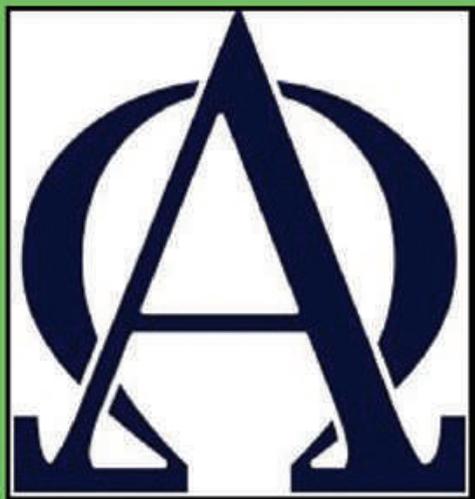
## Revelation ~ Victory Book Chapters 12-22

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Revelation 22:13

## GOSPEL THEMES IN REVELATION CHAPTER 14

There are a number of points of debate in the seven visions of Revelation 14, but we should not lose sight of the great gospel themes with which each in turn deals or which the visions suggest, for this age as well as that to come.

The prospect of being at home in glory, our spirit soul and body changed; (1 Thes. 5:23-24); there in His presence eternally and in the presence of myriads in joyful song, ever new, ever fresh, as the Living Waters that are its source and sustenance.

There is the gospel ‘concerning the glory of the blessed God’ (1 Tim. 1:11 NIV) who has ‘set a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed’ (Acts 17:31). For which reason ‘now he commands all people everywhere to repent’ (v. 30), ‘his eternal power and divine nature’ being ‘clearly seen ... from what has been made’ (Rom 1:20).

The world has its commercial and religious and political and economic systems—its ‘Babylons’—which being ‘under the power of the evil one’ (1 John 5:19) are opposed to God: they fail those who depend on them alone and will ultimately themselves fall.

The truth of divine wrath ‘revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people’ (Rom. 1:20) and the solemn truth of eternal torment for rejecters of God’s gift of His own godliness and righteousness in His Son, the Lamb of God;

The truth of eternal blessing and eternal reward for those who die in the Lord;

The truth that everything will not always ‘go on as it has since the beginning of creation’ (2 Pet. 3:4); this age, this world, as we know it, will come to an end;

Last is the truth of the personal return of Christ to earth, to ‘punish those who do not obey God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus’ (2 Thes. 1:8).

*P.D.*

## *From Study Groups . . .*

### THE LAMB AND 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION; FIVE ANGELS; THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH (Revelation 14)

**From Aberdeen:** The ‘eternal gospel’ will be God’s final outreach to the world. The particular slant of this gospel message provides the opportunity to “‘Fear God and give Him glory’” (Rev. 14:7 NASB). The reality of impending judgement by God the Creator will no doubt cause some to repent of idolatry—because idolatry will be a disturbing feature of life during the days of the Great Tribulation (Is. 2:20). Noticeably the flying angel directs the tribes of earth to worship God, maker of heaven and earth.

This abrupt intervention will take place amidst a world enthralled by the delusional wonders performed by the Beast and the false prophet. The minds of men will already have been poisoned by the audacity of this man who is endowed with devil-derived authority, and who enters the Jerusalem temple to make his blasphemous claim of deity (2 Thes. 2:4). People will wonder after the Beast saying, “‘Who is like the beast?’” (Rev. 13:4).

The urgent measure of sending an angel indicates the shortness of the time left, prior to this world’s affairs being wound up. While the main thrust of the eternal gospel will be the call to give glory to God as Creator (rather than following the blaspheming Beast) there is good reason to suggest that the message will include the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord even though this is not spelled out in Revelation chapter 14 [cp. February issue, p.31, Comment 9, para. 3—*M.A.*]. *James Johnson*

**From Aberkenfig:** From a straightforward reading of the text (14:1-3) the Mount Zion on which the Lamb was standing with the 144,000 must be the heavenly Mount Zion as brought before us in Hebrews 12:22; in other words, it is a heavenly scene. The 'harpers' (v.2 RV) would be in heaven as they harped, singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. The singers would teach the 144,000 to sing that song [Comment 1]. We may all have our favourite choir, but to hear this choir pitch and tempo perfect together with its sweetness must have been truly overwhelming. Is it any wonder that John describes it as hearing like the roaring of rushing waters and like a peal of thunder?

In 14:1 we are told that this 144,000 have ‘his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads’; then after the song they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Further, they have kept themselves pure and have been purchased from among men. Is it men as in ‘mankind’? [Comment 2] Those in chapter 14 were all male, whereas Scripture is silent regarding the gender of those

in chapter 7, who were all from the tribes of Israel [Comment 3]. Putting all that together we draw the conclusion that a different 144,000 were sealed, as mentioned in chapter 7. To read it any other way is to mix the meanings, and God has given us this revelation for a definite reason, although we don't understand it now [Comment 4].

John then saw another angel flying in mid-air. The message given by this first angel was 'Fear God and give him glory...' (v.7), an eternal gospel, and was calling all people to worship God the Creator rather than Satan. Angels [those who did not ally themselves with Satan in his rebellion - Is. 14:12-15; 2 Pet. 2:4 - *R.B.F.*], as far as we know, cannot preach the gospel of grace (because they have not sinned, thus they do not require repentance), which is the good news of salvation. It is the free gift of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That responsibility of proclaiming the gospel has been given to all believers. This call that the angel made was to mankind everywhere, even where the gospel of grace had not yet reached. We know that the day of grace will end at the Lord's return, and so too will the gospel of grace be completed. Following this line of reasoning we arrive at the conclusion that the eternal gospel which this angel is proclaiming includes the gospel of grace. In other words, it is part of the eternal gospel [Comment 5].

This message of fearing God, and giving Him glory has been the requirement of God since mankind was created. It is borne out in Micah 6:8, and Acts 10:35 where Peter says to Cornelius '... he that feareth God and worketh righteousness (or 'does what is right'—NIV) is acceptable to him'. No one can fear God who has not first repented of their sins, and there can be no working of righteousness apart from repentance. (See *Notes on Revelation*, J.Miller, or in *B.S.* 1959, p.2.) The message given by the angel will reach men no matter how diverse is their language, tribe or tongue. This is one of the last calls of God to an apostate world, 'for the hour of his judgement is come' (v.7). *Bill Paterson*

**From Buckhaven:** John saw the Lamb standing upon Mount Zion (the only occurrence of this statement) with a redeemed company of 144,000 who sing an exclusive song of praise before God's throne, 'having his name, and the name of his Father written on their foreheads' (Rev. 14:1 RV). This contrasts greatly with those who have the mark of the Beast on their foreheads. The Lamb stands on Mount Zion whereas the dragon (13:1) stands on 'the sand of the sea'.

There are two schools of thought about the 144,000. In Chapter 7 a company of 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel are sealed from the judgements of God upon the earth. We suggest that these 144,000 are a different company [see Comments 3 and 4]. They were not defiled (v.4), they are pure virgins (Gk. *parthenos*—the same word used of the Lord's mother); they follow the Lamb—a unique relationship; they were purchased; they are the firstfruits (Gk. *aparchē*,

‘gift offering’); their words were pure, they spoke no lie, being blameless, ‘without blemish’ (v.5) [cp. Comment 5].

In Chapter 8 an angel loudly proclaims the three woes. In Chapter 14 a high-ranking angel flies in mid-heaven and proclaims ‘an eternal gospel’ (the only occurrence of this phrase). The hour has come for mankind to fear and give glory to the Creator of all things. This is the last gospel message, universal and permanent, a call to repentance heard by all nations.

A second high-ranking angel speaks of absolute judgement on Babylon the great: ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great’ (14:8). The kingdom of Antichrist which exalted man and denied God and corrupted the nations, is fallen. The third high-ranking angel loudly declares that those who worship the Beast will experience eternal, ‘day and night’ torment (v.11)—the undiluted wrath (*thumos*) of God; but those who suffered great persecution and death will enjoy rest and repose; their labours were not in vain and their deeds follow them (v.13).

In verse 14, John sees one like a son of man, sitting on a white cloud, with a golden crown and a sickle. He is commanded by another angel to reap the harvest of the earth (v.15). This is not the Son of God because, as deity, the Lamb upon the throne would not take a command from an angel. The sickle is used to harvest ‘full corn in the ear’. Matthew 13:38 and Mark 4:28-29 speak of the harvesting of righteous ones—a first harvest of the righteous, we suggest. [Comment 6]

These angels take their commands from God and carry out His purposes. In verse 18 another mighty angel comes from the golden altar also having a sharp sickle, and is commanded to gather the fully ripe clusters of the vine. Earth’s vintage is cast into a winepress to be trodden and crushed. We are not told who treads the winepress, but this great judgement of the unrighteous results in the outflow of man’s blood.

*Martin Notman*

**From Cromer:** *Where is Mount Zion?* This mountain is referred to in Scripture 23 times; most of these refer to the physical place that God chose to be His earthly dwelling place. Christians, however, are told that ‘you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering’ (Heb. 12:22 ESV). The context of Chapter 14 is that of heavenly visions, and therefore Mount Zion here refers to the heavenly place.

*The 144,000*

Reference	Characteristics	Reference	Characteristics
14:1	With the Lamb on Mount Zion	7:4	Sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel
14:3,4	Redeemed from the earth, from mankind	7:5-8	Names of the tribes. Strangely, Joseph is named, with one of his sons, Manasseh, but not the other, Ephraim, whereas Dan is omitted. Why? [Comment 7]

The numbers are the same in each case, but the context is different. Is the number to be taken literally in either case? Technological thinkers are accustomed to regarding each number as simply one of a sequence, but in many cases in Scripture certain numbers have a significance of their own. In this it is suggested that 12 is the number of election (the chosen tribes) squared, multiplied by 1,000, an indefinitely large number. The sequence of their choice indicates their priority in God’s purpose [Comment 8].

*The eternal gospel* The warnings of judgement uttered by the three do not seem much like ‘good news’, which is what the word ‘gospel’ means, but they must have been reassuring to the persecuted Christians. God will punish sin, and repentance from it is a necessary precursor to faith. The gospel proclaimed by the angel was an ‘eternal gospel’; that is, it is invariable, and based on the work of Christ. People had the choice between worshipping the Lamb and worshipping the Beast, and those who chose the latter would ‘drink the wine of God’s wrath’ (v.10 ESV).

*One sitting on the cloud* This cannot be the Lord Jesus, in spite of the use of the term ‘son of man’, for in verse 15 another angel tells him what to do. The Lord Himself has supreme authority. *Peter Hickling*

**From Greenock:** *The eternal gospel* After the anointing of the Lord Jesus at Bethany, He stated that the gospel in its original form will be ‘proclaimed in the whole world’ (Mat. 26:13, Mark 14:9 ESV). This gospel has now been spoken in all the world, thanks to technology [Comment 9]. The accurate transmission of the Scriptures is beyond question. Scholars who have studied so many very old manuscripts find the copyists’ work to be beyond reproach [Comment 10]. We have the wonderful promise that the Word is more enduring than heaven and earth (Mat. 24:35, Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33). The Old Testament, as well as the New, contains the eternal gospel. It starts with the promise that the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:16) and continues to the proclamation by the angel (Rev. 14:6) [Comment 11].

When the Lord quoted the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, He stopped in the middle of the quotation from Isaiah (61:1-2). The first part was fulfilled during His years of public ministry; the second is also true, but is set for a day yet to come. The whole passage is inspired, but not all was applicable on that day in Nazareth. Likewise, we must be careful to see which parts of God's 'good news' relate to past events, ongoing present events, and events still in the future.

The description of the days of Noah has been acted out in our city streets during the current pandemic. The world is ignoring sound warnings to continue with their celebrations (Mat. 24:38). We should not be surprised that their eyes are blinded and their hearts hardened when we share the gospel with those who are perishing (John 12:40).

*Steve Henderson*

**From Halifax:** *Mount Zion* In stark contrast to the dragon who took his station 'upon the sands of the sea-shore' (Rev. 13:1—R.F. Weymouth), John now sees 'a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion' (14:1 KJV). The Alexandrian copy, and others, read 'the Lamb' (see RV, ASV), which Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for mention of His Father is made in the following clause.

There are divergent views concerning the identification of 'the Mount Zion' (RV) in this verse. Some believe it refers to the hilly area south-east of earthly Jerusalem—the so-called 'Temple mount'. It is suggested, however, that here is the heavenly Zion (cp. Heb. 12:22); 'the Jerusalem that is above' (Gal. 4:26). Alluded to as 'the holy mountain of God' (Ezek. 28:14,16), its counterpart is seen in the mountain in Sinai (Ex. 3:1,12; 19:1-2, etc.) where Israel was given God's law, and subsequently in 'the place of the name' (Is. 18:7), the site of 'the house of the LORD', built by Solomon (1 Kin. 9:10).

*From among men* With the Lamb were 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. The 144,000 of Revelation 7:1-4 were 'sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel'; whereas these were 'purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb' (14:4 RV) and they followed the Lamb wherever He went [see Comments 2 & 4]. They were not defiled with women, they did not lie, and they were without blemish. A 'new song' was sung by these before the throne, a song that none other could learn (v.3). 'There have been many choirs at many times,' writes John Miller, 'but here is one which should stir a longing in any honest heart to hear this holy, heavenly song' (*Notes on the Epistles*, p.685). Their song was unique and befitting those who attended the Lamb.

*Robert J. Butler*

**From Mount Forest:** Is the vision of Revelation 14 a preview of an earthly scene after the Son of Man returns to the Mount of Olives (see Acts 1:11-12; Rev. 17:14; 19:11-21), or does John see heavenly Mount Zion and what first occurs

there? Our study group concluded the latter is more supportable. What is clear is that we are intended to see a series of marked contrasts between the fabricated show of the Antichrist and the true glory of the Lamb.

If the earthly Zion is meant in 14:1, then Hebrews 12:22 would strangely not be applicable here, nor the spiritual reality of Romans 9:33, nor the heavenly prophetic fulfilment of Isaiah 28:16 cited in 1 Peter 2:6. Only to seek consistency with the earthly aspects of Old Testament usage of 'Zion' seems insufficient. Likewise, we have difficulty understanding separate companies of firstly (angelic?) singers undeniably in heaven (v.3), and secondly the 144,000 (on earth?) who are the only ones able to learn the song but are then not the singers [see Comment 1]. In the AV/NKJV of v.5 'before the throne of God' is inserted, like Revelation 7:9; although the manuscripts are suspect, its insertion at least implies the copyist felt it was right [Comment 12]. We note the 144,000 have been redeemed 'from' the earth, implying they are no longer there, rather than that they have returned there. Faithful ones who give their life in the Tribulation, will in heaven voice their concern about vindication and be given the good news that victory would come. This is then reflected in worship, even prior to the outworking of the associated judgments on earth (see Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-14; Rev. 14 and Rev. 15). As we see it, the 144,000 sealed against the judgments of God (Rev. 7:3) nevertheless would give their lives in their earthly service, and then share in the heavenly blessing of those from every nation, tribe, people and language who had been martyred. There is close correspondence between Revelation 7:15-17 and 14:4, thus to 'follow the Lamb' is not an exclusively earthly blessing.

We see no conflict in the 144,000 being the same group in Revelation, Chapters 7 and 14. If they were not the same people, would not John record 'another' 144,000? He often uses the term 'another' when distinguishing between similar characters (e.g., before this passage: Rev. 6:4; 7:2; 8:3; 10:1; 13:11; five times in this chapter, and five more after). Admittedly, there is no expected 'the' before 144,000 in verse 1 (cp. Rev. 7:4), so grammatically there could be two groups of equal size. Perhaps the restatement of '144,000' emphasizes the complete success of their mission—not one missing! We conclude that differences in the descriptions between Chapters 7 and 14 do not serve convincingly to exclude them being the same people, viewed at different points in time and in different locations [see Comment 4].

Here we learn these pure men were called to be celibate in their service and had met that requirement. 1 Corinthians 7:26 may have some application in principle (and Matthew 19:12), but the quality of celibacy in this context is in distinct contrast to sinful lawlessness [in the sense of living under an ungodly regime, rather than anarchy—*Eds.*] typifying the days of the Antichrist.

*Geoff Hydon*

**From Ravulapalem:** Verses 14 to 16 remind us of Acts 1:9-11 where a cloud takes Jesus up before the sight of the apostles, and they are told by the two angelic beings in human form that the same Jesus, who had been taken from them into heaven, will come back in the same way on the clouds. They also remind us of the prophetic vision in the night of Daniel 7:13, when before Daniel was 'one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven'. At Jesus' coming to set up His millennial kingdom on the earth, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see Him coming with power and great glory (Mat. 24:30). John confirmed it in Revelation 1:7 by saying, 'Behold he is coming on the clouds! So shall it be! Amen!' He who is sitting on the clouds is the Lord Jesus.

When the Lord comes to the air for those who have believed the gospel and belong to the church the Body of Christ, they will be caught up to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thes. 4:16). In John's vision the Lord Jesus appeared 'sitting' upon the 'white cloud', which may suggest that He was come to judge in the clouds and was seated on one of them as on a throne; a white cloud may represent purity in judgement, which we may compare with the white throne of Revelation 20:11. In 14:14 (cp. Ps. 21:4) He has in His hand a sharp sickle to reap but not to reign. He rules as a King and gathers all nations before Him; for the sickle is used to gather as well as to cut down the crop (14:16 and Mat. 3:12) [Comment 6].

*S.J.M. Edward*

**From Surulere:** From Revelation 14:2—'And I heard a voice from heaven'—it could be surmised that the Mount Zion of 14:1 is in heaven. Does this suffice, however, to reach a conclusion as to the location of the Mount Zion spoken of being in heaven? That once obscure area in the Jebusite city of Jerusalem, was graciously elevated into eternal prominence. 'And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you", thinking, "David cannot come in here." Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion (that is the City of David). Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David,' (2 Sam. 5:6-9 NKJ). On the 'Bible Journey' website, it is written concerning that: 'When David's men captured Jerusalem in c.1004 BC, the city was much smaller than it is today ... After being occupied by David's forces, the old Jebusite city became known as the City of David and the ridge on which it stood was renamed Mount Zion'.

The psalmist Asaph described the importance of Zion thus: 'In Judah God is known, His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, And His dwelling place in Zion' (Ps. 76:1-2). The uniqueness of Zion is accentuated further: 'For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place,'

“This is my resting place forever: Here I will dwell for I have desired it” (Ps. 132:13-14; cp. Joel 3:17). The sons of Korah summed up: ‘Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great king (Ps. 48:1-2).

In the same vein that the things which were in the tabernacle and temple of old were copies of the original in heaven, we are persuaded that God who possesses all things is not fascinated simply with an earthly Mount Zion, but there is the real possibility of an original Mount Zion in heaven. Just like the new Jerusalem in a future time, Hebrews 12 suggests that there is a Mount Zion in heaven to which we ascend by the Spirit: ‘For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem’ (Heb. 12:18, 22).

We note that the Lord Jesus, the Lamb that was once slain and is now glorified and has been shown standing in the midst of the throne in heaven (Rev. 5:6), is shown standing on the holy mountain of Zion in heaven, with the 144,000 first fruits. The Lord Jesus does not return to the earth until the start of the Millennial reign, and as such if in heaven could not then be standing with the 144,000 on a physical Mount Zion on earth. This does not ignore the fact that with God it shall not be impossible [Comment 13].

*Frederick F. Ntido*

**From Victoria B.C.:** *144,000* Regarding the 144,000, we see the characteristics of these people in this chapter. Verse 4 (NKJ) says they ‘were not defiled with women’, and they also ‘follow the Lamb wherever He goes’; so in this verse we see they are all males, and they are totally given over to the leading of the Lamb. Verse 5 says ‘in their mouth was found no deceit’, and in chapter 7 they are sealed by God.

In Chapter 7 we learn these men are 12,000 from each tribe of Israel; hence all are Jewish. Two tribes are not among them, namely Dan and Ephraim. Instead, we find Manasseh and Joseph. Some Bible commentators believe they were left out due to centuries of idolatry, with a golden bull in Dan’s territory and the other bull in Bethel in Ephraim. We conclude that these two groups are one and the same, with Chapter 7 introducing them and Chapter 14 describing their characteristics [see *B.S.* 2020, p.112, Comments 5 and 6; and cp. this issue Comment 4].

*One sitting on a cloud* In verse 14 of this chapter we are shown a man sitting on a cloud, and he has a crown and a sickle. He also has a title, ‘Son of man’. It reminds us of a verse in Matthew 9:38 which speaks of the Lord of the harvest sending workers to labour. It appears though, in Revelation 14:19-20, to be a

harvest unto judgement, as opposed to one of eternal reward [Comment 6]. The one on the cloud is working with angels, and one of these beings has a sickle, too. This harvest, of which Jesus is Lord, is also mentioned in Joel 3:11-13 and in Isaiah 18:5-6 as well as 63:2-4. Based on these verses we see the Man on the cloud is, in fact the Lord Jesus [see Buckhaven's penultimate paragraph and Cromer's final one].

*Mount Zion* Zion has a meaning of being a citadel on the highest point. Zion has three applications today: it is a name applied to the city of Jerusalem in the country of Israel; it is a name which the modern Israeli uses to refer to their whole land today in the 21st century; it is also the name of the city which comes down from heaven in Rev. 21:10. This glorious city has pearl gates, streets of transparent gold, and is massive in its measurement, being four square, or a cube shape. The Lord God and His Lamb, the Lord Jesus, are the temple and light of it. We believe Zion, mentioned in chapter 14, is referring to the heavenly Jerusalem, with the Lamb and His throne. We look forward with anticipation to dwelling with the Lord there. *R. Lefevre, P. Williamson*

## COMMENTS

**1. (Aberkenfig):** My impression from verse 3 is that the vocalists of this new song of victory are the members of the 144,000 as only they were able to sing the words drawn inspiringly from their own excruciating experiences in service to God (see Rev. 7:14,16).

**2. (Aberkenfig):** *'from among men'* (Rev. 14:4) The Greek word for men is *anthrōpos*, which is generic for 'humankind' or 'humanity', comprising people of masculine and feminine gender, i.e., the civil population. The 144,000 were a specially selected group of men, who were wholly dedicated to God in their lives, being sexually chaste, unmarried, absolutely truthful and irreproachable in conduct. *R.B.F.*

**3. (Aberkenfig and others):** I think the 144,000 of chapters 7 and 14 are the same company. In chapter 7 they are called out and sealed for service; in chapter 14 we see them in heaven after their work on earth is done. In Matthew 25:34-46, which refers to the coming of the Son of Man to earth at the end of the Tribulation period, the King speaks of those persecuted preachers of the gospel of the kingdom, as 'my brethren' (Mat. 25:40 RV). Another point to consider is that women were never given a role in the public proclamation of the gospel before—another reason I think the 144,000 of chapter 7 are also male. *J.J.*

**4. (Aberkenfig, Mount Forest and others):** *The 144,000* (Rev.14:1) There is a good case for these being different from those sealed in Chapter 7. They are distinctively qualified because they ‘were not defiled with women; for they are virgins’ (14:1-5 ESV)—expressly stated here. Conjecture that this could be true of those in 7:1-8 is weakened by the emphasis there on genealogy and family. There is absence of any connection made with the previous numbered group, and the names on the foreheads can be understood readily as Chapter 14’s group receiving this distinction for other reasons. This is more important than the absence of the single word ‘another’ (see Mount Forest paper) in a book that shows much variation in how the author presents his material, and his highly individual choices of idiom and grammar. Their being called ‘purchased’ places emphasis on their specific purity, while both groups have faith which recognises the importance of Jesus having shed His blood (see Comment 5, last sentence). We would not be dogmatic, there being some aspects that can be read in different ways. *M.A.*

The 144,000 are one and the same as in Revelation 7:4 and 14:1. They have the seal of God on their foreheads (7:3; 14:1) and stand before the throne of God (7:15; 14:3). Additionally, they have a unique relationship with the Lamb of God on account of their severe suffering for Him (7:14, 17; 14:1,4). It would seem incongruous to have two groups of equal number separately identified and the second group only being qualified to sing the song with understanding (14:3).

*R.B.F.*

**5. (Aberkenfig):** It is difficult to see why an angelic messenger needs to have experienced the message given. To be persuasive by this stage in God’s dealings with those left after the Rapture depends as much on the testimony of the New Testament first, and the Old (especially its prophetic parts) as supportive, which could be passed on by word of mouth by those convicted about their sins. God’s forbearance and longsuffering (Rom. 2:4, 1 Tim. 1:16, 1 Pet. 3:20) will have already been extended to them, so if in the growing hostility they come under conviction, those who have heard the gospel before the Rapture can also pass on that awareness of the preaching to others who did not. On the Jewish sealed servants of Revelation 7 being of practical service and preaching to those faithful to Old Testament promise, by showing how the Christ was Jesus of Nazareth, see *B.S.* 2020, p.111, Comment 5.

This is not in conflict with the view that ‘the eternal gospel’ heralded by the angel (14:6-7) will have power with those persecuted of all nations who may not hear the message above, to bring them to faith in the God of heaven and earth and to repentance, for ultimately forgiveness of sins rests on justice being satisfied by the self-sacrifice of Christ, with peace made between Jew and Gentile through His cross (Eph. 2:8,13). Cp. Cromer, second last paragraph. *M.A.*

**6. (Buckhaven, Ravulapalem, Victoria B.C.):** Three different views on the harvest, of which the one put forward by Ravulapalem that ‘the sickle is used to gather as well as to cut down the crop’ is commended. In February issue, p.29, Comment 5, J.J. writes ‘The second part of the question (‘what shall be the sign ... of the end of the world?’—*aōn*, age) is answered by the Lord in verse 31 [of Matthew 24]: ‘He shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect ...’ It seems to me that this links with 13:40-41: ‘As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world’ (‘age’). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity ...’

This highlights a discriminatory harvest at the end of the age in Matthew 13 where both the gathering of ‘His elect’ and the ‘gathering of them that do iniquity, or in terms used by Ravulapalem friends both gathering and cutting down is done. This harvest, with its focus on individual behaviour, has its sister passage in Matthew 25, although there the focus is on national behaviour in relation to the treatment of His brethren. It is readily possible to see a correspondence of both passages with Joel 3 where both a harvest and a divine Judge are seen, and when turning to Revelation 14:14ff., a correspondence of that passage with Joel 3 also, with both passages dealing with the harvest and the gathering of grapes that follows –and then logically with both the Matthew passages. J.J.’s comment doesn’t require us to see in Revelation 14 either a harvest only unto righteousness or a harvest only unto judgement but the discriminatory harvest of Matthew 13.

The view that the gathering of grapes in Revelation 14:17-20 is concerned with Israel (because there can be no city meant in verse 20 other than Jerusalem and the verse is elaborated in chapter 19 to make that certain), and the harvesting in verses 14-16 is concerned with judgement on the nations—Israel being excluded from the nations (logical because Matthew 25 concerns how Israel is treated by the nations)—can be provided for within the view above. *P.D.*

There remains the formidable difficulty that in Ravulapalem’s view, the Son of God is given instruction by an angel. It is simpler to accept that there is a series of angels at work in this passage of Revelation 14. Thus the angel with crown and cloud is granted the signs of a special servant of the Son, as we saw in our study of 10:1f. (2020, p.155, Comment 7). *M.A.*

**7. (Cromer):** One possible explanation is that Manasseh and Ephraim, like Reuben and Simeon, are regarded in some instances as ‘one’, being brothers, e.g., Genesis 48:5, and therefore Manasseh, as the firstborn, only is mentioned. In Moses’ final benediction on the tribes of Israel in Deuteronomy 33, he omits Simeon – perhaps for the reason stated, though unlikely in this instance, or on account of the leading

part that may have been played by the father of the clan in the vengeful slaying the prince of Shechem and his father, Hamor, in Genesis 34:26.

On the other hand, both Ephraim and Dan are particularly associated in Israel's history with the sin of idolatry (Ps. 78:67b; Hos. 4:17;5:4; 14:8; Judg. 18:30; 1 Kin. 12:29-30; 2 Kin. 10:29), though often Ephraim's name is symbolic of Israel the nation. *R.B.F.*

See also *B.S.* July 2020 issue, p.112, Comment 6.

**8. (Cromer):** It is possible that the number 144,000 has symbolic significance, yet in the sovereignty and knowledge of God there will also be that literal number so qualified and chosen. *M.A.*

Interpretation of Scriptural numerology can be a hazardous undertaking and it is suggested to be better left alone.

**9. (Greenock):** In the verses quoted we have to take account of 'wheresoever' (Gk. *hopou* means 'in what place'), which is not accentuating that this good news of this unidentified woman's appreciation of the Saviour will be preached 'everywhere in all the world'; rather there will be occasions in places in the world when her actions will be well spoken of. It would be difficult to be certain, as a result of technology, to say that the gospel has been communicated throughout the whole world; certainly, a sizeable part of it. *R.B.F.*

**10. (Greenock):** (a) That the gospel has been spoken worldwide may possibly be true in the sense of having been preached at a certain time in every region of inhabited lands, but it's an open question whether the basics have been passed on to all in the next generation, or where remote areas are yet to be reached for this purpose, and languages or dialects to be two-way translated so as to be well enough understood. At present the International Bible Societies and other organizations that aim to reach those who have no Bible background reckon they have a lot still to do, noting that portable technology can be severely limited by geographical conditions.

(b) Transmission of the text of Scripture is remarkably accurate compared with that of other works, but has also been subject to human error and loss—at times occasioning textual comment in this magazine. The textual or translational footnotes to the Book of Job quickly show how much is not understood with certainty by today's scholars.

These points are only two factors in the issue of what the Lord meant about the timing of the preaching in Mark 14:9, but may be helpful for other reasons. *M.A.*

**11. (Greenock):** It will be the last gospel message to be proclaimed with its emphasis on the necessity of turning to God in repentance as a result of impending judgement (see v.7). *R.B.F.*

**12. (Mount Forest):** ‘What a copyist felt was right’ is regarded by textual scholars as suspect indeed for such reasons as unwitting insertion of memo aids, or well-meaning explanation, or the influence of a theological agenda, all corrupting the text.

**13. (Surulere):** Is there really a problem about the Lord taking some time during the setting up of His kingdom with choice servants who like Him, abstained from marriage in dedication to the Lord’s service, and were distinctive in their purity, standing with them in survey of the divinely chosen centre of worship for the nation into which He was born? (More on this in April to explain further.) *M.A.*

*Editors are sorry that the following paper was inadvertently omitted from last month’s study of Revelation 13. Apology has been made to those closely concerned.*

**February paper from Aberkenfig:** This chapter develops the interlude of chapter 12 where we left the woman fleeing into the wilderness from the dragon (Satan), the flood flowing from the dragon’s mouth (12:14-16)—a fulfilment of the prophecy in Daniel 9:26. There is also, however, a parallel portion given in the Songs of Ascents (i.e. Psalm 124). It is interesting that archaeologists have been excavating in Edom, Moab and Ammon, in whose wilderness areas they have found cities carved out in the rock which make perfect places of refuge for the fleeing woman (who symbolises Israel). Satan is standing on the sand of the seashore and this would speak to us of the nations (see Rev. 20:8). To get a better understanding, with as full a picture as possible of these symbolic events and their meaning, it is necessary to consider other passages (as in Ezek. 21; Dan. 7; Mat. 24; 2 Thes. 2; 1 John 2 and Rev. 17 among others).

John sees a beast coming out of the sea. The beast denotes first of all a Gentile government system and secondly an individual. 1 John 2:18; 4:3 together with Matthew 24:23-24 shows us that there have been and will be many antichrists. Whether or not this individual is a Jew or a Gentile we are not prepared dogmatically to say (there have been many debates one way and another over the years). What we would say is that this beast, Satan’s super leader, the Antichrist, will arise from the sea, which we take to be the Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15-17). It has ten horns and seven heads, both being kings (17:9,10) and the seven heads are also seven mountains. Further explanation is given in 17:12—‘they have not received a kingdom as yet: but they receive authority as kings, with the Beast, for

one hour'. This is taking place at the beginning of the second three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week.

The Antichrist begins his 'career' as a peacemaker (Rev. 6:2), settling the Arab-Israeli conflict by making a covenant with the Jews for seven years (Dan. 9:27). This covenant he will break at the middle of the seven years, i.e., in three and a half. In Revelation 12:3 the diadems are on the heads of the dragon, but in 13:1 the diadems are on the horns. This would show that the ten kings (horns) have received authority as kings with the Beast. The Beast here must be the man, as we have in 17:12. The nations quite happily will no doubt admire and possibly thank him for the 'peace' he has achieved, being completely unaware of the sorrow and devastation he will bring to the world. Truly the work of the great deceiver!

We also note that there were four metals mentioned in Daniel 2 concerning the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream—gold, silver, brass and iron. The feet and toes were part iron and clay, signifying partly strong and partly broken. In chapter 7 the same four beasts in Daniel's dream are alluded to as kingdoms or empires (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman). This overall concept agrees with the Beast as a system, as in Chapters 13 and 17.

From 13:3-6 we see there will be wonder at his power and sudden rise to fame and authority. There will also be worship, something that Satan has wanted since his first corruption; and there will be words that blaspheme God. It is beyond our comprehension that God allows this, yet we must take comfort that this authority is delegated by God and not inherent and lasts for only the last part (three and a half years) of the Tribulation.

*Bill Paterson*

## *Feature*

### **SOLOMON'S TEMPLE**

#### **Co-builders and Local Workforce**

Hiram, King of Tyre, a Phoenician port, was a great friend of David and willingly supplied workmen and building materials for the king's royal residence and expressed his desire to do similarly for Solomon when the latter informed him of his heart's longing to build a house for the name of the Lord his God. The Zidonians, over whom Hiram reigned, were highly skilful in timber cutting and building construction, and arrangements were put in place to bring cut cedar and cypress trees from Lebanon to Israel; in return Solomon provided abundant wheat and oil for Hiram's people. Hiram's naval vessels brought an abundance of almuq trees from which red sandalwood supports were made for the temple building (1 Kin. 5:6; 10:12). The question could well be asked as to why Solomon should

seek assistance in the provision of construction materials and labour skill for the temple building from outside his own nation. Not only was Hiram an ally and supporter of David, his mother was an Israeli married to a Lebanese man, and he was clearly a lover of the Lord God of Israel and His people (1 Kin. 7:13-14; 2 Chr. 2: 11-12).

30,000 Israelites were sent on heavy labour and skilled work schedules to Lebanon, operating on levels of 10,000 a month, and returning home for two months. Of the 153,600 non-Israelis residing in Israel's territories, 70,000 of them, designated 'strangers in the land' (RV), were assigned to accompany them as burden bearers while 80,000 were woodcutters in the mountains. They were supervised by 3,600 supervisors, thereby amassing a total workforce of 183,600 men. The stones to be used for the foundation of the house were hewn out of the mountains and described as massive and costly, with decorative designs (1 Kin. 5:13-18; 2 Chr. 2: 17-18).

In the New Testament, we cannot overemphasise the importance of a building for God that is spiritual and not material, and our work of building with and for Him. The apostle Paul's letter to the church of God in Corinth in Southern Greece, directs attention to the fact that as a gathering of God's own, adhering to the pattern of teaching for His service, they were actually and spiritually structurally God's building, and thereby a vital and functional part of the temple of God (Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 3: 9,17; cp. 2 Tim. 1:13).

'For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building' (1 Cor. 3: 9).

'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are' (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

The local testimony of the church of God in Corinth was not in itself **the** temple of God as the definite article in the original language is omitted in verse 16; whereas in the following verse it is present. So, the church of God in Corinth, with other churches of God in various locations, was characteristic and representative of the one temple in its setting and activity.

The foundation of every church of God is Jesus Christ and His teaching given to His apostles and prophets. Every person in divine testimony is classified as a fellow-worker, and therefore a builder, whose effort and output will eventually be scrutinised for what it is, in a day to come. Paul was able to affirm to the saints, on account of his calling by God's grace and commitment to His cause, his status as a wise master-builder (1 Cor. 3:10-11, 13; Eph. 2:20; cp. Acts 1:2-3).

Peter the apostle has something to say to the scattered followers of the Lord

Jesus residing in faraway areas of the Roman empire, using the analogy of stones that have been disparate naturally and geographically but now have been worked upon and fashioned together by the hand of God. Initially, they have been born again through the incorruptible seed of the word of the gospel being sown into their hearts and lives. Further, through obedience to the word of truth they have now been brought together as compacted living stones forming one spiritual house, though physically resident in different areas of the empire. Theirs is the privileged spiritual service of a holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices to God in appreciation of Christ's work in their lives, and as a royal priesthood heralding to the world of sinners the glories of the Saviour. They are united in their beliefs as to where they stand in testimony for God (1 Pet. 1:2-23; 2:3-10).

### **Timeframe of Building, Measurements and Dimensions**

The building work of this house for God began 480 years after Israel's freedom from Egyptian domination, in the second month of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, finishing it in seven years (1 Kin. 6:1, 38, viz. 966 B.C.). The temple overall was double the size of the Tabernacle and as a complex had more expensive furnishings and adornments. Opulence was the order of the day. The land mass of the building was sufficient to accommodate all the people at Jerusalem to enter the outer courts. Sadly, the Babylonians destroyed the temple on 14 August, 586 B.C. (Ezek. 9-11).

Descriptions and measurements outside and inside were:

#### **Externally:**

Length of the building: 60 cubits (cubit being 18"- 22"; 46-56 cm) = 100 feet / 30.5m

Breadth: 20 cubits = 33.3' / 10m

Height: 30 cubits = 50' / 15m

#### **Internally:**

Porch / vestibule: 20 cubits length (33.3' / 10m) and 10 cubits broad (16.7' / 5m)

Windows were of fixed lattice-work, that is small diamond-shaped panes;

Side chambers were erected round the walls, having three levels with narrow recesses, and the beams supporting the chambers were carefully concealed. The stones were meticulously made ready at the quarry so that no noise of hammer or axe would be heard while the house was being built.

The inside walls were built with boards of cedar which stretched to the ceiling, while the floor was covered by boards of fir / cypress. From the middle to the rear of the building Solomon constructed what was known as 'the oracle' or 'most holy place', in which the ark of the covenant would be placed and also the golden altar and table of the shewbread ('bread of the Presence') and the lampstands: all

would be overlaid with pure gold. Inside the oracle were the cherubim, made of olive wood and overlaid with gold with the wings of one touching one edge of the wall, and the other touching the opposite edge and also that of the other cherubim, thereby reflecting the joint responsibility in active service of living cherubim in their employ in God's service in the heavenly sphere. There were carvings of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, within and without. The foundation of the temple was completed in that same year in which the work commenced and the whole project was finished seven years later (1 Kin. 6:37-38).

Solomon called for the master craftsman Hiram to fashion two brass pillars for the temple to be located at the porch. These were made from the shields of gold captured by David in his conquest of the Moabites (1 Chr. 18:2,7). The one on the right was named 'Jachin', meaning 'He shall be established'; the other on the left named 'Boaz', signifying 'In it is strength' (2 Chr. 3:17). A molten sea (or basin), made of cast metal, was also assembled, placed upon twelve manufactured oxen and containing 12,000 gallons (44,000 litres) of water. These rested upon ten brazen bases which in turn had four brass wheels and axles with four supports at the four corners of each stand. All these, and so many more vessels and utensils, were far too many to be considered worth weighing. Items of silver and gold which David, Solomon's father, had carefully prepared for the temple, as well as vessels specially selected, were housed in the treasuries of the Lord's glorious dwelling-place (1 Kin. 7:47,51).

In our day of grace, we rejoice in what God has done in providing a place where His name can be honoured and His service fulfilled, viz. the house of God—an expression which the apostle used in his words to his true child in the faith, Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2; 3:15). This term equates with what Paul described in his correspondence to the church of God in Ephesus, Turkey, as a holy temple in the Lord, of which the Lord Jesus is the chief corner stone. Every church of God, spoken of in the original language of the Scriptures as 'every building', is linked with all other divinely constituted churches of God and together corporately form the temple of the Lord where the Spirit of God can find and enjoy residence, just as He does in the individual bodies of believers (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Cor. 6:19).

*R.B. Fullarton (to be continued)*

He who testifies to these things says,  
"Surely I am coming soon."  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20 ESV