

LESSON 3

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION

Perhaps some Christians living in John's day were like Elisha's servant: able to see only the enemy's apparently limitless resources and crying out, "Alas! What shall we do?" (2 Kings 6:15). They would have needed the insight that Elisha gave his servant: "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16). The purpose of Revelation 14 was to give that same perspective to John's readers.

THE 144,000 WORSHIP BEFORE THE THRONE (14:1-5)

At the beginning of chapter 14, it is as though heavenly sunlight suddenly illuminated the tops of the mountains surrounding the valley. Towering above the darkness was the Lamb, triumphant with His people.

1. What meaning did the Old Testament image of Mount Zion have?
2. If the scene of these verses is set in heaven, do the 144,000 represent just faithful Christians in John's day or all faithful Christians enjoying the blessings of heaven?
3. How was the phrase "new song" used in the Old Testament and earlier in the Book of Revelation?
4. What arguments could be made against the idea that John considered the celibate state more godly than marriage (see 14:4)?
5. Should the term "first fruits" in 14:4 lead us to believe that the 144,000 represent only those who died during the first centuries of the church? Why or why not?
6. What was meant by the word "blameless" in verse 5?

THREE ANGELS WITH MESSAGES (14:6–13)

In 14:6–13, John saw three angels flying in the sky, each with a special message from God to proclaim from a pulpit in midair. The angels are part of the special visions between the introduction of the Lamb's enemies and the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath. As with the other visions of chapter 14, the purpose of the three angels was to bring comfort to Christians facing terrible trials.

7. Is the "gospel" of Revelation 14:6 different from the one read about elsewhere in the New Testament? Explain.
8. What role does "judgment" (14:7) play in the gospel?
9. In what ways do the angel's words in 14:7 qualify as good news?
10. What facts can we know about the "mother of harlots" (14:8)?
11. For what purpose did God announce the destruction of Babylon?
12. What is significant about the fact that the impenitent will be punished "in the presence of" (14:10) the angels and the lamb?
13. What answer could be made to those who think verse 11 unworthy of Jesus?
14. Who are those who "die in the Lord" (14:12)?
15. What does the word "rest" mean in verse 12?

THE GREAT HARVEST (14:14–20)

The only One who knows what the future holds is God—and the only Book which gives us a glimpse of that future is the Bible.

Concerning the future, the most important thing the Bible reveals is that mankind is rushing toward a climactic moment: the time when Christ will return and every person will stand before God's throne to be judged. Revelation 14:14–20 speaks of that critical time in the figure of a *harvest*.

16. Where else in the Bible is harvest imagery used to speak of judgment?

17. How is the description of the “one like a son of man” in 14:14 different from other descriptions of him?
18. What is a wine press, and how is its image used in the Old Testament?
19. What does the original text have for “two hundred miles” in verse 20, and what symbolism was intended in the number?
20. What two primary purposes did the harvest scene serve?