

Revelation 14 – A Vision of Heaven

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[0 : 00] And in a chapter like this, I'd kind of want to read the whole chapter and then backtrack and get into it.

But I just fear that if we do that, we're going to run out of time, which I know never normally stops me. But it's going to stop me today just because I know how long I'm going to go.

So let's pray and just ask God to help us understand this text. Father, thank you for your word, Lord.

And we want to come to your word and be able to understand what you have for us, Lord.

We might not understand every word in every verse, Lord, but we want to submit ourselves to your Holy Spirit's authority over our own understanding today.

Lord, so we come and just ask, Lord, that you would teach us and our Holy Spirit just have your way with us. Lord, we pray that our hearts would be open to receive what you have for us.

[1 : 10] Lord, and if there's any words that I've spoken that are not of you, Lord, I pray you take them from me, Lord. And Lord, just the words of you would remain. Lord, we ask in Jesus name.

Amen.

Amen. All right. So just to recap where we are in Revelation 14. When we got into chapter six, we kind of entered into what John was viewing as a period that we call the Great Tribulation Period.

In a time of seven years of hardship and persecution and tribulation coming upon the whole world where God has withdrawn his influence.

And chaos, as a result, in every area of the world comes to bear. And that's chapter six all the way through to 18. And so where we are in chapter 14, we're still looking at this period of Great Tribulation.

And although chapter 14 does follow chapter 13, it doesn't necessarily follow chronologically. So this chapter is what we know as proleptic, which is it means it's a flash forward.

[2 : 20] So have you ever been watching one of those films where all of a sudden something happens? It doesn't tell you it's going to happen, but it happens. And it's something that's flashing forwards to the future. And it kind of gives you an insight as to what's coming.

And then it flashes back to the present time. That's what we're seeing in chapter 14. We're seeing a flash forward. It's a kind of a temporary cut away from the main story.

And it shows us what's coming up next. And so in verses one to five, actually what happens is that we're transported into chapter 20, verses four to six.

So just look there with me. Chapter 20, verse four to six says this. Then I saw thrones, John says, and seated on them were those whom the authority to judge was committed.

And also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God. And those who had not worshipped the beast or its image or had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.

[3 : 27] And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. And the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.

This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

And so the reason that John does this is this flash forward is because he wants to encourage us after the events of chapter 13 have ended.

Like, you know, chapter 13 paint this picture of oppression and chaos, didn't it? Right. And it was gruesome. It was horrible. All right.

Even so much is that we really didn't want to talk too much about it. A life group on Wednesday.

Right. We're just like, yeah, this is terrible. And John, I think, knows that and the Lord knows that.

And what we have in chapter 14 is John reminding us again that Jesus is coming back.
[4 : 34] And he's going to show up with hope and mercy in the midst of chaos and oppression. And I know that this is a kind of a lesson for me.

And talking to some of you, I know it would be kind of a lesson to you too. But it's a lesson for me in my own personal walk with the Lord as a pattern for my own thoughts. And I think we see that in this chapter.

It's easy for us to allow chaos and oppression to rule my thoughts. And to allow myself to become anxious as I see things going on around me.

And yet time and time and time again, we're called not to stay there with our thoughts in those times, but to move our thoughts to hope and mercy and grace and victory.

And to once again claim the promises of God as my own. And so what we see in this chapter is a kind of like a theme that calls us not only to live in today, but also to live in tomorrow.

[5 : 33] To not just to live for today and in today, but also to live for tomorrow and in tomorrow.

And, you know, as I've been thinking about that, you know, there's two spiritual, that they are two spiritual skills that I think we just need to learn, that we need to be better at.

And probably just to chat about before we actually get into the text, as this is kind of like, as I see kind of the theme of this chapter. I think it's helpful because the text seems to show us the necessity of living in the present, living today and living in that tension of today.

But living in the reality of the truth and the reality of what is coming. I mean, the first will be familiar to you. If you've ever struggled with or known someone who struggles with worry or anxiety.

We live each day in the grace that God provides for us to believe in that God's troubles are enough for today. Right. And Jesus said that in Matthew chapter six.

This is what he said. He said, so don't worry about these things saying what we will, what will we eat? What will we drink or what we will we wear? These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers.

[6 : 52] But your heavenly father already knows all of your needs. See the kingdom of God above all else and live righteously. And he will give you everything that you need. So don't worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will bring its own worries.

Today's trouble is enough for today. And there's a sense that the Lord is saying, look, there is there is a sense where we just need to live out the priorities of today.

Right. Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will live out its own priorities. Someone's going to take care of tomorrow. Submit to what God is doing with you today. And so therefore, then we we learn.

As poorly as many of us do, we learn to cast our cares upon God because he cares for us in that moment. We learn to take every thought captive day by day so that our minds don't become overly anxious or worried about the things that we can't control.

And so, you know, Paul says, control the things that you have the power to control, which is the things of your mind. The direction of your thoughts.

[7 : 56] And I know that's easier to say than it actually is to master. Living in today is important to help us trust God for whatever comes tomorrow. And that is largely one of the lessons from chapter 13, I think, that no matter what life throws at us, to learn to submit to his care and his provision.

And yet just as important for us to learn that living for and in today is also for living for and in tomorrow. Then the truth and reality of that.

And I think that's what chapter 14 brings. It's a message for the despondent and the broken down. This is about meditating and imagining what life is like just on the brow of the hill, just on the other side.

What is life like there? And then living every moment today as if we are there. And to set our course of action each and every day in that direction.

It's almost like to see that in the moment that we start planting, harvest is assured in the future. At the very same time.

[9 : 14] It's to see a harvest that is being reaped. Why? Because of the faithfulness in the present. I mean, this is why the writer to the Ecclesiastes, he said this. He said, Now that sounds totally morbid, doesn't it?

Like not many of us would agree that it's better to spend time at funerals than it is at parties. But he's saying, look, we learn something about tomorrow by going to a funeral.

We learn something about tomorrow. And the wise are able to adjust their lives in the present based on what's coming. I think Peter sums up this idea really well when he writes in 2 Peter 3. He says, Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things. So since you have your eyes fixed on what is above. Since you are not tied to earthly things and earthly worries.

Since you are looking forward to the reality of the truth of life tomorrow. As you are doing that. As you are imagining what life is like on the other side of the brow of the hill.

[10:25] Be diligent to be found by him today. Without spot or blemish and at peace. So all that to say, chapter 14 is a message for the despondent and the beaten down.

It's a welcome relief to chapter 13. It is a flash forward to the return of Jesus. And a description of how God is still at work.

Even though on the face of it, we might not see it so clearly. That God is still doing his thing. So this chapter is broken into three sections.

And you will see this immediately. Each of, and I don't know whether this is outlined in your Bibles or not. But each of the start of the section is, starts with the phrase, and I looked.

Right? So verse 1. And I looked and behold, Mount Zion stood. On Mount Zion stood the Lamb. And we see the Lamb on Mount Zion with 144,000 Jesus returned.

[11:27] Right? And then verse 6. Then I saw, which in the Greek is actually exactly the same. I don't know why the ESV render it. And I saw and not. Then I looked. It's exactly the same.

So it's then I looked. Verse 6. Then I looked. Another angel. And we see three angels who are proclaiming the gospel to the world. And in verse 14. Then I looked. And behold, a white cloud. And we see this great harvest of souls as God uses another three angels to separate believers from unbelievers. And so that's kind of the, you are outlined. Then I looked.

Then I looked. Then I looked. Then I looked. So let's look at these together. So then I looked. Verse 1. And just bear in mind. You know, the whole theme is how do we live today in light of tomorrow? All right? And even as if tomorrow has already come. So then I looked. Verse 1. And behold, on Mount Zion. Now look. That is only one place.

[12:23] Right? It can be only one place. Zion appears 162 times in the Bible. And refers practically every single time to one place.

Locality to the city of Jerusalem. Right? Isaiah 24. Then the moon will be confounded. The sun ashamed for the Lord of hosts returns on Mount Zion.

Where? In Jerusalem. Right? No other place. He's not coming secretly to America. Right? Some believe. You know, this is one place.

Now look. Some say that Mount Zion is just a figure of expression for strength. And although it's true that this does often carry the same idea in the Old Testament. It really just doesn't satisfy the text really.

Some say this is the heavenly Jerusalem. So two places. Hebrews chapter 12 and Galatians chapter 4 I think it is. This is what Hebrews 12 says.

[13:22] But when you come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gatherings, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.

But look. In verse 2, we're going to see John say that he heard something from heaven. Which implies Mount Zion and the voice from heaven are in two different places. And also the Jerusalem in Hebrews 12 and Galatians 4 are perfect prototypes of the new Jerusalem that is coming in Revelation 21.

Not the Jerusalem here in our text. And so out of the 162 times Zion is mentioned, 160 times, it clearly talks about a mountain in Jerusalem where King David's tomb is.

And that's the place Jesus is coming back to. And so look what he sees on Mount Zion. On Mount Zion stood a lamb.

It's only one person. So we only have one place, only one person, and that is Jesus, right? And notice that he is standing.

[14:35] And he's standing in contrast to the dragon who stood in chapter 12. And we can pick up the contrast that goes through this chapter with chapter 13. The end of chapter 12 kind of, as we saw, kind of hangs on to the beginning of chapter 13.

But we saw in chapter 12 a dragon standing. Here we see a lamb standing. In chapter 12, chapter 13, we saw a dragon standing on an unstable sand on the sea.

Here we see a lamb standing on the rock of Mount Zion. See the contrast? So John is setting up a contrast. And he's setting up a contrast to say, hey, you know what? There's something better coming. This isn't all there is. It isn't all about chaos and oppression and persecution and darkness. There's something better coming. And so notice then who is with him. There with him are 144,000. They are only, that is only 144,000, if you get my meaning. It's 144,000 of ones.

[15:46] Go back to Revelation 7 and you see that those are the saved Jews from chapter 7. They're not Jehovah's Witnesses. Right? We explored that.

Okay? So we have one place, one person, one group of people with him. All right? And they had his name and his father's name written on their forehead.

So again, the contrast with chapter 13. In chapter 13, chaos is reigning. And identification with Satan and the world systems are given as a mark.

And here, John counters that by saying that there are saved Jews that are also marked. And again, I don't think that's a literal mark. Because this is about their allegiance to Jesus.

That is what makes them marked. They are bearing the name of God as image bearers of God. So this contrast. Satan, the beast, the other beast.

[16:42] They're standing on the sea. Coming out. Doom. Chaos. Suppression. Darkness. And then here comes Jesus. And he's coming to one place.

He's coming to the place of the tomb of David. The Messiah. The king. The messianic king. In the Old Testament. The one who would come and reign. And expanded the kingdom.

This is Jesus coming. That's not an accident. Right? And he's coming with these saved Jews. And I heard, he says, verse 2.

From heaven. Like the roar of many waters. It wasn't many waters. It was just like the roar of many waters. And the sound of loud thunder.

And the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. Now, like, I would just be honest with you.

[17:39] And I don't know how you get the sound like a roar of many waters. And like the sound of a loud thunder. And sound of harpists all in the same sound.

But I didn't write this. So, like, there's some other crazy things in here that I do believe. And I'm just going to give God the credits that he'll work that stuff, that bit out.

Like, there's a sound. Right? And they, verse 3. That is the voices. They were singing something like a new song.

So, this new song had the sound of harpists and thunder and roaring water. And they sang the new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

And no one could learn that song and accept 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. In the Old Testament, the new song is a specific type of song.

[18:41] It's not just a song that the worship leader has stuck in there to fool us all. Right? Because they wanted a solo knowing no one else would sing.

So, they're like, let's just do a new song. Right? That's not what a new song is. It's a specific type of song that gives thanks to God and praises Him for His mercy.

And it's specifically in relation to the new experiences and realizations of God's rescue and grace. Last week, we made reference to the idea that chapter 13 was probably a parody of the Exodus from Egypt.

And there you remember the Israelites, once they had been rescued from slavery, in Exodus 15, they sang a song of praise. It was a new song. And so, this is the same kind of idea.

This is a song being sung by the redeemed 144,000. And I like that it's a new song.

[19:45] Again, because of the context and the application that comes from it. That the world is singing one tune, but God intends for us to sing a new song. And I was thinking about this this week, you know, and I was thinking about how the idea of singing a new song is not just restricted to the 144,000.

Like, I think this song is restricted to the 144,000 because that's what the text says. But the Psalms also exhort us to sing a new song. And the Psalmist exhorts us to sing a new song in response to understanding again and receiving again God's mercy and grace in our lives.

Like, I'm sure you've had those moments where you just realize again that God is just good and he's just been good to me. And he's been gracious. And, you know, there's absolutely no reason for

it apart from the fact that God is good.

And you come to that realization. And what is our response? It's a new song. Now, you may sing that. You may pray that in words. But it's a new song. That's the idea.

Isaiah 42, verse 10 says, Sing to the Lord a new song. His praise from the end of the earth. I don't think it's a call for us to add new songs to the Sunday morning worship set.

[21 : 01] Although that is good from time to time. This is calling us to respond afresh to the truth that God's mercies are new every morning. Like, when do we last stop just to think about that God's mercies are new every morning.

Every single morning we wake and we experience God's mercies afresh. And what the Psalmist and Isaiah is encouraging us to do is that when we experience those new mercies, to turn afresh to God and sing a new song in response.

And the question, I guess, would be then what new song are we singing today as a response of God's mercy and grace? Are we experiencing afresh, understanding afresh, realizing afresh God's mercy to us?

Is there newness in your life that each and every day you're experiencing afresh the goodness of God? Or is your walk with the Lord a pretty stale experience?

It's a pretty old experience. These 144,000 are able to respond to the work that God had done. Able to experience again afresh the work that God had done.

[22 : 12] And then notice in verse 4, three descriptions of these 144,000. It is these, John says, who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

These who have redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and for the Lamb. And in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless. Now, like there's lots of pages written about these verses, especially the beginning of verse 4.

Like it's like it's a big deal. That they have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. And they take that literally. But the same people don't take the second part of verse 4 literally, where it says that they follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

They see that as being a picture of dedication, as commitment, as allegiance, as faithfulness to the Lord. So these Jewish believers have remained loyal to God, even in the hardship and oppression of chapter 13.

That's the point. Now, the second thing that John sees is in verse 6. He says, Then I saw, I looked again, another angel.

[23 : 27] And look, we're going to see three angels in this scene. Right? And again, this is a message for the downtrodden and dejected today.

How can anything come out of chapter 13? Answer. I saw another angel. And this angel is going to give an invitation. Flying directly overhead.

And with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And so John reminds us that even in the hardship and oppression of chapter 13, there is still hope.

God hasn't given up reaching His people. And because the church aren't around to proclaim the good news that King Jesus has come, the gospel, there is an angel doing that instead.

Isn't that God's goodness? God isn't saying, I've given up. God isn't saying, look at the chaos and rebellion and sin and anger against me.

[24 : 31] I'm done. He's not saying that. He's like, oh, the church isn't around. I'm going to send an angel. Maybe they'll listen to an angel. God hasn't given up reaching people.

And then in verse 7, calling people to respond to the gospel. So we've seen in the first five verses, this reminder, King Jesus is coming.

King Jesus is coming. And now verse 6, an angel goes out and says, King Jesus is coming. King Jesus is coming. Verse 7, respond to that. Just in the same way He's calling us to respond.

Even this morning. If we've known the mercy of God this morning, as new to our lives, we're called to respond, aren't we? We're not called to just sit back and go, well, that's nice.

But here's the response. He said with a loud voice, Fear God. Give Him glory. Because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him. He made heaven and earth and sea and the springs of water. Fear God. Fear God.

[25 : 32] Give Him glory. That's not the gospel, but that's a response to the gospel. So once again, we see this idea again of living in today and tomorrow. Adjust your life on the basis of the truth and reality of what is coming.

What is on the brow of the hill? Aim there. Set your life there. Set your sail there. It's easy for us to read the book of Revelation, isn't it?

And read about all of the devastation, all of the destruction, all the cataclysmic stuff that happens on the earth. And actually, sometimes it's easy to get weighed down by it. And think to yourself, you know, like who even has the opportunity to get saved amongst all of this destruction and devastation?

Listen, God sends an angel. It couldn't get more perfect, could it? Sends an agent of hope so that nobody has an excuse.

And everyone has an opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus. Now, angel number two, verse eight, is not giving an invitation, but is making a declaration.

[26 : 47] Another angel, verse eight, a second followed. I love how he clarifies. Another angel. It's a second one. It's like, thanks for that, John. Like I couldn't count. Like another one. A second one followed, saying, fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.

She who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality. Now, look, let's just pause there because this is tricky.

So Babylon, like, where did that come from? Right? All of a sudden, we get this declaration, fallen, fallen is Babylon.

You're like, where did Babylon come from? And I think we'll camp out on this in a few weeks' time when we get there, 17 and 18. But just to say, Babylon is the term used by John to describe the chaos system of the Antichrist and false prophet that we saw in chapter 12 and 13.

So it's the chaos system and it's described as Babylon. But think of it in terms of, more broadly, the result of the third rebellion.

[28 : 10] Now, you know that there was a, you know what we call the fall was a rebellion of man. And generally, generally referred to that as the second rebellion.

So the second rebellion is the fall of man. The first rebellion is the fall of Lucifer and his angels, his followers. So we have the first rebellion, Satan, angelic rebellion, essentially.

Then we have the second rebellion, which was the fall of man. And then we have a third rebellion. And that third rebellion took place in Genesis chapter 10, Genesis chapter 11. And in Genesis chapter 10, Genesis chapter 11, we see the story where mankind built a tower to the stars and rebelled against God.

And as a result, God came down and confused their languages and scattered them. It's the third great rebellion. And we call that tower what?

The Tower of Babel or the Tower of Chaos because that's, that's, that's the, because of the language. And so, in figurative language, just like we saw the chaos beast, Leviathan and Behemoth from chapter 11 or chapter 13 represent the two beasts in chapter 13, Babylon, that was founded by Nimrod in Genesis 10, Babel, and was the center for false worship in Genesis 11, is being used to represent the chaos system of the Antichrist.

[29 : 41] it is not literally Babylon in Iraq. Okay? It's being used as a representation of everything that is against Jerusalem.

All right? And so, look, this angel, and again, we're flashing forward, the angel declares that this chaos system of Babylon has fallen, which, you know, there's a, there's a, there's an irony there. You know, they built the tower and Babylon has fallen, right? And the encouragement is that God is not only sending out an invitation, but he is also making a declaration that sin is going to be judged. And then in verse 9, linked really to this, this second angel, we get this third angel speaking condemnation. So we have an invitation, declaration, and condemnation.

Verse 9, And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger.

[30 : 54] No one is drinking wine. Symbolic language. Do you get me? Right? So, in the Old Testament, God's anger is often pictured as a cup of wine.

And drinking the wine is receiving the anger or being poured out. So, for example, Psalm 95, verse 8, For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it,

and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

It's a brilliant verse for Mother's Day. None of this is, none of this is very, you know. So, the context of this second scene, the invitation has gone out and those who have chosen not to accept the invitation then receive a condemnation.

And in verses 10 to 11 provide this terrifying picture of the result of rejecting Jesus and his free gift of salvation. It's a great and he, that is the one who rejects, will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they will have no rest, day or night.

And these worshippers of the beast and his image, whoever receives his mark or of its name.

[32 : 25] Now look, it's pretty impossible to read those verses and come away happy about ourselves. Like those, if those verses don't trouble us, we don't understand mercy.

It's also pretty impossible to come away from these verses and come up with the idea that some have done that eventually everyone is going to get saved or that eventually everybody is going to be annihilated. The picture is one of conscious, eternal, everlasting suffering.

And of course, the purpose in writing this is not to remind us of the destiny of those who don't know Christ, that it's radically different from those who do, but to encourage us.

However incredibly heartbreaking it is to know that those we love may choose not to follow Jesus, the purpose of this chapter is to remind us that there is still hope. And then the scene cuts away again to John giving us a commentary on this.

I think it's just a testimony to how sobering those verses is that John cuts away and he wants to write a commentary. He wants to say something that is not part of the vision, that is not part of the scene.

[33 : 49] It's almost like John is writing to the churches that he's writing to and he's saying Pastor John is just being a pastor to his people. And he calls us back again to the key idea of living today and living tomorrow.

He says, here is a call for the endurance of the saints. A term, actually, endurance we read seven times in the book of Revelation. And he says, here is a call to the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

if we know the truth of tomorrow, that should affect how we're living today. Jesus reminded us in John chapter eight, if you abide in my word, you are my disciples.

John, John, who wrote Revelation, also wrote this in first John. He said, for this is the love of God that we keep his commandments. And so John is saying, here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

He says, I heard from heaven, verse 13, saying, write this, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. In other words, death is always a troubling thing.

[35 : 05] But when you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, blessed are you. When you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, death is a transition from here into the presence of the Lord.

blessed are the dead who die in the Lord because there's hope. And there's still hope today.

Blessed indeed, says the Spirit.

It's like the Spirit couldn't contain himself. It's like, yes, blessed. Blessed indeed. That they may rest from their labors for their deeds follow them. And then finally, the third scene is in verse 14, where he says, then I looked and behold a white cloud and seated on the cloud, one like a son of man with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

And another angel, so we're now going to get three other angels. And another angel came out of the temple calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.

And so he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth and the earth was reaped. Okay, so the debate that we don't really have time to get into is surrounding the question of who is the one seated on the cloud?

[36 : 36] Who is the one seated on the cloud there in verse 14? Then I looked and behold a white cloud and seated on the cloud one like a son of man. So I'm just going to put it out there for sake of time that I think that that is Jesus.

I'm seeing some nods. I'm seeing some what? What there? Right? But look, the reason that I think that John is, the reason I think that it's Jesus is that I think John is doing what he's previously done and he's merging some Old Testament ideas into one picture.

Some Old Testament ideas about Jesus kind of bringing them together into one kind of picture. And so verse 14, you know, will be familiar to you.

It says that there was the one on the cloud was like a son of man. son of man.

That's neither here nor there. But clearly it's a reference to Daniel chapter 7. So Daniel 7.13, I saw in the night visions, behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a son of man.

[37 : 58] He came to the ancient of days and he was presented before him. So in Daniel, that son of man is Messiah. there. And he's with the clouds of heaven.

Mark 14, 62, Jesus said, I am and you will see the son of man seated, noted this, at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. So son of man, son of man.

And then, so, you know, Jesus, Jesus is saying that, you know, we see there in that Mark 14, the son of man is seated.

So we're combining some Old Testament and New Testament passages and a reference to clouds of heaven. And then, you know, one strong one is the messianic psalm.

So a psalm about Jesus. In Psalm 110, verse 1, the Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. And this is exactly just what's happening.

[39 : 01] Jesus is sat, and we've seen before, haven't we, the emphasis on Jesus being seated in heaven. And there, this messianic psalm in Psalm 110 is talking about Jesus being sat until the next thing, until I make your enemies your footstool, which seems to be happening right here in this text.

And so it's best to see, from my view, is that this one who is seated on the cloud like a son of man is Jesus. And an angel comes out of the temple and is essentially saying, go tell the son of man, here we go, it's time.

Like, it's time to wrap this thing up. And so in verse 16, the result of that is that he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth and the earth was reaped.

Now, some say that this is about judgment. So, you know, Jesus is judging the world. He's basically punishing the world.

Some say this is a great end times harvest. Some say it's both. And clearly you can't have one without the other. You can't have judgment without harvest.

[40 : 26] And so, and we'll see that this kind of ties into Matthew 13 and a bit later on. But it's clearly a reference, first of all, to Joel chapter 3, verse 13. So, Joel 3, 13, put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe.

Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. Right? So, verse 17 says, then another angel came out of heaven, out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out from the altar, and the angel had authority over the fire. Now, you remember we talked about this before, like, in Jewish tradition, various angels had authority over various aspects of the world.

Right? So, in chapter 7, we saw angels who had authority over the four winds. We've seen angels have authority over the abyss. In chapter 9, angels had authority over the waters.

And so, according to Jewish tradition, this makes total sense to have an angel having authority over fire. To you and me, we're like, what? But in Jewish tradition, this is like totally normal. right?

[41 : 40] So, and he called, this is the angel with the fire, he called out the loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.

And so, the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

And so, Jesus comes back, question, what is Jesus going to do? What's the first thing Jesus is going to do when he comes back?

Well, according to this text and other texts, the first thing he's going to do is that he's going to separate the righteous from the wicked. That's what he's going to do. And that's what he's actually doing, bringing in a harvest.

What does a harvest do? Does it only bring in the stuff that you're going to burn? No, of course not. The idea of bringing in a harvest is that you bring in the fruit of the harvest and you burn the stuff that you don't no longer need.

[42 : 45] And he is kind of the same. In fact, Jesus talks about this in Matthew chapter 13. Let's turn there. Matthew 13, he put another parable before them saying, the kingdom of heaven may be

compared to a man who sowed seed, good seed in his field.

And while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed seeds among the wheat and went away. Isn't that just like the history of our world? And so when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared.

That's the story of my garden. I remember planting bulbs, daffodils are coming up. I'm like, well, no, who planted that thing? I didn't plant that thing, but it's right there. And so he's using something that would be like everybody would know about.

And so the servants of the master of the house came to him and said, master, did you not sow good seed into the field? How then does it have weeds? And he said to them, an enemy has done this.

And so the servant said to him, do you want us to gather them? Do you want us to go out and rip them up? And he said, no, lest in gathering the weeds, you root up the wheat along with them.

[43 : 57] Kind of one without the other. That's what he's saying. Let both grow together until the harvest. And at harvest time, I will, notice this, I will tell the reapers, gather the weeds first and bind in bundles and to be burned and, but gather the wheat into my barn.

That's exactly what's going on here. Isaiah 63 refers to the one who treads the winepress. Isaiah 63, I have trodden the winepress alone and from the people no one was with me.

I trod them out in my anger and trampled them in my wrath. Their lifeblood splattered,! It actually says splattered,! Splattered on my garments and stained all my apparel.

For the day of vengeance was in my heart and my year of redemption had come. I looked but there was no one to help. I was appalled but there was no one to uphold. So my own arm brought me salvation and my wrath upheld me.

I trampled down the people in my anger and I made them drunk in my wrath and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth. Like that's a gruesome picture isn't it?

[45 : 21] But that's what the Lord is doing when he returns. in response to all the darkness, all the oppression in chapter 13, God is saying that is going to come to an end and I will have justice.

I will set right all the things that were wrong. All of the injustice that is taking place I will set right and this is how I'm going to do it. And then we probably get to the most gruesome picture of all in verse 20.

And the winepress was trodden outside the city. The winepress was trodden outside the city and blood flowed from the winepress as high as a horse's bridle about for 1600 stadia.

And you're like what's a stadia? I'm glad you asked. So a stadion, plural stadia, was an ancient Greek unit of length consisting of 600 ancient Greek feet.

Glad you asked? Yeah. But here's the problem. Greek feet over time were actually different lengths. You know that? Like by a few centimeters they were different.

[46 : 45] And so 1600 stadia could be as small as 176 miles or as big as 209 miles. That's why probably some in your footnotes have 184 miles as a footnote.

I don't know how they've managed that. That's not an average but there you go. I don't think it's sort of centimeter. I think it's like how high is a horse's bridle?

Shetland pony? Shire horse? That's a range. Right? I think it's just saying look it's going to be gruesome.

Right? This is not going to be like someone had a nosebleed and splattered blood on the ground and it's going to go unnoticed. Like when the Lord comes back someone's going to pay.

It's a literary term just designed to make us sit up, take notice that this is a gruesome thing and that the judgment is going to be huge.

[47 : 49] It's the magnitude of judgment. And so look the important thing here is that when Jesus comes back he is not blowing kisses. When Jesus returns he is not coming meek and mild.

He is not coming to a manger. He's coming to Mount Zion. He is being pictured as a warrior. And he's coming to put all of the wrong right.

And the chapter is designed to help us take hope in what is coming and to live today in light of that. And to ask and to invite as many who will to join us.

Let's pray. Father thank you that you give us hope. Lord thank you for the promise that you're coming again. Thank you Lord that even though we see a tremendous amount of chaos and hardship and darkness even in our own time and injustice.

Even though we've seen families ripped apart even this new understanding or revelation have 700,000 children gone missing in Ukraine.

[49 : 12] Lord we thank you today Lord that one day someone's going to pay for that. That you're going to come back and you're going to put all things right. And Lord we would pray today for our own hearts and for the hearts of those that we love.

Lord we pray for our own hearts. Lord that we would fix our eyes on imagining what life is like just on the other side of the brow of the hill.

And that we would alter our course, the direction of our lives and live for that. To live as though what we have already planted we are already harvesting.

Lord we thank you Lord that it is you who brings the increase. And so we do pray this morning Lord that the small changes would lead to big differences in our lives.

Lord help us in that each and every day Lord not only to live for you today but to live for you today because of what's coming tomorrow. Lord help us not to be anxious about tomorrow.

[50 : 19] Lord help us to cast our cares upon you. Lord help us to keep to capture our thoughts each and every day. Lord but we do pray Lord that you would keep our heads up and focused on the prize the upward call of Christ Jesus.

Lord we pray that for our own hearts but we also pray for those that we love that don't know you.

Lord we pray Lord that they would come to know you before the realities of this chapter are played out.

Lord quietly in our own hearts Lord we would just echo their names to you. Lord I ask you to save them. By your grace use us to speak words of life to them.

To invite them into this life that we experience this new life. Lord we thank you this morning Lord that we get to sing a new song because we have this new life in you.

Lord and we do pray Lord that those that we love would experience that new life. Lord we pray that you would save them from the hardship and terrors that are coming.

[51 : 50] Lord we pray Lord that salvation would be real. Lord that they would see that in our own lives Lord that we have set our sail towards King Jesus and we're just doing the best that we can however flawed to live for you.

So we pray Lord that you would help us to be light and witness in this place and we pray that your Holy Spirit would do the work the invitational work in their hearts.

Lord we ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.