

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation

Revelation 14:1-7 – “¹ 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. ⁶ 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.””

This is the Word of the Lord.

It is such an honour for us to spend these times together.

And I don't know what you might think when people say things like that.

But I just want to tell you I really mean it. I love the Bible. I love Jesus. I love his Word.

And I love talking about his Word to anyone who would want to sit and listen. So thanks for sitting and listening.

Well, we are in the book of **Revelation**.

We have been going through it pretty much verse by verse.

And we find ourselves at 14:1.

Before we dive in let's bow our hearts in a word of prayer before the Lord.

Father, thank you for your Word. Thank you that you are the God who speaks. And we want to say thank you that in the book of Revelation you have spoken to us about the way things are going to play out in planet Earth and into forever in a new heaven and a new earth. Thank you, Lord, that you have given us this record to stir our hearts. Lord, this record has been in the hands of your people since the end of the 1st century. And, Lord, I pray that we would be men and women who are so enthralled with what you have to say in this book. And, Lord, not only that we would be loving you with our minds, and having our intellects exercised in loving you as the God who speaks and speaks prophetically, but, Lord, I pray that your Word would find a home in our hearts, that as we get into your Word your Word would get into us. And, Lord, I pray for everything that you desire and you have purposed for your Word to do in each of our hearts and lives, I would ask that you would please overlook my inadequacies as a man, overlook my inadequacies as a teacher, so that your Word would go forth in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power to make the name of Jesus known. Lord, for those who are listening online, those who might be listening to this on the church app, or referencing it and resourcing it from the website, Lord, as your Word goes so far beyond whatever we could imagine, as people get it and share it with others, Lord, we pray that it would still be working in hearts and lives wherever they might be in this world, as we're asking you to work in our hearts. We pray that Jesus would be lifted up and exalted, made great in our hearts and in this world because of this time together. And it's in his wonderful name we pray, amen.

Well, this 14th chapter completes the parenthetical section of the book of **Revelation** that began in chapter 11.

So if you want to think of it literally – and to help you remember, in the pages of your Bible above chapter 14 –

You can write a parentheses – ‘(’ – And you can write – ‘**Revelation 11-14**’ – Close the parenthesis – ‘)’

(**Revelation 11-14**) – Because that's the parenthetical section.

The content of those chapters is not a continuation of the chronology of the events in the book. Instead within those parentheses the Holy Spirit has been backfilling for us some of the details of what has been taking place up through the 10th chapter in the book of **Revelation**. So we pick up in chapter 6. We're moving forward in the events on the earth up through chapter 10. That's all chronological. And then from 11-14 the Holy Spirit backfills for us.

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

But in this chapter **14** we find within the parentheses a looking forward to the consummation of this present age. This is big stuff for us! This chapter is primarily prophetic, looking forward. It consists of a series of visions and pronouncements that look out all the way to the end of the great tribulation. The theme of this chapter – if you want to put there at the top of the header of chapter **14** in your Bible – write this –

The Ultimate Triumph of Christ.

I believe that the vision here given to John is not concerning the event of the rapture of the Church, in which Jesus comes for his Church;

I believe it's a looking forward to the time when Jesus Christ returns to the earth with his Church in his second coming to establish his kingdom upon the earth.

In our earlier studies we looked at some of the views of the rapture and millennial views. And, again, I wanted put this out here that I believe these are open-handed issues. We can differ on them. We can discuss them. But we're not going to divide over them. The important thing is we see that God is working towards something. That's very important.

I personally believe that one of the essential things to understand and to keep us from being confused is that – The rapture is Jesus coming for his Church; And the second coming is Jesus returning to the earth with his Church. So that's a simple way to separate those two concepts.

Now concerning the rapture of the Church – There are zero prophecies in Scripture that need to be fulfilled for the rapture of the Church to take place – not one. But there are still a number of prophecies yet to be fulfilled concerning the second coming of Jesus to the earth at the end of the great tribulation. And we'll see that event happening. We're going to see it referenced a couple of times in this study from the Old Testament as well – events that are prophetic within this book, and yet to be fulfilled, and prophetic within other portions of Scripture.

Matthew 24 is one of the major ones, where Jesus himself says this is what's going to happen before I return again to this earth. **Matthew 24 & 25** are not about the rapture of the Church. I was really confused about that as a young Christian. And I'll confess I was juggling those things back and forth – rapture, second coming – as though they were one and the same thing. You need to be really disciplined when you study through **Matthew 24 & 25** because you need to understand Jesus is not talking about the rapture in **Matthew 24 & 25**; he's talking about his second coming. And he's very clear about that.

So here we go – **Revelation 14**: “¹ 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.”

Now “**Mount Zion**” is first mentioned in **2 Samuel 5:7 & 9**. So there in chapter **14** where it talks about the Lamb standing on Mount Zion you can write in the margin of your Bible there the first reference to Mount Zion –

2 Samuel 5:7, 9 –

“⁷ Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.

⁹ And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David.”

So David chose to give the name, “**the city of David**” to the stronghold of “**Mount Zion**”.

But David's choice is not what gives Mount Zion its importance.

Here's what we read in the **Psalms** –

Psalm 132: “¹³ For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place:”

“¹⁴ This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.”

“¹⁷ There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.”

This is the center of God's universe.

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

It's not London. It's not New York. It's not Paris. It's not Washington D.C. It's not Moscow.
Pick anywhere that man says is where everything is centered and where the focus of the world is.
God's perspective – the City of Jerusalem is in the center of his heart; it's in the center of his universe.

Psalm 48:

**“¹ Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain,
² beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.”**

The ESV translators made it a point to capitalize the “K” in “King”.
“**Mount Zion – the city of the great King** – it's – “**the city of our God.**”
Now there's another thing that adds infinite significance to “**Mount Zion**”.
That is a place that all of us are familiar with – a place called ‘Calvary’.
Another name for it is – ‘The place of the skull’ – ‘Golgotha’.
That's located on “**Mount Zion**”.

That is where Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God – you remember John the Baptist, when he pointed out Jesus at the beginning of his earthly ministry, he said, “**Behold the Lamb of God**” – that's the Lamb who is standing on Mount Zion in chapter **14** – The Lamb of God, Jesus, was sacrificed for the sins of the world there on “**Mount Zion**”.
The Bible tells us that the place where Jesus was crucified in our place for our sins is the very place that Jesus will return to this earth and set his foot upon.

Psalm 2:

**“² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed,”**

And remember the title “**Christ**” in Greek, the title “**Messiah**” in Hebrew – it means “**the Anointed**”.
So they –

**² “take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”
⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.
⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,
⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.””
⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.
⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.””**

Now I want you to think of this. The flow of this world that's been organizing itself against the God of heaven ever since **Genesis 3** is going to be consummated in the Valley of Megiddo.

In the book of **Revelation** it's referred to as Armageddon.
In **Revelation 16:16** God tells us – the God who speaks, the God who is saying,
“*Here's how it's all going to roll out to the end of this age*”;
“*Here's what's going to precede the return of Jesus and precede a new heaven & a new earth*” –
In **Revelation 16:16** we read of the nations of the world gathering in Armageddon.
And God, as we just read in **Psalm 2**, is going to hold them in derision.
He's going to pour out his wrath against them, and set his Son, our Saviour, on that holy hill.

Zechariah 14: “⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.”

So Jesus, when he comes in his second coming his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.
And it's outside of Jerusalem to the east of Jerusalem. It's such an amazing view looking from the city eastward to the Mount of Olives. It's so amazing to be standing there on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane looking across up to Jerusalem to the walls of the old city. It's a spectacular place to be.

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

When we return with Jesus at the end of the great tribulation –
And we're going to see that happening in our study of the book of **Revelation** –
When we return with Jesus at the end of the great tribulation Jesus is going to set his feet on Mount Zion.
The Mount of Olives is going to split in two.
And Jesus is going to enter the city of Jerusalem and establish his rule upon the earth for 1,000 years.
In the margin of your Bible write **Revelation 20**.
That duration of time is referenced several times there – 1,000 years –
Hence the title – the millennium – the millennial rule or the millennial kingdom of Jesus on the earth.
Now here's what's really important. That's kind of setting the stage for us here. But here's what's happening.

In **Revelation 13** –

John has just been shown the rise of the beast and false prophet.
John has just been shown their rule over the world.
John has just been shown how they're going to make war against the saints and prevail.

Within the chronology, within the timeline of the great tribulation, things are going to get unspeakably radically dark.
But in the face of such unspeakable radical darkness God wants to encourage the heart of John by giving him a glimpse, a preview looking out to the end.

The Lamb is shown to John standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000.
The antichrist and the false prophet are defeated.
The millennial kingdom is about to begin.

God wanted to encourage the heart of John.
He wants to encourage men and women concerning the events that look out.

And as we approach that day – again –
It's my personal opinion that the rapture of the Church – Jesus coming for His people –
It's going to precede the events of the great tribulation.
There are those who think it's pre-tribulation.
There are those who think it's mid-tribulation.
There are those who think it's post-tribulation.

There are those who don't believe in any of the above.
And I don't understand them at all.

But here's the application for our lives –
When things are dark –
When it looks like our adversary the devil is having his way –
When it looks like the god of this world seems to be prevailing –
You and I need to look out to the end.

Jesus said, "**There is going to be a time of great tribulation.**" And that is so important for us to understand.
The night before Jesus died he told his disciples, "**In this world you will have tribulation.**"
That's just the adversity that we face living as followers of Jesus in a world that's not following Jesus.
So we're going to face tribulation in this world.
But in **Matthew 24, 25**, speaking of the things that would transpire prior to his second coming, Jesus said that –
"**it will be a time of great tribulation, such as the world has never seen, and never again will see.**"

So there never has, and there never will be again, a time in the history of the world that's darker than the time of the great tribulation. And John has just been shown that in chapter **13** – the antichrist being worshipped by the world, the false prophet forcing men and women to worship the image of the beast, and to take the mark of the beast, or be put to death. And except for the 144,000, all those who come to faith in Jesus during the time of the great tribulation are going to die for their faith in Jesus. It cannot look any darker in the world than that.

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

And yet right here in chapter **14**, when John has just been shown the darkest time in the history of the world, God says, *“John, let me show you how it’s going to end.”*

Christians, The Lord has let us read the end of the story. It’s okay to cheat.
You can pick up the book of **Revelation** any time you want and read how it ends.
Jesus wins. Jesus is the victor.
And that means that his Word is sure and his promises are never going to fail.

By looking out to the end, by God showing John the Lamb on Mount Zion –
just as it was promised in the book of **Psalms**,
just as it was promised in **Zechariah**,
There is Jesus on Mount Zion – God says, *“Look, John, it’s going to end like this.”*

And so that means –
When you and I are watching the news at 10 –
When you’re at the checkout stand at the grocery store, and you’re looking at the cover of Time Magazine –
When you’re seeing the kinds of movies that Hollywood is producing and awarding –
When you see the world running away from God & organizing itself without God & against God & seeming to prosper –
You need / We need to remember the end.

Psalm 73 begins with an unchangeable declaration inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is God-breathed.
This isn’t speculation. This is revelation.

“¹ Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.”

Literally it reads – **“¹ Only good is God to Israel...”**
We forget that, don’t we? – **“Only good is God.”**
“to those who are pure in heart.” –
Does that mean a perfect heart? No, it means a heart that is cleansed by the blood of Jesus
Jesus loved us, and washed us from our sins with his blood.

“¹ Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.”

That is an immutable fact.

“² But”

So the Psalmist is brutally honest here.
He said, **“This is the truth – Truly God is good. But...”**
And whenever we read that little conjunction in the Scriptures remember it sets contrast.
Everything that is before it is contrasted against what’s going to follow it.

“² But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,”

Here’s a man who knows that God is only good all the time.

But he says –

“² But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped.
³ For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
⁴ For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek.”

I haven’t quite figured that one out yet.

- ⁵ They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.
⁸ They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression.
⁹ They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth.
¹¹ And they say, “How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?”
¹² Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.
¹³ All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.”

In other words, the Psalmist is saying,
*“I’ve committed my life to the Lord for nothing.
I have set my life apart to trust him and to love him and to serve him.
And look where I am. And look where they are. This is pointless.”*

- ¹⁶ But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task,
¹⁷ until” – this is huge – “I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.”

It was when the Psalmist came into the presence of the Lord that all of this stuff was resolved in his heart & mind; Because in the presence of the Lord he got an eternal perspective. He was able to see beyond the temporal things that seemed so dark, so twisted, so wrong – wicked people prospering, godly people suffering.

And there in the presence of the eternal God – he was able to see past the here and now; he was able to see the here and the now in the light of eternity. In other words, he got an eternal perspective.

I want to tell you something –
That is the point of our time together every Monday night.
That is the point of our time together every Sunday morning.

The whole point is not for you and I to come in and leave affirmed and feeling better and have a few laughs and hang out with some friends. No, the point is for us to meet with God, to come into the presence of God, with the people of God, so that we can be refreshed in the person of the eternal true and living God, that God can shine into your heart, into my heart, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; that we can finally see in the light of the face of Jesus, the present world that we live in, and see it rightly – getting a glimpse of Jesus, getting a glimpse of eternity.

If you know friends that are just puzzled and troubled –
They profess faith in Jesus, or they go to church –
And yet they are constantly struggling with the very things that the Psalmist said –
And they’re still looking for their identity in the same things that the lost world is trying to find its identity in –
You just need to say, *“Why don’t you come with me to church on a Monday night? Let’s get an eternal perspective.
I think your whole way of seeing the world will be changed by just spending some time in the presence of the Lord.”*
I think there are a lot of Christians that need to get their perspectives sorted out.

Look at how the Psalmist finishes the Psalm –

- ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
²⁷ For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.
²⁸ But for me it is good to be near God;”

Wow – There’s an underline for you. There’s a put your highlighter to it. There’s a circle, asterisk, arrow moment.

- ²⁸ But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.”

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

I'm pretty sure that most of us have seen things or have gone through things that are apparently working against us. I say apparently because God inspired Paul to say that for the believer all things work together for our good; They're never working against us ever. They all work together for our good.

So most of us have seen things or have gone through things that are apparently working against us. And in those times we can think,
*'Lord, I'm living for you. I'm serving you. I've given my life to you.
Why is it, God, that people who don't live for you, who don't serve you, haven't given their lives to you –
Why is it that they seem to have a life that's easier than my life?'*

Here's the deal – I think the sad truth is that – A lot of us – that's me included –
A lot of us think that the world is falling apart when the line is too long and I-N-Out.
'Oh God I'm in such a hurry. I can't believe this is happening to me.'

There was a time – it wasn't terribly long ago – it was a few years ago – where at least five days a week – And those of you who go to Starbucks regularly can date it just by – They don't have the pastry anymore – so you can date it from the time they did. How many of you have ever had the old version of Starbucks maple oat nut scone? Was that like the thing or what! It was amazing! I would just eat the corners, thinking I'm not going to eat the whole thing. Every day, Monday-Friday, I would make my way to Starbucks for a large ice latte and a maple oat nut scone. I couldn't figure out why I was gaining weight. But every day I was doing that. And I remember standing in line there; and there was one maple oat nut scone in the bakery thing - one. And I'm looking at that thing, thinking, *'Please, Jesus.'* It was like I was a heroin addict. And the guy in front of me is just talking on and on about his sexual conquests. And I'm thinking in my heart, *'Surely, God, you're not going to let him get the last maple oat nut scone.'* And he got the last maple oat nut scone.

*"And as for me, my feet almost stumbled. My steps nearly slipped. I thought you loved me, God.
For I was envious of the arrogant, when I saw the wicked guy got the last maple oat nut scone.
All in vain I have kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.
What's the point of serving God if the wicked guy gets the last scone?"*

Now I say that light-heartedly; but there is so much truth in it that it's frightening. Because there are really a lot of things that are bigger than that; and we'll act like that. That guy got the job. That guy got the promotion. That guy got the loan. That guy got the good grade. That guy made the team. That girl got that guy. Just feel in the blanks. That is all such small stuff.

When we are in the midst of real adversity –
We need to remember what God showed John – Jesus wins.
We need to look out to the end;
We need to live with an eye on eternity;
We need to process the here and now in the light of the not yet; because the not yet is certain.

That's why God showed it to John –
*"This is the certain end, John.
This looks horrific. But this is certain."*

It's in that light – like the Psalmist – that we understand that –
This world is as close to Hell as a believer will ever get;
And when we die we get to go to Heaven.

It's in that light – like the Psalmist – that we understand that –
This world is as close to Heaven as an unbeliever will ever get;
And when they die they go to Hell.

May God help us to think of the end of the story.

“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,”

Harp that sound like loud thunder – Wow! How intense is that?

I'm thinking of my son, Shaun, with his peddle board, and his amps, and the stuff he does. And it sounds so unlike a guitar; but it's like thunder. And I'm thinking Heaven is going to be giant making that kind of music.

“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.”

Big question – Who are these “**144,000**”?

Well, let me tell you who these “**144,000**” are not.

They're not any one of us. You are absolutely not in this group of people, unless – you are a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;

and you don't become a Christian until the great tribulation begins;

and you are sealed by God as one of the 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

That's the only way anyone of us could possibly be one of those “**144,000**” people.

These are not the prominent saints of the church age.

They are not the Seventh Day Adventists who worship on Saturdays.

They are not the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Revelation 7 tells us exactly who these people are.

These people are obviously descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are obviously Jews.

It says very plainly that they're taken from the 12 tribes of Israel – **Revelation 7:4**.

Please put that in the margin of your Bible so you get that clear.

And in case you or I would be tempted to spiritualize Israel, and make it the Church, God lists the names of those 12 tribes – **Revelation 7:5-8**.

**⁵ from the tribe of Judah,
from the tribe of Reuben,
from the tribe of Gad,**

**⁶ from the tribe of Asher,
from the tribe of Naphtali,
from the tribe of Manasseh,**

**⁷ from the tribe of Simeon,
from the tribe of Levi,
from the tribe of Issachar,**

**⁸ from the tribe of Zebulun,
from the tribe of Joseph,
from the tribe of Benjamin – were sealed 12,000.**

That's a specific people group.

Despite the relentless attack and persecution of the forces of the antichrist throughout the great tribulation – These 144,000 Jews are going to be supernaturally protected by God.

And they are going to be like 144,000 Kosher Billy Grahams let loose on the world.

And they will be indestructible until they have finished their tasks.

But would you note this as well –

We're told that this is a very exclusive group – so exclusive that they have a song that will be exclusively theirs.

“³ ... No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.”

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

Now there's a great lesson and a great comfort for us here as we see those who, by God's preserving hand, will come through the great tribulation. We're not them. But there are lessons for us in them. Our sorrows will one day be turned into songs. Now I have a real problem with cliché. So this is not cliché – to say our sorrows will one day be turned into songs. One time the guy who built the Crystal Cathedral in Southern California said, "When you get lemons in life you've just got to make lemonade." I'm thinking that's not this. That's not this at all.

Would you put **Psalm 30:11** in the margin of your Bible?

**"¹¹You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;
you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,
¹²that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!"**

When we look at these 144,000, and they're singing a song that is exclusively their song –
It's not going to be your song; It's not going to be my song – unless you're one of these 144,000 –
you're a Jew – you're part of that people group;
and you're not believing the Gospel;
and you're going to get saved in the great tribulation;
and you happen to be one of the people that God is going to seal out of the 12,000 of each of the 12 tribes –
If that's you, that's who you are – but the rest of us – by and large that's not us –
They have this exclusive song.

But we learn from them how God turns our sorrows into songs.

And though this is an exclusive group of people, they possess attributes that should belong to every Christian.
This is so challenging. I was so challenged by this afternoon. Speaking of this very exclusive group of people –

"⁴It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins."

Now this is not about celibacy. It's about spiritual purity.
I think the **New Living Translation** is really helpful here.

Revelation 14:4 in the **New Living Translation** – "**For they are spiritually undefiled, pure as virgins.**"

"they are spiritually undefiled, pure as virgins."

In the Bible unfaithfulness to the Lord is spoken of in terms of spiritual fornication, spiritual adultery.
Paul spoke of our relationship with Jesus in these same terms.

2 Corinthians 11:

**"²For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy.
For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."**

So here are these people who kept themselves from anything that would compromise their love for Jesus –
faithfulness to Jesus, spiritually keeping themselves pure.

1 John 2: "¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride and possessions of life—is not from the Father but is from the world."

These 144,000 would not give away the love that belonged to Jesus and Jesus alone.
That's what God is saying about these 144,000 people.
They are an exclusive group of people; but they speak to us. Their lives speak to us.
They wouldn't give away the love that belonged to Jesus.
They didn't trade the love that belongs to Jesus for passions, sensual pleasures, possessions or position.
The love of their heart was kept for Jesus and Jesus alone.

Now what follows is really important in relationship to spiritual purity.

“It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.”

We’ve said it earlier – The Lamb is Jesus. John the Baptist said, **“Behold, the Lamb of God…”**

Jesus said, **“Follow me.”** That’s what he said – **“Follow me.”**

Here is the simplest definition of Christianity – and it’s lost on so much of contemporary church culture.

What is Christianity? What is a Christian? – It’s not about church. It’s not about a Christian subculture.

Jesus said, **“Follow me”** – to the exclusion of anyone or anything.

Jesus also said that there are two ways to go in this life. He said in –

Matthew 7:

“¹³ Enter by the narrow gate.

For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

Interesting –

Why do so many people choose the wide gate and the way that’s easy that leads to destruction?

Why are there so many choosing that?

Because the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life.

They’re not thinking about the destination.

They’re not thinking about the outcome of their choice.

They just want easy.

There is his way – the way of Jesus;

Or there is what Paul the apostle calls – **“the course of this world”**.

The broad path – that’s the course of this present world – it’s the way of the world.

The appeal of the course of this world is that it is so broad. That’s what’s so appealing about it.

There is nothing to constrict, nothing to constrain.

It’s like –

I can stretch out;

I can do what I think is right;

I can do what I feel is right;

I can think how I want to think.

But the path that is so broad, so accommodating to man’s fallen desires and fallen passions –

That path ends up crushing the life out of you.

“There is a way that seems right unto man” – it says in the book of **Proverbs** – **“but the end of it is death.”**

Following Jesus means entering in at the straight gate, the narrow gate, and walking on the narrow path.

It’s straight. It’s small. It’s exclusive.

Jesus is the only way onto that path that ends up in life.

It’s narrow – Following Jesus is not an anything goes path. It’s not a do what you want way.

The difficulty of following Jesus is that we don’t get our own way. Does anybody besides me find that reality hard?

Following Jesus is hard because we don’t get our own way.

I love to get my own way. And the Holy Spirit is working day in and day out in my life to kill that.

When Ashley and Nathan were little I would come home from church, and maybe had a long day, a few hard appointments, a long day of study and prep. And I’d walk in the door, and I would be greeted by the Disney channel. I do not like the Disney channel. I had this thing about the Disney channel. And my attitude was – *Look, I’ve been working hard all day. And do I need to remind you, I have been working hard serving God? I get the remote.*

The hard part about following Jesus is that following Jesus –
is not about getting my way;
it's about Jesus getting his way.

But here is what's so magnificent, so absolutely beautiful about that life.
The narrow path – the path that says, “deny yourself” – the path that says, “die to self” –
That path is the only path that gives real freedom.
It's the only path that gives a life that's truly broad, a life that's truly abundant.
And you need to understand this – The two paths, the broad path & the narrow path – They never converge - never.

Their spiritual purity was the result of having followed the Lamb wherever the Lamb went.
Do you want to know how to stay spiritually pure? – Follow the Lamb wherever he goes.
Doesn't that just mess you up how simple Christianity is? It just messes you up.
If I'm following Jesus, then I will keep my life from being defiled.
If I'm following Jesus, then I will avoid anything that will steal my affections.
You see, Jesus is never going to lead me where he doesn't want me to go.
He is never going to lead me into sin – never.

Put **Psalm 17:5** in the margin of your Bible there.

“⁵Uphold my steps in Your paths, *That* my footsteps may not slip.”

Also **Psalm 23:** **“³ ... He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.”**

If I fall into sin it's because I have not been following Jesus.
They followed the Lamb wherever he went.
No wonder they were spiritually pure.

They were also consistent in their obedience to the Lord. They followed the Lamb wherever he went.
Now here's my problem – I believe it's our problem – I hope I'm not speaking for you presumptuously –
We will follow the Lord as long as things are going well.

How many of you know somebody that professed faith in Jesus –
Their life was kind of a mess. They give their life to Jesus. Things are going well.
They're saying, *“This is great following Jesus. My life is doing everything I want it to do.”*
And the minute things go wrong – bye, bye Jesus.

We will follow the Lord as long as things are going well,
as long as I can see the immediate benefits of following Jesus,
as long as the way he leads me is the way I want to go.
But the moment we can no longer see the immediate benefit;
The moment Jesus goes in a direction we don't like or a direction we cannot understand – in other words –
The moment we actually have to start living by faith, we fall away.

A true follower of Jesus will follow Jesus wherever he leads.
Jesus said, **“You're my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.”**
Jesus didn't say, *“You're my friends if you do what you personally agree with.”*
He didn't say, *“You're my friends if you do whatever is convenient and comfortable.”*

The Bible says that those who have been justified by faith –
And that's the only way we can be made right with God – by faith –
We're **“saved by grace through faith, not of works lest anyone should boast”** –
The Bible says that those who have been made right with God through faith in Jesus are to live by faith.
“The just shall live by faith.”

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

And yet what happens is when we're following Jesus, and suddenly he's leading us somewhere we don't understand. And I'm not just talking about the personal direction in your life as an individual, like where God is leading you in his plan for your life. I mean, even in the pages of Scripture Jesus leads us places we don't understand. How about –

“Love your enemies?” I don't understand that.

“Bless those who persecute you.” I don't understand that.

Somebody persecutes me, I want to get mad at them. I don't understand that command.

The minute Jesus asks us to follow him somewhere that we don't understand is when we follow him by faith.

That's what it means to live by faith. If I can understand it, where is the faith in that?

There is no faith involved in completely understanding something.

The Christian life is all about following Jesus. He is the Lord. There is no other option.

I can't sit here and try and invent another Christianity –

that's more comfortable for us,

that might appeal to you because it seems a little easier than the Christianity of the Bible.

In a literal sense none of us can qualify as one of these 144,000, unless you meet those qualifications that I said.

But in a spiritual sense here is the challenge to me – here's the challenge to us –

Do we make the grade when we look at these lives – spiritual purity that's rooted in following Jesus?

And, by the way, why would we not want to follow Jesus?

He loved us and washed us from our sins with his blood.

He bought us out from under the penalty and power of sin.

The one who saves us died loving his enemies – that's us.

Why would we not want to follow him?

Oh it requires faith. And It's not easy.

But why would we not want to follow him?

“⁶ Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on *the* earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.”

This is a phenomenon never witnessed in the history of the world – angels preaching the gospel to man. God is going to commission angels to offer one last all out offer of grace to the world before he buries the world in an avalanche of judgment. Now people will say, *“I don't get this God of the book of Revelation who is just judging the world and pouring out wrath on this world.”* If you want to ask me what part I don't get is that God is going to actually commission angels to proclaim the everlasting gospel to a world that is collectively flipping him off. This is utterly amazing. God is going to do this for the world that's worshipping the antichrist. This angel is going to preach to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.

And this, by the way, is exactly what Jesus said would take place prior to his second coming.

Matthew 24:14 is a great cross reference for you to put in the margin of your Bible.

Matthew 24: **“¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the whole world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end will come.”**

Now there are those people who say that the rapture of the Church won't take place until the gospel has been preached in all nations. But in **Matthew 24** Jesus is speaking of his second coming, not the rapture.

And, again, this angelic proclamation of the gospel is so amazing.

For thousands of years angels have wanted to get into the act of preaching the gospel.

1 Peter 1:12 – speaking of the gospel, says - **“...things which angels desire to look into.”**

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

They have apparently been itching to preach the gospel for a long time. But until this moment of time referenced in chapter 14 in the events of the great tribulation God reserved that privilege for you and me, for humans.

Think of **Acts 10** – Remember the first Gentile converts in the book of **Acts**. Cornelius, a Roman centurion living in Caesarea – he was a guy burnt out on his pagan life, burnt out on pagan religion. He wanted to know the one true and living God of Israel. But he wasn't becoming a Jew. The Jews called such people 'God-fearers'. And if ever there was a moment, if ever there was a man who was ripe for an angel to preach the gospel to, this moment, that man would be it. But, no, in **Acts 10:5** an angel appears to him. And the angel, quite interestingly, doesn't preach the gospel. He says (KJV), **"⁵ And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: ⁶ He lodges with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell you what you ought to do."** The angel didn't tell him. He says, *"You need to go see this man. As much as I would love to tell you about Jesus, I've just been told to tell you to go to that man, and he will tell you about Jesus."*

But now at last angels have their chance. Here's the big exception. And the question that I think it begs is – Why? The only thing I can come up with is this – Because the time is short. The time is short in the book of **Revelation**. The tribulation period is winding down. The return of Jesus is closer with every passing day. So the Lord sends angels to cover the earth so no one would miss the gospel. That is the matchless love of God for the world when it is like – and I believe – worse than it was in the days of Noah. Because Jesus spoke of that time – he says –

"Just as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be before the Son of Man returns."

Have any of you seen the movie '**The End of the Spear**'? It was a good movie. It's the story of the men – the most famous of which was **Jim Elliot** – men who were murdered in their attempt to preach the gospel to the Waodani tribe in the forest of Ecuador. When the day had finally arrived for the men to make contact with that people group a man named **Nate Saint** sat down with his little boy, Steve. And Nate's son said, *"Dad, if those men try to kill you will you defend yourself? Will you kill them before they kill you?"* And when we were watching that movie, and this scene came up, and his dad gave him his answer, I just started bawling. I was so wrecked by the answer that Nate Saint gave his son. He said, *"No, son, I can't kill them, because they're not ready to go to heaven. I can die because I am."* Wow! *"I can't kill them, even if they're trying to kill me, son, because if I kill them they'll go to hell. They can kill me because I will go to heaven."*

That is the very love of God put into the heart of those men, the same love that is seen in this angelic proclamation of the gospel – the love of God so great for a world that's not repenting of its wickedness, that says, *"Let the mountains, let the rocks fall on us. We're hiding in caves. Just cover us up. Kill us. We just can't bear to look at the face of the one on the throne. And the wrath of the Lamb is being poured out. We would rather die than repent."* And yet God says, *"No, no, no, Jesus is coming back. When he comes back it's done. So to make sure that you all can have an opportunity to hear the gospel I'm going to commission angels."*

Have any of you read '**Through Gates of Splendour**'?

Here's my challenge to you. Get the book – '**Through Gates of Splendour**'.

It's the story of Jim Elliot and the men who died bringing the gospel to the Waodani tribe.

There in that book it talks about their long preparation. These guys went through long preparation. **Jim Elliot** was like the cream of the crop as a student, as an athlete in college. He earned honors as a wrestler nationally. He says, *"Mom, you might be hearing about these awards I'm winning. But just know this, I'm only wrestling to prepare my body for the mission field."* And in his journal, and in that book, Jim Elliot says, *"We cannot wait to preach, to proclaim the matchless name of Jesus to these people who have never heard it."* So they go through years of preparation. And then they're trying to find these people, people that they know kill anybody that comes near them. And so they fly over the jungle looking for these people. And they finally find the people. And then they figure how do we make contact with them? Well, the man who was the pilot devised this thing where he could use physics by circling in his plane over where these people were at into this open area. And he would let down a rope, and the further he got in his circle the line would go straighter down until finally he could be circling, and it would go straight down, and he could land a bucket on the ground that they could pick up. And what they did is they filled that bucket with things to introduce themselves to these people so that they wouldn't be afraid of them when they showed up.

Revelation 14 – The Lamb - His Followers - The Amazing Proclamation Richard Cimino

And when I read that in that book I think what an amazing picture of God in heaven looking for lost souls, and then dropping the bucket of the gospel right in front of us, confronting us with his love and his mercy. I know that I was hiding from God, running from God, choosing to live without him, and organizing my life against him. I set up my little doomed kingdom of one over and against his kingdom for 22 years of my life. And God dropped the bucket of the gospel right in front of me. That's our God.

“⁷ And he said with a loud voice,” – this is the proclamation – **“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven & earth, the sea & the springs of water.”**”

This is the end right here. Notice the content of this exhortation.

To a world that is exalting man, the angel says, **“Fear God and give glory to him.”**

To a world that smirked at the concept of a literal heaven and hell, the angel says, **“His judgment has come.”**

To a world that mocked the concept of creation, the angel says, **“Worship him that created.”**

Wow! The gospel does fly into the face of the world. But it's a glorious gospel. It's so glorious that God would commission angels at the last most desperate time in human history to a world that is rejecting him.

Father, thank you for this amazing chapter, this part of this chapter, so amazing, so filled with truth for us. Lord, I pray that as we respond to you now, that there would be those who would be saved; they'd give their life to you, that men and women would find themselves saying, “Lord, how can I live more fully for you. Forgive me for not looking out to the end. Forgive me for not wanting to follow you where you want to go, but always wanting to follow you only where I want to go. You know the full gamut, Lord.” May we respond accordingly!

If you need to give your life to Jesus – somebody has been telling you about Jesus – or maybe all you got out of them was an invitation to be here – you've heard about Jesus, God's Son who died on a cross for your sin so that you could be saved. You've heard about the very heart of God for you. If you want to give your life to Jesus I want to pray for you and with you. And I don't want this to be protracted, but be praying, because I can't help but think that there are some people who have identified themselves as Christian just because they do go to church. And they maybe go to church frequently. But we've seen the defining trait of the Christian – they follow the Lamb wherever he goes. If that's not what defines you, that you can't say, “I'm a follower of Jesus”, become a follower of Jesus. Is there anybody at all – you need to make that decision to follow Jesus? Or maybe you were following Jesus at one time; but you just walked away from him. And now you're hearing about following Jesus, and God diagnosed you, all the reasons why you decided not to follow him. You need to know his arms are wide open to you.

So I want to encourage you as we take Communion –

The bread reminds us that Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities.

The cup reminds us that Jesus loves us and he washed us from our sins with his blood.

Let's worship the Lord.

Let's take the Communion elements.

And then we'll close.