

# The Victory of the Lamb and His Followers

by John F. Walvoord

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*The sermon explores the ultimate triumph of Christ and the judgment of the wicked, highlighting the significance of the Lamb and the 144,000, the everlasting gospel, and the fall of Babylon.*

**Scripture:** Revelation 14:1-17

**Topics:** "End Times", "Divine Judgment"

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## Description

John F. Walvoord preaches on Revelation chapter 14, which focuses on the ultimate triumph of Christ and the judgment of the wicked. The chapter begins with a vision of the Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion, symbolizing the redeemed standing with Christ in victory. The chapter also includes prophecies of the fall of Babylon, the doom of the worshipers of the beast, the blessing of the saints who die in the Lord, and the judgment executed by the Son of Man. The vivid imagery of the sharp sickles, the winepress of God's wrath, and the bloodshed portrays the final acts of divine vengeance and judgment on the wicked.

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## Transcript

Chapter 14 brings to a conclusion the material found in the section of chapters 12 through 14. Chapter 12 deals with the important characters of the period, chapter 13 with the wicked rulers of the period, and chapter 14 with the ultimate triumph of Christ. All of this material is not chronological but prepares the way for the climax which begins in chapter 15. Chapter 14 consists of a series of pronouncements and visions assuring the reader of the ultimate triumph of Christ and the judgment of the wicked. Much of the chapter is prophetic of events that have not yet taken place, but which are now impending. The chapter begins with the assurance that the Lamb will ultimately stand in triumph on Mount Zion with his followers, and it concludes with a series of pronouncements of judgments upon the wicked.

The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion (14:1-5)

14:1-5 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault

before the throne of God.

The chapter begins with the unusual phrase used several previous times: "And I looked, and, lo." This expression, which could also be translated "And I saw, and, behold," introduces the vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion accompanied by 144,000. The expositors are faced with a number of important decisions in the understanding of this passage among which is the meaning of Mount Zion. J. B. Smith joins with Bengel and Hengstenberg in interpreting Mount Zion as the figurative expression referring to heaven, finding a similar usage in Hebrews 12:22.<sup>252</sup> Smith holds that the expression "mount Sion" always refers to the heavenly Jerusalem whereas "Sion" without "mount" always refers to the earthly city, a rather arbitrary conclusion.

To interpret this as a heavenly city, however, involves numerous problems which Smith and others do not take into consideration. If this group is the same as the 144,000 of chapter 7, they are specifically said to be sealed and kept safely through the tribulation. In this case, they move on into the millennial earth without going to the third heaven, since this is the meaning of the seal (cf. 7:3).

Further, the argument that the 144,000 must be in heaven as they hear the song before the throne may be disputed. There is no statement to the effect that they hear the song, only the declaration that they alone can learn it. The reasons for making Mount Zion a heavenly city in this passage are therefore lacking a sure foundation. Preferable is the view that this is a prophetic vision of the ultimate triumph of the Lamb following His second coming, when He joins the 144,000 on Mount Zion at the beginning of His millennial reign.

The determination of the place of this action is also correlated with the question whether the 144,000 in chapter 14 are the same group as in chapter 7. Walter Scott expresses the opinion without giving any substantiation that the 144,000 of chapter 14 are of the tribe of Judah and therefore to be distinguished from the 144,000 in chapter 7.<sup>253</sup> There is no evidence whatever in the passage that this group is limited to Judah, and it would be most strange to have two groups of exactly 144,000 in the end time, especially when 12,000 of those in chapter 7 are also of the tribe of Judah. The preferable view, therefore, seems to be that the 144,000 in this chapter are the same as in chapter 7. In their first mention they are seen at the beginning of the great tribulation. In their second mention in chapter 14, they are seen still intact, preserved by God through the fearful days of persecution and standing triumphantly with the Lamb on Mount Zion at the beginning of the millennial reign.

The best manuscripts indicate that the expression "having his Father's name written in their foreheads" should be "having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads." By this expression they are clearly identified as belonging to both the Father and the Son. In chapter 7, the seal is mentioned as simply being the seal of God, whereas here we have more detail. There is no good ground for imagining that the seal here is a later development and dissimilar to the earlier seal. J. B. Smith offers this view on the theory that in chapter 7 the 144,000 are not Christians and do not become Christians until chapter 14.<sup>254</sup> There is little to support this conclusion. The difference in the two descriptions is that one is general and the other specific. As Seiss points out, their identification with the Father is their mark of being saved Jews; their identification with the Lamb reveals their salvation through faith in Christ; their position on Mount Zion a place of security, blessing, and glory in the earthly Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom.<sup>255</sup>

In verse 2, a new facet of the vision is given to John and he records hearing a voice from heaven. The voice is described in most majestic terms as being similar to the sound (Gr., *pho,,ne,,*) of many waters and comparable to the sound of a great thunder. John also hears the voice of harpers harping with their harps (lyres). In verse 3 they are described as singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. This scene seems reminiscent of chapters 4 and 5 though the expression "from heaven" is not in some manuscripts. The preponderance of evidence seems to indicate that this is indeed a heavenly scene which John is seeing "in the Spirit" while his body is on earth. If the 144,000 are on earth in Zion, who then are the company in heaven? Though the natural questions concerning their identity are not clearly answered in the text, the heavenly group are probably the martyred saints of the tribulation, in contrast to the 144,000 who are on earth and do not suffer martyrdom. Both groups, however, experience the trials of the great tribulation and therefore are alone worthy to enter into the song of redemption recounting their victory over their enemies and praising God for His grace which has numbered them among the redeemed.

Chronologically, the song John hears is their hymn of praise in heaven during the time of the great tribulation, but the same song is echoed by the 144,000 who stand triumphantly on Mount Zion after the tribulation. As is true of the rest of the vision in this chapter, the chronological order is not maintained, but rather different subjects are brought into view pertaining to the general theme of the ultimate triumph of God. There seems to be a definite connection between the new song that is sung and the ascription of praise (7:10) in which the martyred dead cry out to God, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Different in character but also a new song is that of the twenty-four elders in 5:9-10. In chapter 14, the song is sung before the four living creatures and the elders; in chapter 5 the elders themselves sing the song. In the reference to the 144,000 as redeemed from the earth, the thought seems to be that both those in heaven and on earth have been redeemed, that is, purchased by the blood of Christ and delivered from their enemies, one group through martyrdom, the other group by divine preservation through the tribulation.

Returning to the subject of the 144,000 in verse 4, John describes them as "not defiled with women, for they are virgins." This description is not explained in the context but has been taken variously as referring to necessary abstinence from marriage in the critical days of the tribulation when a normal marital life for a person true to God is impossible, or as referring to spiritual purity, that is, they are not defiled by love of the world or compromise with evil, but keep themselves pure in a world situation which is morally filthy. In like manner Israel is referred to frequently in the Bible as "the virgin the daughter of Zion" (2 Kings 19:21; Isa. 37:22), as the "virgin daughter of Zion" (Lam. 2:13), and as the "virgin of Israel" (Jer. 18:13; 31:4, 21; Amos 5:2). In the New Testament also, the term "virgin" is used of both men and women as in 2 Corinthians 11:2 in reference to the church as a bride.

The possibility that their virgin character signifies their spiritual purity primarily is indicated in the next statement describing them as those "which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Here again it is obviously in the earthly scene, as the 144,000 of Israel do not ever go to heaven during their natural lifetime. The third statement also introduced by "these," as the two previous affirmations, repeats the thought that these are redeemed from among men as the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. Again the word for redeemed is a form of *agorazo,,* as in verse 3, meaning "to purchase." In what sense is this company "firstfruits" (Gr., *aparche,,*)? The term "firstfruits" seems to refer to the beginning of a great harvest, here to the beginning of the millennial kingdom. The 144,000 are the godly nucleus of Israel which is the token of the redemption of the nation and the glory of Israel which is to unfold in the kingdom.

The description of the 144,000 closes with the statement that they are without guile and without fault. In saying that they have no guile (Gr., pseudos), the thought is that there is no falsehood or especially no false religion in them (cf. use of the word pseudos in Rom. 1:25; Rev. 21:27; 22:15). This large number have been kept utterly clean from the false religion of the great tribulation. They are also described as without fault, that is, blameless and without stain, in contrast to those who are apostates, described as "faults" or "blemishes" using the same root (Gr., amo,,sos) as in 2 Peter 2:13. How important this makes the life and testimony of any believer who seeks to emulate these who in this most trying time are found in no compromise with error and no defilement of their purity. Christians in the present age are exhorted to be "without blame before him" (Eph. 1:4), "without blemish" (Eph. 5:27; 1 Peter 1:19), "unblameable" (Col. 1:22), "without spot" (Heb. 9:14), and "faultless" (Jude 24). All of this is in the sight of God, though the expression in verse 5 "before the throne of God" is not in the best manuscripts.

#### The Angel with the Everlasting Gospel (14:6-7)

14:6-7 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The next phase of the vision given to John in this chapter introduces "another angel" flying in the midst of heaven, literally "in mid-heaven," having the everlasting gospel to preach to the entire world. The reference to "another" seems to be to an angel in addition to the seven angels introduced in 8:2 and also in contrast to "another angel" in 8:3 and 10:1. J. B. Smith notes that the remaining portion of the chapter "presents a sevenfold division consisting of the appearance of six angels including a vision of the Son of man between two groups of three angels each."256

The expression "the everlasting gospel," actually without the article ("everlasting gospel") is an arresting phrase. It is everlasting in the sense that it is ageless, not for any specific period. Ordinarily, one would expect this to refer to the gospel of salvation. In verse 7, however, the content of the message is quite otherwise, for it is an announcement of the hour of judgment of God and the command to worship Him.

Some expositors use the term "gospel" to include all the revelation God has given in Christ and hence conclude that there is only one gospel with various phases of truth belonging to this gospel. There are others who prefer to distinguish various messages in the Bible as gospel or "good news" even though they contain only one aspect of divine revelation, hence, the expression "gospel of grace," referring to the goodness of grace, or to the gospel of the kingdom, dealing with the good news of the kingdom of God. The everlasting gospel seems to be neither the gospel of grace nor the gospel of the kingdom, but rather the good news that God at last is about to deal with the world in righteousness and establish His sovereignty over the world. This is an ageless gospel in the sense that God's righteousness is ageless. Throughout eternity God will continue to manifest Himself in grace toward the saints and in punishment toward the wicked. To refer to the gospel of grace as an everlasting gospel is to ignore the context and usage of the term.

#### Prophecy of the Coming Fall of Babylon

14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The pronouncement of verse 8 is by another angel, apparently also flying in mid-heaven, saying the great city of Babylon has fallen. The repetition of the phrase "is fallen" is for emphasis. Prophetically, "Babylon" sometimes refers to a literal city, sometimes to a religious system, sometimes to a political system, all stemming from the evil character of historic Babylon. The announcement here is prophetic as the actual fall of Babylon probably comes later if the reference is to the physical city. There is some evidence, however, that the woman referred to as "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT" in chapter 17, referring to the apostate church which will hold sway in the first half of the seventieth week of Daniel, is actually destroyed at the beginning of the great tribulation in preparation for the worship of the beast. The destruction of the city of Babylon itself, whether a reference to Rome, as is commonly held, or to a rebuilt city of Babylon on the ancient site of historic Babylon, does not take place until the end of the great tribulation. Inasmuch as the context here seems to deal primarily with the end of the great tribulation and the beginning of the millennial kingdom, the reference seems to be to the literal city.

The fall of Babylon is occasioned by her iniquity, which in the best manuscripts is described in these words: "...made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Some expositors feel the text originally read "have drunk" instead of "made...to drink." In either reading the peculiar expression "the wine of the wrath of her fornication" has been variously interpreted but seems to be a shortened expression of the two phrases "the wine of the wrath of God" (14:10) and "the wine of her fornication" (17:2). The resultant meaning is that the nations who participate in the spiritual corruption induced by Babylon ultimately share her divine condemnation and judgment. Like the pronouncement of the previous angel and the other prophecies of this chapter, the promise of judgment upon the iniquitous Babylonian system is designed to bring comfort to those in trial in that period.

#### The Doom of the Worshipers of the Beast (14:9-11)

14:9-11 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

The third angel adds immediately to the pronouncement of the previous angel by proclaiming with a great voice the sad doom of those who worship the beast. Anyone who receives the mark of the beast as required in 13:17 shall also partake of the judgment of God. As he drinks of the wine of spiritual fornication, so he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. It is described in most dramatic terms as wine that is unmixed, that is, untempered by the mercy and grace of God; and these worshipers are declared to be "tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." The same Scripture which assures all Christians of the love of God and the grace of God as extended to those who trust in Christ is unequivocal in its absolute statements of judgment upon the wicked.

Concerning the destiny of the wicked, J. B. Smith writes,

Anyone disposed to discredit the Biblical teaching on the eternal destiny of the wicked should be reminded that Jesus and His beloved disciple said more in regard to this doctrine than all the remaining contributors to the New Testament record.

This is supported by the fact that Jesus referred to hell (gehenna) eleven out of the twelve occurrences, made twelve out of nineteen references to hell fire, and used other similar expressions more than any other person in the New Testament.<sup>257</sup>

The righteousness of God is as inexorable as the love of God is infinite. The love of God is not free to express itself to those who have spurned Jesus Christ. Their torment is not a momentary one, for it is described in verse 11 as continuing forever, literally "into the ages of ages," the strongest expression of eternity of which the Greek is capable. To emphasize the idea of continued suffering, they are declared to have no rest day or night. In describing the worshipers of the beast, the word worship as well as the word receive in verse 11 is in the present tense emphasizing continued worship of the beast over a long period of time, the worshipers spurning the testimony of the godly remnant and plunging blindly to their doom. The same present tense is used in describing their torment. As the worship of the beast is not interrupted by repentance, so their torment is not interrupted when repentance is too late. How dangerous it is for men to trifle with false religions, which dishonor the incarnate Word and contradict the written Word.

#### The Blessing of the Saints (14:12-13)

14:12-13 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

The stern warning addressed to all worshipers of the beast is also an encouragement to those who put their trust in Christ in the time of great tribulation. Though some of them will face martyrdom and others will need to go into hiding, they are assured that their lot is far preferable to those who accept the easy way out and worship the beast. The saints are described in verse 12 as those who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Here is the proper link between works and faith so necessary in all ages but especially in the great tribulation.

In verse 13, John hears a voice from heaven pronouncing a blessing on those who die in the Lord. Four times previously there is a record of a voice from heaven (10:4, 8; 11:12; 14:2). Again in 18:4 and 21:3 a voice is heard, a direct communication from God as contrasted with communication through an angel. The implication is that this is unusually important and a direct divine pronouncement. The reference to the blessing of those who die in the Lord from this time on is not a general reference to all saints who die, but specifically to those who die in this period, that is, as martyrs of the faith. It is far better to be dead at the hand of the beast than to have favor as his worshiper. This is followed by the expression "Yea, saith the Spirit." The implication is that the voice from heaven is none other than the voice of the Holy Spirit. Those who die in the Lord are described as resting from their labors with the rewards of their work following them. This verse is the second beatitude in Revelation (cf. 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

#### The Judgment of the Son of Man (14:14-16)

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

Following the reassurance of the saints' ultimate reward, a further revelation is given graphically in the closing portion of this chapter. John in his vision beholds One like the Son of man sitting on a white cloud wearing a golden crown and having in his hand a sharp sickle. The revelation is introduced by the familiar phrase "And I looked, and behold," indicating another major advance in the revelation. Though the one described is said to be like the Son of man, it is probable that this is none other than Christ Himself participating in the divine judgments of God upon a wicked world. This probability is reinforced by the golden crown speaking of His glorified state and His royal dignity. Alford says, "This clearly is our Lord Himself."<sup>258</sup> The sharp sickle indicates this is the time of harvest, referring to the climactic judgments relating to the second coming.

As John beholds the vision of the Son of man having a sharp sickle, he sees another angel come out of the Temple crying to the Son of man to thrust in His sickle and reap, declaring that the harvest of the earth is ripe. It is remarkable that an angel should thus address the Son of man, but it should be regarded as an entreaty of a holy angel to Christ as the Son of man in His position as judge of men (cf. John 5:22, 27). The fact that the angel comes from the Temple seems to allude to this judgment as proceeding from the righteousness of God. Further, the angel urges judgment at this time because, in God's sovereign plan as made known to the angel, it is the time for judgment. The expression "the harvest of the earth is ripe" seems to imply that judgment is overdue. The verb form "is ripe" (Gr., *exēranthe*), meaning "to become dry or withered," has a bad connotation (cf. Matt. 21:19-20; Mark 3:1, 3; 11:20; Luke 8:6; Rev. 16:12). The picture here is of a fruit or vegetable that has become so ripe that it has begun to dry up and wither. The rotten moral condition of the world is dealt with now with a sharp sickle. Verse 16 indicates that the Son of man does as the angel requests, possibly using angelic means to accomplish this end as in Matthew 13:30, 39-42.

Some commentators like Alford distinguish between the figure of reaping in verses 14-16 and the vision of reaping which follows, holding that the first harvest is that of the saints in contrast to the second harvest which is obviously of the wicked. As Alford states,

The verdict of Commentators is very much divided. There are circumstances in the context which tell both ways. The parallelism with the vintage which follows, seems to favour a harvest of the wicked: but then on the other hand, if so, what is the distinction between the two ingatherings? And why do we read of the casting into the wine-press of God's wrath in the second case, and of no corresponding feature in the other? Again, why is the agency so different--the Son of man on the white cloud with a golden crown in the one case, the mere angel in the other? Besides, the two gatherings seem quite distinct. The former is over before the other begins. On the whole then, though I would not pronounce decidedly, I must incline to think that the harvest is the ingathering of the saints, God's harvest, reaped from the earth: described here thus generally, before the vintage of wrath which follows.<sup>259</sup>

As Alford himself notes, the passage itself does not tell us what the first harvest is. There is no distinct event in this sequence of prophecies which clearly presents a harvest of saints, and it is probably preferable to consider the first harvest as the judgments in general which characterize the period and the second harvest as the final climactic one.

#### The Angel with the Sharp Sickle (14:17-20)

14:17-20 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had

the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The use of angels to assist in the harvest of the earth is now stated explicitly in verse 17. Though not enumerated, the angel of verse 17 is the fifth to appear in this chapter and, like the angel of verse 15, comes from the Temple in heaven. Like the Son of man he has a sharp sickle indicating the severity of the judgment. This angel is exhorted in verse 18 by another angel, the sixth in the chapter, to thrust in his sharp sickle. The angel making this request is described as coming from the altar and having power over fire. These allusions seem to indicate that the angel is acting in response to the prayers of the saints for divine judgment on wickedness in the earthly scene, and the fact that he has power over fire indicates the purging judgment of which he is capable.

The figure of divine judgment as a harvest is here enlarged. Twice the sharp sickle is mentioned in this verse and the clusters of the vine of the earth are described as grapes fully ripe. The expression "fully ripe" (Gr., e,,kmasan) is a different expression from the verb (Gr., exe,,ranthe,,) used in the description of the harvest in verse 15. Here it pictures grapes fully grown in their prime almost bursting with juice. Though the figure is somewhat different, the spiritual meaning is the same. The time has come for the final harvest. The use of the vine in a figurative way, frequently found in the Bible in relation to Israel (Ps. 80:8,14-15; Isa. 5:2-7; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 17:5-8; Hosea 10:1), is also used of the church in John 15:1-6. Just as Israel and the church were to bear fruit of righteousness to the Lord, so here we have the vine producing the fruit of wickedness and corruption.

In verse 19 the angel, in response to the entreaty, thrusts or "casts" (Gr., ebalen) his sickle into the earth and harvests its vintage casting it into what is described as "the great winepress of the wrath of God." This action is actually fulfilled in Revelation 19:15, where the same figure of speech is used. In verse 20, the winepress is described as trodden without the city, and blood is said to come even to the bridles of the horses as far as 1,600 furlongs. This is obviously a picture of ultimate judgment of the wickedness of men at the time of the second coming of Christ. Alford interprets it: "A tremendous final act of vengeance is denoted."<sup>260</sup> This passage speaks prophetically of that which will chronologically follow the return of Christ to the earth.

The spurting of the grape juice from under the bare feet of those treading the grapes in the winepress is compared to the spurting of blood and speaks of the awful human carnage of Revelation 19:17-19, 21. The unusual expression that the blood spatters to "the horse bridles" for "a thousand six hundred furlongs" has intrigued expositors. The scene of this event is apparently the city of Jerusalem outside which the judgment takes place. It seems quite impossible that the blood will flow in depth as high as the horses' bridles, and it is better to understand this simply as a liberal spattering of blood.

As Alford states, "It is exceedingly difficult to say what the meaning is, further than that the idea of a tremendous final act of vengeance is denoted."<sup>261</sup> This interpretation is confirmed by the parallel in Isaiah 63:3. The area covered, 1,600 furlongs, is approximately 200 miles, and specifies that the area within a 200-mile radius from Jerusalem will be the center of the final carnage where the armies of the world will be gathered at the time of the second coming of Christ. The land of Israel covers about 200 miles from the north to the south, and the reference to distance may mean that this area is in view rather than the more

extensive territory of 200 miles in all directions from Jerusalem.

Alford objects to a literal distance, as the holy land is actually only 160 miles north and south, and prefers a symbolic meaning of the distance. He concludes, however, "This is one of the riddles of the Apocalypse to which not even an approximate solution has ever yet been given."<sup>262</sup> There is no reason, however, for limiting the battle to the precise boundary of the holy land, and there is really no serious problem here in taking the distance literally. The terrible picture here given of the bloodletting which will mark the end of the age may include various phases of the battle taking place in the great tribulation and the climax of Christ's victory when He judges the nations at its end.

William Kelly regards this chapter as the outline of the end of the age:

In this chapter, then, we have the full outline of the dealings of God in the latter-day crisis. There are seven divisions of it. First, there is the full remnant of godly Jews associated with the Lamb on mount Sion, in sympathy with His sufferings and waiting for the kingdom. Secondly, a testimony to the Gentile nations scattered all over the world as well as to those seated on the prophetic earth. Thirdly, the fall of Babylon. Fourthly, the fearful doom, both in this world and in the next, of such as should worship the beast and his image, or receive the mark of his name. Fifthly, the blessedness from that time of those that die in the Lord. Sixthly, the discriminating process of the harvest. And seventhly, the awful infliction of vengeance on religious apostasy; the first, at least, of these two last acts of judgment being executed by the Son of man, which necessarily supposes the very close of the age; the wrath, not of God only, but of the Lamb.<sup>263</sup>

Taken as a whole, chapter 14 of Revelation emphasizes first that the 144,000 of Israel seen at the beginning of the great tribulation will be preserved triumphantly through it. Second, the rest of the chapter is devoted to various pronouncements of divine judgment upon a wicked world, reassuring the saints of that day that, though they may suffer and even be martyred, God's ultimate justice will triumph, the wicked will be judged, and the saints will be rewarded. This chapter reassures the saints after the two preceding chapters speak of the gigantic conflict that will have its consummation in the great tribulation. The implications of the message for today are only too plain. Today is a day of grace; but what is true of the tribulation is also true today, namely, that God will ultimately judge all men. Today, however, the invitation is still open to those who will trust in Christ and who thereby can avail themselves of the grace of God and be saved from entering this awful period which may be impending for this present generation.

252 A Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 208.

253 Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 293.

254 Smith, pp. 208-9.

255 Joseph A. Seiss, The Apocalypse, pp. 353-54.

256 Smith, p. 211.

257 Ibid., p. 216.

258 Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament, IV, 690.

259 Ibid., p. 691.

260 Ibid., p. 693.

261 Ibid.

262 Ibid.

263 Lectures on the Book of Revelation, p. 330.

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