THE FALL OF BABYLON AND THE BEGINNING OF THE END

In these remaining chapters of Apocalyptic scripture (Revelation primarily) we will read phrases that could puzzle us. Such as we studied in Rev. 6:8: And I looked, and beheld a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. The logical question would be, “How can Antichrist kill that many people with a sword?” It is a principle in Scripture that a prophet always speaks to his own society in terms of the culture of that society. If he talks about transportation it’s always by horse, camel, donkey—never by airplane. If he speaks of farming, it’s always in terms of plowing with an ox and reaping with a sickle. Even when the prophets look forward to Christ’s millennial reign, they talk about the reaper overtaking the harvester, using speech that was prevalent in their own day. When they speak of instruments of war in the future, they always speak in terms of their own culture, so that they talk about swords, spears and shields as the battle instruments. Those would represent any instrument which might be developed and used in the future. So the fact that John does refer to swords here does not mean that one-fourth of the earth’s population would have to be destroyed by a physical sword. The sword could represent any instrument of destruction.

In Chapter 14 we will encounter several prophetic events: the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, on Mount Zion; the pronouncement of divine judgment upon the false religious system of Babylon, and also the similar fate of those who have taken the mark of the beast.

In the last chapter we saw the awful advent and careers of Antichrist and the False Prophet along with their leader, Satan; Now...their time is drawing very short:

Rev. 14:1-20
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. [2] 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: [3] 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. [4] 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. [5] And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

[6] 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, [7] 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. [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. [9] 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, [10] 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: [11] 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.

[12] Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. [13] 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.

[14] 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. [15] 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. [16] And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. [17] And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. [18] 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. [19] 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. [20] 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.

This is one of the most difficult chapters in Revelation. Let's start with the 144,000 on Mount Zion. Who are they? Are they the 144,000 sealed Jewish witnesses who evangelized the earth as we read in Rev. 7? Or is this yet another group on the scene?
Let's refresh our memories. Starting with chapter 6 in Revelation, God pours out His
divine wrath on this lost world with three sets of judgments:
  1. The seal judgments  Chapter 6 - 7  Each time Jesus tore a seal off the scroll of
judgment another judgment hit this earth.
  2. The trumpet judgments  Chapters 8 - 15
  3. The bowl (or vials) judgments  Chapters 16 - 17

But remember the “parentheses” - the interludes within those three sets of judgements.
We are in chapter 14 so this information has to do with the trumpet judgments. It opens
with John seeing 144,000 saints with God on Mount Zion.

Three questions:
  1. What is Mount Zion?
  2. Are these the same 144,000 as before?
  3. What’s the time period in the Tribulation?

Chapter 14 takes place about midway through the awful seven year Tribulation. This
“kicks off” the GREAT TRIBULATION, a 3 ½ year period that would easily wipe out
humanity if God in His mercy didn’t arbitrarily stop it.

Where? Bible scholars differ. I have books that inform me chapter 14 takes place in
heaven. Others disagree claiming it takes place in Jerusalem. LaHaye makes a good
point:  *We know this is a scene in heaven because John sees ‘the Lamb standing on
Mount Zion.’* The Lamb of God will not be on the earth during the Tribulation (so) this
must be a scene in the heavenly Jerusalem described by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews
12:22-24  *But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the
heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, [23] To the general
assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the
Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, [24] And to Jesus the mediator
of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than
that of Abel.*

“Not so,” claims J. Vernon McGee:  *This verse pictures a placid, pastoral scene which
open the millennial kingdom here upon this earth. Mount Zion is at Jerusalem. There is
no use trying to locate this at any other place than at Jerusalem in the land of Israel!”
THRU THE BIBLE / MCGEE / PAGE 1006 / NELSON PUBL. / VOLUME FIVE

You get the same division of response as to the IDENTITY of the 144,000. I am not
going to be dogmatic here. One thing is sure: These 144,000 are marvelous saints of
God.
  * They are redeemed (14:1)
• They are morally pure 14:4)
• They are obedient and available for they follow Jesus wherever He leads (14:4)
• They tell the truth (14:5)
• They live blameless lives (14:5)

Now, rejoicing in their salvation around the throne, they receive the rewards of their service to the King - just as you and I will one day (I Corinthians 3).

THE SUDDEN SHOCKING WITNESS

Verse 6 informs us of the first of five angels who appear over or on the earth to proclaim the Gospel in the middle of the Tribulation. This is highly unusual because the spread of the Gospel has been commissioned to human beings - the Great Commission. The use of angels to proclaim the Glad Tidings points up the seriousness of the situation in the Tribulation.

But we need to understand at this point in the Tribulation the persecution of Tribulation saints is overwhelming! A revival is sweeping much of the world and Satan will throw everything at his disposal to stop it. Hence the grand preaching of the angels. Their message will NOT BE CHANGED from what we have in scriptures now. Will these angels have more affect on sinful humanity? No. There is no evidence that the angels will be any more successful in preaching the eternal gospel than was Noah, the preacher of righteousness before the Flood. On the contrary, it seems that people will pit their will against God and succumb to the lying tongues of Satan's chief tools during this period - the Antichrist and the False Prophet. We will discover in chapter 16 that the angels' announcement will introduce the darkest days in human history.

REVELATION UNVEILED / LAHAYE / ZONDERVAN / PAGE 237

THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON

From its inception, which we read in Genesis 11, Babylon has stood against God - even as nations around it today continue their evil practice. As we have noted earlier in our series, a false system of religion, proclaimed by the False Prophet, will unite in ecclesiastical and theological adultery with a world government, and it will blanket the earth.

The False Prophet will use this global religion to help empower Satan and Antichrist to set up their power. But somewhere along the line, Satan gets fed up with this religion and destroys it. Rev. 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.

From the days of Nimrod, early leader in Babylon (which means “Babble - or Confusion) rulers have understood that to control the world they must control the economy as well as the political realm. In REVELATION these two factors are termed “Babylon.” Both of these systems will be dramatically ended at the end of the Tribulation, for THE KING IS COMING! Christ will rule for 1,000 years. God will end the Babylons in a display of divine fury unmatched in the history of the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God’s blessing upon the Tribulation Saints</th>
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<td>Rev. 14:12-13</td>
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A great old song promises, “And the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace!” One writer has penned, “One of the consistent chords of the Scripture is the concept that present-day sufferings are inconsequential in view of the eternal blessings prepared for those who love the Lord.”

Note that last line in verse 13: “And their words do follow them.” It is vital for the follower of Christ to always remember:
- We are saved by the blood of Christ - not by our works.
- However - all rewards will subsequently be based upon our works.

Salvation is a GIFT and it is free; rewards are NOT A GIFT; they are earned. See I Corinthians 3. So let us heed Jesus’ challenge: Matthew 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

CHAPTER FIFTEEN - HEAVEN REVEALED!

Even As The Bowl Judgments (Vials) Erupt

Rev. 15:1-8

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. [2] And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. [3] And they sing the song of Moses the
servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. [4] Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. [5] And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: [6] And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. [7] And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. [8] And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Vs 1: “I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous....” Previously John had seen the signs in chapter 12 of the woman representing Israel and the great red dragon representing Satan. Now we are told of the last great judgment by God against the earth and its inhabitants. Earlier judgments included the Tower of Babel destruction (again - Babylon), the great Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and even the dispersions of the Jews from Israel because of idolatry.

As this chapter opens, the scene is “a sea of glass.” We learn more about that “sea” in Revelation 4 when all the redeemed of the ages are gathered at the great throne of God, before which is a SEA OF GLASS (Rev. 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal:).

Apparentlly what John saw was impossible to describe – it was so different from anything he had seen that he was compelled to describe it using a contradictory statement. Expressing the inexpressible may demand an oxymoron. Whatever John saw, it obviously had qualities both of the sea and of glass. Perhaps it had the sea’s motion and expanse and glass’s transparency and purity. Add to that the words “crystal” and “mingled with fire” and chances are that John was trying to convey the vivid brilliance, vast expanse and lucid purity of what he saw.”

One thing is sure: every child of God will one day see with their own eyes what John witnessed with his. We will be drawn to the throne of God and before it is this “sea of glass, clear as crystal.” Whatever it turns out to be, it will be one of the most amazing things we have ever seen!

Beside that sea, John saw “those who had been victorious over the beast and his
image, and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God. (Vs 2)

That phrase means the persecuted and martyred Tribulation saints, those who would not bow to Antichrist or take the mark.

DEATH MEANS SOMETHING ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT FOR A CHILD OF GOD THAN IT DOES FOR A NON-BELIEVER. To a non-believer it is merely the cessation of life. However, that concept is totally wrong. Life does not end; it continues - either in Heaven or in Hell. During the Tribulation, every time a believer in Christ is killed, Antichrist thinks he is cruelly punishing his enemy; in reality, he is giving that saint an entre into Heaven and eternity. 1 Cor. 15:55-57 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? [56] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, these martyred saints will be rewarded by God Himself: James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Rev. 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THOSE CROWNS? Years ago, Gordon Jensen wrote a terrific song that answered that question. I had the privilege of recording the song with Gordon’s song with his orchestra:

When earth’s short day is far behind / and heaven’s role complete
The One Who saved us will say well done / we’ll cast our crowns at His feet

We’ll cast our crowns at His nail scarred feet / our joy complete in His presence sweet
Eternity’s greatest privilege will be casting our crowns at His feet.

We’ll soon forget life’s troubled past / for now a golden street
Is leading us to where we all can cast our crowns at His feet.

Imagine the chagrin at meeting our Lord at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, bowing in His presence, and having nothing to lay at those “nail-scarred feet.”

Verse 2: John saw the martyred saints holding “harps given them by God.” We cannot begin to imagine the music of heaven!
Receivin: 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God... What was the
song of Moses? When the Egyptian Pharaoh and his armies pursued the people of Israel
into the Red Sea, and God marvelously delivered them by parting the waters, on the other
side Moses sang a song of victory: Exodus 15:1-27 Then sang Moses and the
children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the
Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into
the sea. [2] The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is
my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.
[3] The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. [4] Pharaoh's chariots and his
host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.
right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath
dashed in pieces the enemy. [7] And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast
overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which
consumed them as stubble. [8] And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were
gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were
congealed in the heart of the sea. [9] The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I
will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my
hand shall destroy them. [10] Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them:
they sank as lead in the mighty waters. [11] Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among
the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?
There is more to the song than that which I have not included in these notes for sake of
space but it is well worth your reading. SO THE SONG OF MOSES IS ONE OF
DELIVERANCE AND THE ALMIGHTY POWER OF OUR GREAT GOD! Can you
even imagine the Tribulation saints (millions of them!) sing that song to God in His very
presence?

THE HOLY OF HOLIES OPENED IN HEAVEN

Receivin: 15:5-6 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the
testimony in heaven was opened: [6] And the seven angels came out of the temple,
having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts
girded with golden girdles.

In the original TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS and in the two great TEMPLES
in Jerusalem was contained the small room known as THE HOLY OF HOLIES. In that
small enclosure was kept the Ark of the Covenant. In that small golden-covered chest
were Aaron's budding rod, a pot of manna and the ten commandments (Hebrews 9:3-4
And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; [4] Which
had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold,
wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the
tables of the covenant;). But Revelation 15:7 informs us that one of the four massive
derubim (who fly over the throne of God continually in worship) gives seven angels
seven gold bowls or vials full of THE WRATH OF GOD. And the glory of God so
filled the Temple that no one was able to enter into it.

Normally, those who break God's laws are not the brunt of God's wrath on this earth -
that awaits them at the judgment and eternity. The exception is this scene during the last
three and a half years of the Tribulation. During this time God will pour out horrendous
judgment and calamity on the people of earth. This is a horror picture from scripture -
the pouring out of the seven vials of God's wrath - which we will explore next week.