**God’s Righteous Judgment**

Rev. 14

Introduction:

1. Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians and said, “We speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted . . .” (2 Thess. 1:4-7).

2. One of the major themes throughout Scripture is that God vindicates His people and afflicts those who afflict them. Abel was vindicated although he died and Cain was afflicted. Israel was vindicated although they suffered Egyptian slavery and Pharaoh was afflicted.

3. As the Book of Revelation reveals the plan of God the vindication of the faithful and the affliction of the rebellious continues.

4. This theme is brought to our attention again in chap. 14.

Discussion:

I. The chapter opens with a vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion with those He has purchased from among men (1-5).

 A. We were introduced to the Lamb back over in chap. 5.

 1. There was a book in the hand of God, but it was sealed up.

 2. Only the Lamb was qualified to open the book.

 3. His qualification: He had purchased for God with His blood men from every tribe and

 tongue and people and nation (5:9).

 B. 12:11 says these overcame the dragon because of the blood of the Lamb. Even though

 their lives were taken by the dragon, nevertheless they remained committed to Him.

 C. In this vision they are seen singing a new song. I am reminded of the Song of Moses

 and Israel in Ex. 15. This is the song that they sung after the Red Sea closed over the

 Egyptians. See. Ex. 15:1-2.

 D. Many are concerned about the number 144,000, as if there was a limitation on the

 number of those purchased by the Lamb. It is as if they fear they might be 144,001 and

 not make it. To think this way presses the language beyond its intention. Better that we

 give attention to who these 144,000 represent.

 1. They are those who stand with the Lamb.

 2. They are identified by His name and the name of His Father.

 3. They are those who sing in praise of their deliverance.

 4. They are those who have been purchased from the earth.

 5. No lie is found in their mouth. I take this to mean that they are not associated with

 the deceit of the idolatrous worshipers (cf. 13:14).

 6. They have not defiled themselves with women. I take this to mean that they have

 not participated in the immorality of false religion. Four reasons for this conclusion:

 a. Cannot be referring to literal marriage that is commended throughout Scripture.

 b. The image of idolatry as adultery is evident throughout Scripture (ex. Jer. 3;

 Ezek. 16; Hosea; James 4:4).

 c. Rev. 2:20 the church at Thyatira is condemned for tolerating Jezebel who leads

 people to immorality and adultery and to eating things sacrificed to idols.

 d. Later in 14:8 spiritual adultery is the consideration as Babylon (the world) makes

 “the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”

 7. “These are the ones who follow the Lamb.” Note the contrast between “being

 defiled” and “following the Lamb wherever He goes.” Later, Revelation will speak of

 the marriage of the Lamb (cf. 19:7ff).

 E. Do not miss the point that these are those purchased by blood. They are not

 blameless because they are good enough, but because they are forgiven.

II. The call of the gospel to worship God (6-7).

 A. Note that the message is universal: to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

 B. Cf. Matt. 28:19ff; Mk. 16:15f.

 C. The message of the gospel is a call to repentance and submission to God, but it is also

 a message of reassurance of having been purchased by the blood of the Lamb and

 therefore made perfect by His gracious forgiveness. Worship is the natural outgrowth

 of this transaction.

III. Judgment on those who do not worship God (8-20).

 A. Why is Babylon introduced here?

 1. Babylon has always been representative of the world.

 2. In the days of Judah and Jerusalem she represented the worldly flood of idolatry

 engulfing the people of God. Indeed, both Isaiah (52:11) and Paul (2 Cor. 6:17)

 called on the people of God to “Come out from their midst and be separate.” Isaiah

 was calling on the people of God to come out of Babylon and be separate. Paul

 used this to call the Corinthians to be separate also. The passage in 2 Cor. 6:16

 harks back to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and the exclusive covenant he made

 with her to be their God and her to be His people. Both Egypt and Babylon are

 representative of the world (the domain of Satan’s darkness; Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 2:1-

 3) from which God’s people are called out.

 B. This is the call of the gospel! Cf. James 4:4-9.

 C. Those who worship the beast are doomed (9-12).

 D. Those who die in the Lord at blessed (13).

 E. Reapers are coming in the wrath of God (14-20).

 1. This is not a new image in Scripture. John the Baptist had used the same image to

 refer to the coming judgment of God (Matt. 3:11-12).

 2. Joel had used it before him (3:12-16).

 F. The trodding of the winepress of the wrath of God is an image used by Isaiah in 63:3.

 G. “Is this a reference to the final judgment?” some ask. Whether the final or some other,

 as on Egypt, Babylon, Rome, it does not matter. Judgment is in the hands of God.

 The question we must answer is, “Will we be condemned or will we be those who have

 responded to the good news and been purchased by the blood of the Lamb?”

Conclusion:

1. How have you answered that question?

2. Are you ready for the judgment day?