



Revelation

2020 - Lesson

14

Chapter 14

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- We're nearing the end of the mid-Tribulation period, and as we do, let's take a brief moment to stitch together everything we've learned about this period
 - The trigger for all the mid-Tribulation events seems to have been Satan's casting down from Heaven
 - After he loses the war with Michael, he is bound to the earth and knows his time is short
 - So Satan begins to war with the saints and the Jewish people
 - He first attacks believing Jews, and the Lord protects them in a fortress in the desert
 - So then Satan departs and seeks a new strategy, beginning with orchestrating the death and resurrection of the Antichrist
 - The man is killed in Jerusalem by three kings but then is resurrected by Satan
 - His resurrection stuns the world, and they celebrate him as a savior
 - His first act is to kill the three kings and the two witnesses in Jerusalem and then enter the temple
 - In the temple, the Antichrist declares himself to be god and puts an end to the practice of Judaism
 - He eventually leaves the city to complete his conquest of the world and to persecute the saints
 - Before he goes, Satan raises up a second man to be a false prophet who, in the Antichrist's presence, possesses great power
 - The false prophet tells the world to worship the Antichrist
 - He sets up an image of the Antichrist in the temple to focus worship after the Antichrist leaves Jerusalem
 - And he institutes a new religious order for the world that requires taking a mark to buy or sell
 - Those who refuse the mark are executed
- All of these things happen in a relatively brief period of time at the midpoint of Tribulation
 - We have one more chapter of mid-tribulation events and a concluding chapter to close the book of this part of Tribulation
 - Let's set the scene for Chapter 14 with a brief transition out of the events of Chapter 13
 - The false prophet now requires all humanity to worship the Antichrist and take a mark on their bodies
 - If they do not worship the image of the Antichrist in the temple, they are killed
 - And if they do not take the mark of the beast on their body, they could not buy or sell anything
 - The false prophet's requirements placed all mankind between a rock and a hard place
 - On the one hand, refuse the mark and die

- On the other hand, take the mark and forever be excluded from the possibility of receiving salvation

Rev. 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

- Everyone in the world must now make a public declaration for or against the Antichrist
 - There is no room for undecideds or agnostics
- The world will be polarized into a few camps defined according to their response to the Antichrist
 - Among those who choose not to worship the beast, the principle group will be believers, both Jew and Gentile
 - The believing remnant lies in protection in the wilderness and of course will not have the mark or worship the beast
 - They will be the only ones who escape persecution once they reach Botzrah
- Then there will be believing Gentiles who experience severe persecution and many, if not most, will be martyred
 - Finally, there will also be unbelievers who refuse the mark, namely the orthodox Jews who continue to believe in Yahweh
 - Both these groups will face stiff persecution and many will die, though as we will see some will survive
- But there is one more distinct group that will never takes the mark of the beast and so they too are persecuted
 - But unlike the earlier groups, none of those in this fourth group will survive the Tribulation
 - In fact, 100% of this fourth group will be martyred
 - That group is the 144,000 Jewish evangelists that began the work of salvation during this period of history
- That's the group we open with tonight in our study

Rev. 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

- John's vision transitions to a new scene, that of the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion
 - We know from earlier chapters of Revelation that the Lamb is Christ
 - But then we're told He is standing on Mt. Zion
- Today, there is a mountain directly south of the temple mount in Jerusalem called Mt. Zion
 - So at first glance, we might assume that John was witnessing Jesus standing on

earth in Jerusalem

- But there are several problems with that view, beginning with what we see in the rest of Revelation
- The previous time we saw the Lamb mentioned as part of the action was in Chapter 8 when He broke the seventh seal
 - At that time, Jesus was in the throne room of Heaven
 - And the next time we see the Lamb taking part in the action will be in Chapter 19 when He returns to Earth
- So logically, we should expect the Lamb to remain in the Heavenly realm until the return of Christ in Chapter 19
 - But at this point, we're only at the mid-point of Tribulation
 - So that raises questions of where this scene is taking place – which we will answer as we move ahead
- Next, we see the 144,000 standing with Jesus, having the name of the Father written on their foreheads
 - Obviously, this group of 144,000 Jewish men is a reference back to the events of Revelation 7 when the Jewish men were commissioned
 - 144,000 were marked with the seal of the Living God, which is the name of the Father
 - Then they went out to bring an uncountable multitude to faith
 - Since then we haven't heard anything of these men and their work
 - But now as we reach the mid-point of Tribulation, we find them standing with Jesus on Mt. Zion
 - Are they on the Mt. Zion of present-day Jerusalem?
 - If so, then it would mean that Jesus was standing with them on earth in the middle of Tribulation
 - But that can't be since we know that Jesus doesn't return until the end of the age according to Daniel
 - So where is this scene taking place? We need to move further in the text

Rev. 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.

Rev. 14:3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Rev. 14:4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

Rev. 14:5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

- As John sees Jesus and the 144,000, he hears a voice from heaven, but the voice isn't really a voice...it's a loud thundering sound
 - It's also like the sound of harpists playing, so it's the sound of many thundering voices combined with harps playing
 - That's a unique sound and difficult to imagine
 - And it came from the throne, so it seems to be the voice of God
 - Then John says the 144,000 begin singing before the throne of God and before the creatures and the elders
 - The only ones who knew this song were the 144,000, therefore we must conclude that only ones singing were the 144,000
 - If the 144,000 are singing before the throne, then they are obviously in Heaven as is Jesus
 - So why did John say he saw them on Mt. Zion? Mt. Zion is a common term in the Bible for the Kingdom of Israel in glory
 - So John saw the future kingdom of Israel in glory depicted in the Heavenly throne room
 - Jesus in His glory preparing to rule and 144,000 Jewish men prepared to enter and rule with Jesus
 - And they were standing on the heavenly Mt. Zion in the New Jerusalem in Heaven
 - The New Testament mentions the Mt. Zion in Heaven in at least a couple of places

Heb. 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

- The writer of Hebrews says that our future lies in Heaven, with a heavenly Mt. Zion ready to descend to earth
- And Paul says that Jesus will come from this place when He returns to earth

Rom. 11:26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

- So the chapter opened with a scene of Jesus in Heaven accompanied by the 144,000 evangelists
 - So why is John being shown this scene of the 144,000 in heaven with Jesus at the mid-Tribulation moment?
 - Notice in v.3 that the 144,000 are described as those who were purchased from the earth
 - To be "from the earth" is a clear indication that they have left earth and arrived in Heaven
 - And they were "purchased" which means redeemed by the blood of Christ

- Back in Chapter 5 we heard something similar

**Rev. 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying,
“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain,
and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and
people and nation.**

- Back in Chapter 5 we had another group around the throne singing a song declaring that Jesus purchased men from the earth
 - In this context, the term purchase clearly refers to the Lord purchasing believers by His sacrifice on the cross
 - So in Revelation 14 we must conclude that these 144,000 were removed from the earth and now reside in Heaven
 - And they entered Heaven because they believed in Jesus
- Then in v.4 we’re given the reason for their death: they were the first fruits for God
 - The concept of first fruits is found throughout Scripture, and the concept is simple
 - During any reaping of produce, the best fruit are typically harvested first (low-hanging fruit)
 - In the law, the Lord dictated that these would be given to God as an offering of thanks
 - The Lord deserves the first and the best in everything, including in the bounty of the land
- So the concept of first fruits is that the best goes first and belongs to the Lord, and in v.4 we’re told these men are the ones who follow Jesus everywhere
 - They are in Heaven, so clearly they have died, and since it’s mid-Tribulation, they died before the second half of the Tribulation
 - So they are the first and best of the martyrs that will soon follow
 - They aren’t necessarily the first people to die during Tribulation, but they are the first group to enter complete into Heaven
 - They were a privileged group because they were the first to receive faith after the rapture removed all believers from earth
 - And they were the first to spread the Gospel again
 - And they were set apart from earthly pleasures like marriage so they could be dedicated to serving Jesus
 - And they were single-minded to their task, obediently following Jesus wherever He asked them to go and whatever He wanted done
 - In v.5 we’re told they never lie, which is a truly powerful testimony for any person
 - They certainly weren’t sinless, but it appears they were on a level of Paul or the other apostles in their sanctified lifestyle
 - Simply put, they were models of obedience and service during their short time on earth

- And then as further grace to them, the Lord allowed them to be the first of the martyrs, removed from earth before the worst of Tribulation starts
 - They were probably being killed throughout the first half of Tribulation
 - And then when the mark is required and worship of the image of the beast is required, these men refuse, of course
 - And so the remaining are quickly killed and become models for obedient martyrdom as well
 - Now that all have been martyred, they stand Jesus on Mt. Zion awaiting the end of the Tribulation
- So if the 144,000 were sealed in Chapter 7, how could they be killed at mid-Tribulation? Wouldn't the sealing protect them?
 - Let's revisit the description of their sealing

Rev. 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,
Rev. 7:3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

- These men were sealed and the text indicated that the sealing would prevent the supernatural disaster harm them
 - Much like God protected Israel in Goshen during the time of the Exodus plagues, these men would be protected too
 - Earlier in Revelation 6:6 we're told that these disasters won't hard the oil or wine either, which is a reference to the land of Israel
 - So the disasters spare the land of Israel and they also spare these men no matter where they travel
- So the 144,000 were sealed to protect them from God's judgments, but evidently that sealing is removed at mid-Tribulation
 - The time has come for evangelism to end and for all destinies to be set

Rev. 13:10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

- God has purposed to allow believers to experience martyrdom and the first fruits of that martyrdom will be the 144,000
 - By their example, the saints will have encouragement to know that death is not something to fear
- Back in Chapter 12 we were told that mid-Tribulation would include believers dying rather than bending their knee to Satan

Rev. 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Rev. 12:11 “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

- The martyring of the 144,000 is further evidence that the opportunity to know the truth and be saved by God’s grace has come to an end on earth
 - It’s highly symbolic to see those God selected and commissioned to re-ignite the spread of the Gospel having died and completed that mission
 - The suggestion is that the time for sharing the faith and persuading people to believe is over
 - With the Antichrist demanding that everyone take a stand, everyone must decide at mid-Tribulation
 - So the undecided column quickly drops to zero
 - So who is left to save?
 - The saved already believe and the unsaved have taken the mark and are therefore unsaveable...except for one group
 - We come back to that remaining hold out group later, but for now let’s move ahead
 - Meanwhile, the Lord offers one, very final opportunity to the world to believe, and the offer comes from the very top

Rev. 14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;

Rev. 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

- Now John sees another angel flying in midheaven (the atmosphere), and the last time he saw an angel flying was to announce the coming Woe Judgments
 - And sure enough, this angel is bringing another heavenly declaration to the entire world
 - This angel preaches an eternal gospel to the world, John says
 - He calls it an eternal Gospel because it’s the very same message that has always been preached
 - There has only ever been one way to be saved, one plan for salvation, one message that must be believed
 - The details of that message have expanded over time to include more specifics, but the thrust of that message never changed

- From Adam and Woman in the Garden to Noah to Abraham to Moses to Samuel to David to the Apostles
- From Abel to Zachariah, the message has always been that a righteous man lives by his faith in the promises of God
- And here the angel delivers it one last time to the world of this age
 - In this case, the angel declares that the window was closing, the salvation train was leaving the station
 - The hour of judgment had come, and in this context “hour” simply means a short time
 - So don’t fear the Antichrist and don’t fear physical death, but instead fear the Lord, and trust Him Who has made all things
- This angelic declaration is God’s final presentation of the Gospel to the world prior to the return of Christ
 - We can hardly accuse God of not making enough opportunities available
 - Not only has God delivered the Gospel by means of men who faced death for their willingness to declare truth
 - But now God has also elevated that presentation to the heavenly realm
 - In this moment, the Gospel is proclaimed to the entire world, just as Jesus promised

Matt. 24:12 “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.

Matt. 24:13 “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Matt. 24:14 “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

- Jesus tells us that the Gospel will be preached in the whole world before the end of Tribulation and here we see that fulfilled
 - He says it will be done as a testimony to all the nations
 - It’s a testimony both in the sense that some might believe, though we don’t know how many will
 - But also in the sense that it’s a warning to convict the world
- It’s also a reminder to us that evangelism has never and will never depend upon human beings
 - This one passage forever negates and renders irrelevant any question or objection about how God saves people
 - God has all the power He needs to save whoever He desires
 - So if you’ve pointed to the native in a jungle who has never heard of Jesus and wondered if God has been unfair to them, remember this passage
- All those God intends to reach will be reached one way or another
 - And often the method He will use is people like me and you, people who worry about the unreached in the jungle

- So when those people come to your mind, perhaps that's a sign you are supposed to be part of that solution

Rev. 14:8 And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”

Rev. 14:9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

Rev. 14:10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Rev. 14:11 “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

- The Lord has more to say to the earth, so a second angel makes an announcement from midheaven
 - The second announcement concerns the enemy and his kingdom on earth
 - The name of the Antichrist's kingdom is Babylon, and this is the first mention of this city name
 - As we've seen already, major topics of Revelation are generally spread out over multiple chapters in the book
 - The topic of Babylon is significant to understanding the events of the second half of Tribulation
 - But since it's revealed in pieces, beginning here and running until the end of Chapter 18, we will wait until later to explore it
 - Next, a third angel declares that if anyone doesn't heed the call to believe the Gospel and takes the mark, they will be tormented forever
 - There will be no second chance for anyone with the mark of the beast because there is no source of the truth after this moment
 - Since God Himself has preached by means of an angel, human messengers are no longer available
 - No more evangelism, no new voices sharing the truth
 - So the fate of every person on earth will be sealed at mid-Tribulation
 - Moreover, the punishment is eternal and terrible, and in v.10 we have one of the most detailed descriptions of eternal punishment in the Bible
 - The specific judgment described is one of burning and suffering in torment
 - Those who die absent faith suffer the wrath of God for sin
 - Specifically, they suffer in intense heat, described as fire and brimstone
 - And they suffer night and day without end and without rest

- They're suffering without end because they are forever existing in a sinful state
 - So their suffering is a result of *who* they are, not merely for *what* they've done
 - Finally, they will suffer in the presence of the angels and the Lamb of God
- In recent time, it's become fashionable to proclaim that there is no hell and that a loving God would not punish people so harshly
 - Some claim God gives second chances after death and others claim that eternal punishment doesn't last forever but after some time it ends
 - While we might be able to empathize with someone's desire to see unbelievers given a reprieve in eternity
 - Or entertain thoughts the eternal punishment must end at some point, we can't let our emotions override the meaning of the text
 - Scripture is abundantly clear about the nature and duration of eternal judgment for unbelievers
 - Unbelievers face a never ending burning torment, the wrath of an angry God Who hates sin
 - And they face eternal judgment because their sinful nature itself never ceases even in eternity
 - Ironically, those false teachers who try to convince others that there is no hell or punishment isn't eternal contribute to the plight of the sinner
 - They remove perhaps the one incentive God was prepared to use in converting the unbeliever, thus ensuring their demise
 - And these false teachers also give purpose to Hell's very existence

2Pet. 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2Pet. 2:2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

2Pet. 2:3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

- Now the narrative switches...

Rev. 14:12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Rev. 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

- In v.12 John says here is the perseverance of the saints, and notice that this verse is not a quote

- An angel was speaking in v.11 and a voice of Heaven starts talking again in v.13, so this is commentary by John
 - The perseverance of the saints means the way the saints maintain hope in these difficult days...
 - So John says to the saints of Tribulation, here's how you maintain hope during the difficult 3.5 years about to start
- They maintain hope by understanding that dying is a blessing
 - Those who die in the Lord will have been released from living in a horrific, sinful world
 - They will have rested from the burden of trying to escape the enemy, surviving on meager supplies of food and water
 - Of dealing with sinful, sick and weak bodies and the uncertainty of what lies around the corner
- The hope of all believers in that day will be the rest that death brings, knowing their deeds will follow them
 - The mention of deeds following is a reference to the eternal rewards that will be theirs for persevering in difficult times
 - They will be rewarded for maintaining a strong witness in the midst of so much pressure to recant
 - And they can press on knowing that if and when death comes, it is a blessing
- But more than just escaping the turmoil of Tribulation, death brings another blessing for these saints
 - If a person dies in this time, they will be assured of living in the Kingdom in a resurrected state
 - And in that resurrected state they will be sinless and glorified
 - And as a glorified member of the Kingdom, they will be part of the government

Rev. 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

- Those believers who live to the end of the Tribulation and never die will also enter the Kingdom, but they will enter in natural bodies
 - And therefore, they will not be part of the Kingdom government
 - We will come back to that topic later in our study
- So those who die in the Lord from now will be blessed, and that number will be very high
 - In fact, martyrdom will be the norm...

Rev. 14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

Rev. 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

Rev. 14:16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- On a white cloud is one like a son of man Who has a sickle in his hand
 - At the command of an angel, he swung his sickle and reaped the earth
 - Obviously, we have numerous questions about what John is seeing, so let’s work back through the details
 - We’ll begin by determining who is the one on the cloud with the sickle
 - John says he was sitting on a cloud like a son of man, and the reference to “son of man” immediately draws us to suspect this is Christ
 - We know it’s a Messianic term in the New Testament
 - And John commonly uses that term for Christ in his gospel
 - But there are a several details that undermine that conclusion
 - First, the “man” has a golden crown on his head but the Greek word for crown is *stephanos*
 - That is not the Greek word used for the crown worn by a king (*diadem*)
 - In fact, the next time we see Jesus described in Chapter 19, we’re told this

Rev. 19:12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.

- The form of crown Christ wears is a *diadem*, not a *stephanos*
- Second, the one on the cloud takes an order from an angel sent from heaven
 - It seems unlikely that the Lord in His glorified form would take a command from an angel
 - Third, the angel that gives that command is described by John as “another” angel
 - “Another” could simply mean another angel like those earlier in the chapter, but it suggests that both these characters are angels
- Giving further support to that conclusion, Jesus described in the Olivet Discourse a reaping of the earth during Tribulation by angels

Matt. 24:31 “And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

- In speaking about the events of the second half of Tribulation, Jesus said that the elect will be gathered (or reaped) from the earth
 - There is a regathering of the elect at Jesus' Second Coming which we will cover later
 - But throughout the Great Tribulation, the angels will be reaping believers through martyrdom
- So the two in view here are both angels, and the directive from Heaven comes announcing that believers are now to be removed
 - This is our confirmation that the second half of Tribulation is a time of great martyrdom
 - Angels are reapers of believers, and according to Jesus in Luke 16 believers are escorted into Heaven by angels
 - But while angels will be reaping the earth of believers, the actual process of death will be carried out by the Antichrist's forces
- Remember what Daniel told us would be true in this time

Dan. 7:24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

Dan. 7:25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

- The Lord allows the Antichrist to prosper and have success in killing saints for 3.5 years
 - This is the time of martyrdom
- But as the angels already declared, his success will be temporary

Rev. 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

Rev. 14:18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

Rev. 14:19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

Rev. 14:20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

- Finally, two more angels emerge from the temple in Heaven, and one angel has a sickle also

- This again confirms our earlier conclusions that these characters are angels and none are Jesus
 - Like before, the second angel gives an order to the first angel to reap
 - But this time the reaping task involves removing a different group from the earth
 - We know this second group is different than the first group because they face a different fate
- This is a description of the deaths of the world's entire population of unbelievers at a point near the end of Tribulation
 - Obviously, this chapter has been describing events that span the second half of Tribulation
 - And believers are dying throughout this time
 - But the death of the unbelievers is largely confined to the final days and weeks of Tribulation
- This group will be placed into the great winepress of the wrath of God to the effect of a great bloodshed, John says
 - This is looking ahead to the end of the seven years even as we exit the mid-Tribulation period
 - Specifically, it's referencing the war of Armageddon, which we begin to study next week
- But for now, the reader gets a taste of what's coming for the unbeliever to balance what we've learned about the fate of believers
 - And unbelievers will become a bloodbath, literally, producing a river of blood rising incredibly high and traveling impossibly far
 - The blood is 4½ feet high and two hundred miles long
 - How is this possible? Because it happens in a narrow ravine that runs in Israel
 - As we will learn later, the battle happens in the valley of Kidron which is probably the channel through which the blood flows
 - Nevertheless, the amount of blood here is literally the blood of billions of people
 - If we assume it flowed to the width of that valley, we're talking about 62 billion cubic feet of blood
 - That would require over 300 billion people's blood, which is clearly too high to be realistic
 - Instead, it likely means that at the moment of the winepress when the armies are killed, there will be a sudden release of blood in the valley
 - And it will produce a 4.5-foot high wave of blood that flows away from the valley for 200 miles
 - We're still talking about a tsunami of blood, and as you let that scene settle in your mind, let it balance your concern for the believer
 - Vengeance is mine, declares the Lord
- So the ending of Revelation 14 describes the eventual fate of the unbelieving world

upon the return of Christ

- But the specific moment when the winepress of the wrath of God takes place will occur at the end of Tribulation
 - In fact, this reference is a foreshadowing of the bowl judgments, which are right around the corner in a chapter or so
 - And when it comes, the world will see immense bloodshed
- But in the meantime, the second half of Tribulation is a relatively peaceful time for the unbeliever
 - Only at the very end of Tribulation will the unbelievers encounter suffering and death
 - The bowl judgments bring a new level of suffering unlike anything the world has ever witnessed before
 - But the people who suffer through most of the second half of Tribulation will be believers and Jews who oppose the Antichrist
- So Chapters 10-14 have taken us out of the Trumpet judgments and into the amazing events of mid-Tribulation
 - Those events have drawn to a close, and now we wonder how the second 3½ years will proceed
 - Though there is still much to happen at the end of Tribulation, in a way the answer will be a bit of a disappointment
 - Because the next two chapters pick up at a point near the end of Tribulation
 - Most of the second half of Tribulation will have concluded, and in reality, we've already studied most of the last half of Tribulation
 - In Chapters 12-14 we learned that during the last 3½ years the enemy is confined to earth
 - Together with the Antichrist and false prophet, he persecutes and kills anyone who threatens his existence, particularly Christians and Jews
 - The Antichrist and false prophet pursue an economic and police state that brings a temporary sense of peace to the unbeliever
 - But it brings great persecution to believers and Jews
 - That's how the final 3.5 years of Tribulation will go...until the bowl judgments begin
- To end today, let's revisit all three judgment series in Tribulation
 - The first series of judgments, the seals, contains all three judgments
 - So that seventh seal ARE the seven trumpet judgments
 - And then the seventh trumpet will become the seven bowl judgments
 - When the judgments were suspended at the end of Chapter 9, we knew we were waiting for the seventh trumpet to sound
 - We do not know the exact timing for any of the judgments, whether seals, trumpets or bowls
 - We only know relative positioning within the seven years of Tribulation

- For example, we know that the seal judgments cannot begin until Tribulation itself has started by the signing of a covenant
 - We also know that the seal judgments must happen before the trumpet and the trumpet before the bowls
 - And we know that the seal and trumpet judgments happen before the middle of Tribulation
 - This is based on the sequence of chapters in Revelation
- Now as we transition into the second half of Tribulation, we know that the bowl judgments are after the middle of Tribulation
 - But we're faced with the same question of where exactly in the second half of Tribulation do these judgments take place
 - The short answer is we can't be sure exactly, but there are some strong suggestions that they come at the very end of Tribulation
 - We'll come back to this question next time as we return to the final judgments of Tribulation