

# ALLIES OF THE LAMB

*Revelation 14*



**Intro:** Now that we've gone more halfway through the book, it will be helpful to recap what we've seen thus far in Revelation:

1. Chapter 1 focused on Jesus, emphasizing His victory over death and His absolute rule. For a people being persecuted, this was a picture of overwhelming comfort. Jesus is also pictured as being intimately familiar with what was going on with His churches.
2. Thus, chapters 2-3 contain seven letters to His churches. These letters praise faithfulness and rebuke unfaithfulness. Each contain exhortations to follow in the ways of God, promising great reward to those who overcome.
3. Chapters 4-5 take our focus away from this world, directing our focus to the splendor of God on His throne in Heaven. We are also introduced to the Lamb in chapter 5, the only One able to bring about God's will.
4. Chapters 6-7 show how God's will was playing out. With the breaking of the seals we see the gospel going forth, but swiftly followed by persecution. Significant was the words of martyred saints in Revelation 6.10. They believed God would avenge them, but when? God's judgment would come on the world, but God's redeemed (defined in chapter 7) would escape.
5. Chapters 8-11 contain seven trumpets of judgment. However, these were not final judgment, rather they were intended to beckon man to repentance (see 9.20-21). But when man did not repent, God's vengeance would be meted out in full. Chapter 11 gives further assurance that even though it seemed as if the world was victorious (God's witnesses being killed), yet God and those with Him are the real victors (the witnesses are given life and the Christ proclaimed as ruler of the kingdoms). This ends the first cycle of Revelation, showing that even though the plight saints on this earth seems hopeless, God will be victorious!
6. Chapter 12 began a new cycle, this one going behind the scenes of the earthly conflict. This is a spiritual conflict between the Dragon (Satan) and the Christ as well as His people (the woman). While the Dragon had hoped to destroy Christ on this earth, Christ ascended to Heaven in victory. However, the Dragon did not quit, rather he turned his attention to the people of Christ. Chapter 13 introduces

us to two beasts in league with the Dragon. The beast of the sea and the beast from the earth find their identification in the Roman Empire and the worship of the Emperor. This was why God's people suffered: Rome was acting on behalf of Satan, the continuing of his war with God.

Chapter 13 may have focused on the allies of Satan, two deadly and powerful foes. But chapter 14 will focus on the allies of God and give assurance of their victory.

### **The Lamb & Those With Him (vss. 1-5)**

1. It's interesting that after seeing the two horrible beasts in chapter 13, our attention is next drawn to the Lamb. This description of Jesus was already seen in 5.6, but why use it now? "After seeing the conflict described between Jesus and the devil with his terrible allies, it is rather surprising to find Jesus again symbolized by a lamb, the meekest of animals. We would rather expect Him to be represented as the lion of the tribe of Juda as in 5.5. But as 12.11 says, those who overcome the devil will do so by the blood of the Lamb." (Ken Green)
2. We see the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. This is where David ruled (2Samuel 5.7) and came to represent the dwelling place of God (Psalm 9.11; 135.21). The significance of this picture is found when we compare it to Psalm 2.6, where in spite of the raging and rebellion of the nations God declared, "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain." Yes, Satan may have powerful agents doing his will, but the Lamb is still standing on Zion.
3. And with Him we see 144,000.
  - a. These represent the saints on the earth that were sealed in 7.4-8. They have the seal of God on their foreheads in contrast to those that received the mark of the beast, 13:17-8. In both cases it refers to ownership. These have given themselves to God, while the rest of the world serves the dragon.
  - b. "Here in John's vision, the redeemed have, in one sense, reached Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem pointed to by the prophets. In another sense Zion still lies ahead, 21:2...The scene symbolizes security, permanence, and a victorious spirit of rejoicing enjoyed by the church on earth at any time, because the Lamb is in their midst," (Hailey).
  - c. These are further described as those who have kept themselves chaste (probably a reference to their faithfulness to God since idolatry is described as adultery). Furthermore, they show their devotion by following the Lamb wherever He goes. Thus, these are the firstfruits of the earth that belong to God. "Here Christians are symbolized as the firstfruits, dedicated unto God. The rest of the harvest, according to v. 19, will be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God," (Green).
4. Then, John heard a voice from heaven (vss. 2-3). This voice would be from the redeemed multitude in heaven that we saw in 7.9. These are singing a "new song", a song reflective of the new reality of victory in Jesus. Thus why only the

144,000 could learn this song since they are the only ones wearing the name of the Lord.

### **Heavenly Words (vss. 6-13)**

1. An angel appears (vss. 6-7) proclaiming "an eternal gospel" to proclaim to those living on the earth (i.e. those with the mark of the beast as opposed to the name of the Lord). The "good news" they need to hear is to fear God and worship Him! Only then could they be saved from His wrath. While application can certainly be made to the final judgment, the judgment in view would be the fall of Rome.
2. Another angel appears, this time proclaiming that Babylon is fallen (vs. 8).
  - a. This is the first of six times that Babylon is mentioned in the book (see 16.19; 17.5; 18.2,10,21).
  - b. Babylon, the empire that took God's captive in the Old Testament is here used symbolically of Rome, the political power of John's day.
  - c. Note these words were used in Isaiah 21.9. When Isaiah prophesied concerning Babylon's fall, Babylon was not even the dominant world power. Their fall would not occur for 200 years after the prophecy. Likewise, John's readers could know that even though it may take some time to be fulfilled, Rome would indeed fall.
3. A third angel appears, foretelling what would happen to those who followed the beast (vss. 9-11). If they would not heed His gospel (vs. 8), they would experience the full and undiluted wrath of God, just as Sodom and Gomorrah had in the Old Testament (see Genesis 19.28; Luke 17.29). And as enemies of God, their punishment would not be confined to temporal destruction, but their torment would go on forever (vs. 11)
4. In vss. 12-13 God's judgment is referred to as "the perseverance of the saints". In other words, this is what keeps the saints going. The wicked will be judged, their tormentors will be overthrown, the righteous will be victorious. Thus, the call to continued faithfulness with the assurance that those who "die in the Lord" are blessed and at rest.

### **The Reapers (vss. 14-20)**

1. The chapter ends with another picture of judgment. We see the Son of Man victorious, sitting on the clouds and with a sickle in His hand prepared to reap.
2. The first reaping (vss. 15-16) would seem to be of the faithful, the firstfruits mentioned in vs. 4. The Lord reaps these because they belong to Him.
3. But then another angel reaps (vss. 17-20) and these are thrown into the "win press of the wrath of God". This occurs outside the city (i.e. Zion).
4. The point of this entire chapter has been that those with the Lamb will be victorious. God's judgment was coming, it was a certainty. Future chapters will relate more of how Christ would be victorious.

