

Rev. 14:6-11, Judgment on the Beast
October 1, 1994
H. Van Dyke Parunak

Overview

1. ch. 14 is devoted to two cycles of triumph of the saints and God's vengeance on the persecutors. One cycle for each of the two groups that we have already seen in ch. 7 and ch. 12:

7:	12:	14:
1-8, 144K	12-16, the Woman	1-5, 144K
9-17, Multitude	17ff, remnant	12-13, martyrs

2. Each of the four sections in this chapter is introduced with a testimony of witness ("I saw" or "I heard").
3. 6-11 describes God's judgment on the Beast. Three angelic announcements, proceeding from Gospel to Gehenna. God's judgment is real, but it is always avoidable for those who will repent.

A. 6-7, Proclamation of the Gospel

1. "another angel fly[ing] in the midst of heaven":
"other" after the first such angel in 8:13. Like a skywriter or plane with a banner: no one is to miss this message. That announcing angel reported the three woes (the final three trumpets), which focused on demonic oppression. This one announces God's sovereign rule.
2. "the everlasting gospel"
 - a) What is this gospel? Three commands, the second and third with motives. Take the first as summary of the other two.
 - 1) Summary: Fear God
 - a> Not just "reverential awe," but being afraid of consequences: Matt. 10:28 "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Cf. cf. 2 Cor. 5:11, "terror of the Lord" before his judgment seat.
 - b> Heart of OT piety. Ec 12:13 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man."
 - c> Central to NT piety as well!
 - 1> Ac 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

- 2> 2Cor. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- 3> Php 2:12 "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (same sentiment a servant is to have toward a master, Eph. 6:5.

- 2) First amplification: Glorify him, because the hour of his judgment has come. If he is in a position to judge you, you'd better learn to say, "Your honor."
 - 3) Second amplification: Abase yourself, because he is the creator of all things. "Worship" = "prostrate oneself." We are only clay, the work of his fingers.
 - 4) Summary: By content, the same as the "gospel of the kingdom" of Mark 1:14,15, where "is at hand" is perfect tense, "has drawn near," thus same meaning as "has come." The message is a call to recognize our actual standing toward God in the light of who he is and the nearness of his judgment.
- b) We are perhaps more familiar with Paul's gospel, defined in 1 Cor. 15, that Christ died for our sins and rose again. Paul is quite exclusive about this gospel; he insists (Gal. 1:8,9) that anyone who preaches any other gospel is under God's curse. How then are these two gospels related?
- 1) We naturally assume that Paul and the other disciples were preaching under the authority of the Great Commission, which is most clearly stated in the synoptics. These make no distinction between the "gospel of the kingdom" (Mark 1:14,15) and the gospel that the disciples are to preach in all the world (Mark 13:10; 14:9; 16:15).
 - 2) Even after the day of Pentecost, Peter still preaches very much this message of the nearness of God's judgment (Acts 3:19-26). This is the church age. Is he under Paul's curse from Galatians?
 - 3) In fact, Paul's gospel preaching includes this aspect of the gospel as well!
 - a> Synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:41, quoting from Hab. 1:5, prophecy of the Babylonian invasion, which is symbolic of the final day of wrath.
 - b> Mars Hill, Acts 17:30-31.
 - 4) Compare the "two gospels" more carefully.

- a> Paul's gospel implies the gospel of the kingdom: "Christ died *for our sins*." Those words have no meaning apart from the announcement, "the hour of his judgment is come." Cf. Heb. 11:7, where the motivation of fear is the foundation for justification by faith!
 - b> The "gospel of the kingdom" implies Paul's gospel. How can a holy, righteous God who hates sinners (Psa. 5:5; 11:5) possibly offer them repentance and fellowship with himself? Only because the coming judge is also the slain lamb.
 - c> Conclude that these two gospels are really one, opposite sides of the same coin. If we would faithfully proclaim the good news of God, we must announce both God's wrath against sin and his free grace through Jesus Christ.
- c) Why is this message of impending judgment "good news"?
- 1) To godly Jews, it announced the impending destruction of their enemies. Compare Paul's encouragement of the Thessalonians in 2 Thess. 1. This is not an "evangelistic" use, but one of encouragement to believers.
 - 2) To unbelievers, it is God's attempt to shock them out of their complacency. Psa. 119:71, "[It is] good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." The reprobate will never appreciate any statement of God's as good news, but the believer looks back on the day he first heard the message of coming judgment and blesses God for wakening him while there is still time.

B. 8, Announcement of Babylon's Fall

1. This is the first time the city has been named, but it was described previously, in 11:8, where we saw that it was also identified with apostate Jerusalem. Represents man-made religion, and includes not only the godless Jews of John's day, but the RC church of the last two millennia and much evangelicalism today.
2. The name "Babylon" and much of the imagery is drawn from Jeremiah's prophecies; Nebuchadnezzar's invasion provides a vivid image of the coming oppression by Antichrist.
3. Babylon is pictured as a barkeeper, serving an intoxicating brew of abomination and fornication stemming from anger against God. Cf. 17:1-5 for development of this picture. Here judgment falls on her for this deceptive practice.
4. *Note: Jer. 51:7; 25:15ff speaks of cups of wrath in association with Babylon, but both of them are the Lord's Wrath in Jeremiah. Here that image splits in two, much as Daniel's beast did; as the time comes nearer, the focus becomes clearer, and things that earlier were confused, now become clear.*

C. **9-11, Judgment of Babylon's Clients**

Though Babylon has deceived and intoxicated the nations, that does not relieve them of responsibility toward God. No sooner is she judged than they learn of their judgment with her.

Chiastic: description of those judged in 9 and 11b, surrounding four characteristics of the judgment that befalls them in 10-11a.

1. 9, 11, Description: those who worship the beast and his image, and who receive his mark. We are to have no association with the apostate religious system.
2. 10-11: Their judgment has four characteristics:
 - a) Shame: 10a, drink the wine of God's anger. Just as God's mark triumphs over the beast's mark, so his cup triumphs over the beast's cup. I've never been intoxicated, but in college I saw people who were, unable to stand, rolling on the floor in their own filth. God's wrath is not surgical and painless. It shows unbelievers up for the fools that they are, and exposes them to the disgust and rejection of all about them.
 - b) Torment: 10b, tortured, from two perspectives.
 - 1) Physically, "fire and brimstone" (much mocked in our day, but clearly taught in Scripture)
 - 2) Psychologically, "in the presence of the ... angels and ... the Lamb." A beaten dog wants to slink away from the gaze of its adversary; these must suffer in his presence.
 - c) Duration: 11a, for ever.
 - d) Constancy, 11b, no rest. No nights off or weekend paroles.
3. **Application:**
 - a) Unbeliever: flee from the wrath to come. You cannot win if you side with Babylon. Heed God's warning before it becomes too late.
 - b) Believer: recognize the terrible fate that awaits those around you, and compel them to come in.

D. **12-13, Triumph of the Martyred Believers**

Recall that ch. 14 contains two cycles of triumph for believers and judgment on the beast and his followers. The first description of triumph, in 1-5, focused on the 144K Jewish remnant who are preserved through the Great Tribulation. The second, here, deals with those who are martyred during it.

Division in question: verb of hearing comes at v.13, but v.12 matches the corresponding member in 13:10b.

1. Their identity: "they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Aligns them with the "remnant of [the woman's] seed" in 12:17, the believers other than the 144K.

2. Their patience: cf. 13:10, the assurance that their persecutors will be destroyed. Recall comments on 13:10, and 2 Thess. 1. One of the great deceptions fostered by the enemy is that revenge is an ungodly emotion. In fact, it is distinctively godly:
"Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord," Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30; quoting Deut. 32:35, cf. Psa. 94:1. We can be patient in the face of persecution precisely because we leave the settling of accounts to our Lord.
3. Their blessing:
 - a) "from henceforth," now that God's enemies are judged. Before this time, the martyrs are in a state of suspense, awaiting their revenge, 6:9-10.
 - b) "rest," in contrast with the followers of the Beast, who have no rest day nor night.
 - c) "works follow them." Not "lead them"; their access to heaven by grace through faith. But that true faith has yielded in its turn godly works. Eph. 2:8,9; Tit. 3:5-8; etc.