

# THE GRACE OF WRATH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text

Revelation 14:1-20

Topic

Three angels in the Earth's atmosphere preach the Gospel & warn men not to take the Mark of the Beast

Title

***"Angels In The Atmos-field"***

---

**What would you call Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Joey Bishop, & Peter Lawford?**

They were the *Rat Pack*, Frank Sinatra's posse.

Artists and actors worthy of celebrity have an inner circle of folks that are their posse or if you prefer, entourage.

**We call Jesus "the Famous One," and He has a sizable posse in the Revelation.**

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

The text contrasts the 144,000 with the followers of the Beast who "receive *his* mark on [their] forehead or on [their] hand" (v9).

## **The 144,000 are not the only believers Jesus writes upon.**

He tells believers in the current Church Age, "I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from my God: and I will write upon him My new name" (3:12).

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Walk With The Lord Knowing You Have His Name Written On You**, and **#2 Talk To The Lost Knowing You Have His Fame To Witness To Them**.

### **#1 - Walk With The Lord Knowing You Have His Name Written On You (v1-5)**

Putting a bumper sticker on someone else's car that says something stupid is an OK prank. To stick one on that they might not even notice and shows up at night when lit with headlights from another car, that's waaaayyy better. You can [Google](#) the details on the instructables website.

The "writing on the foreheads" of the 144,000 may or may not be visible to people during the darkness of the Great Tribulation. One thing is sure: The light of Jesus Christ illuminates their witness, and everyone on Earth will 'see' that they belong to Him.

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

We met the 144,000 in chapter seven. It is not a symbolic number:

- They are 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel.
- They are Jewish men, no women.
- They were sealed by God and rendered untouchable by their enemies.
- At the end of the Great Tribulation, they are safe and sound and successful.

The Revelation is chronological as you follow the opening of seven seals on the scroll Jesus takes from His Father:

- The opening of the seventh seal results in the blowing of seven successive trumpets.
- The blowing of the seventh trumpet results in the pouring out upon Earth seven successive bowls of the wrath of God.

Other notable events are interspersed as flashbacks or flash-forwards in-between the seals, trumpets, and bowls.

“Lamb” is John’s favorite name for Jesus in this book. He’s the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. What He accomplished once-for-all on the Cross is enacted in the Revelation.

Mount Zion is on Earth, and this is the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the seven years.

The 144,000 will gather to Him and serve Him in the Millennial Kingdom.

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

The climactic events of the Great Tribulation will have a musical score. Think of certain movies you love, and you'll realize the soundtrack played a significant role in telling the story.

Rev 14:3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

- The “four living creatures” are a type of angels whose *joy* and *job* it is to worship the Lord day and night.

- The “elders” are most likely a divine council of supernatural beings we read about in several Old Testament passages (e.g., Psalm 89:5-7). (I refer you to our previous studies).

Don't the 144,000 need to be in Heaven to be singing “before the throne?” No. Whenever we sing, isn't it to God? Aren't we before Him? Doesn't He hear it before His throne? The 144,000 are on the earth with Jesus, on Mount Zion, at His Second Coming. Heaven is providing a live soundtrack for a song they sing.

It's a “new” song:

- We should not do things to seem “new,” or as we might say, “hip.”
- Neither should we be held back by the way we've always done things. God the Holy Spirit can and will guide us if we listen.

Rev 14:4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

These guys are untouchable by the forces of evil, but that protection would not extend to a wife and family. They are better off without those relationships. How many movies have you seen where the hero's family is kidnapped or killed? Enemies pressured Jack Bauer to kill President Palmer because kidnappers had his daughter.

### **At certain times, celibacy is advisable.**

“Defiled with women” means *rendered unclean by sexual contact*. Jews would immediately understand this to be a *ceremonial* uncleanness, not a *moral* one. In the Old Testament Law, certain behaviors that were not themselves sinful would nevertheless prohibit a worshipper from approaching God until a prescribed time had passed or a specific offering was made.

### **The 144,000 abstain from marriage and the marriage bed to remain undistracted in their mission.**

Athletes are encouraged to abstinence when training. Mick warned Rocky to stay away from “that pet shop dame” during his training for the upcoming fight with Apollo Creed. “Women weaken legs,” was his sage advice.

Think of “legs” as your walk with the Lord. What weakens your legs? It could be a person, a possession, a place, a practice. Whatever it is, you may need to abstain from it to serve the Lord.

When you read that “they follow the Lamb wherever He goes,” John is looking forward *after* the Second Coming to their work in the Kingdom.

“These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.” Firstfruits are always the promise of a greater harvest. God uses them to bring forth more fruit as men, women, and children receive the Lord.

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Lies and idolatry characterize the Great Tribulation. We read in Second Thessalonians that there is something called “the lie” that people who follow the Beast will believe (2:11).

The 144,000 are “without fault.” It could be translated “without blemish.” It is a technical phrase describing the sacrifices that were worthy of being brought to God.

**W**e are not Jews by descent. We are not the 144,000.

God the Holy Spirit seals us and we *do* have the Lord’s Name written on us. Like the 144,000, we are clean and without blemish.

In the Book of Ephesians, we learn that Jesus will “sanctify and **cleanse [us]** with the washing of water by the word [and] present [us] to Himself a glorious

church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that [we] should be holy and **without blemish**" (5:26-27).

We cooperate with Jesus by remaining "clean" and "without blemish." We do it by obeying Him in the empowering and enabling He provides by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Dwight Eisenhower said, "When you put on a uniform, there are certain inhibitions that you accept."

Jesus accepted many inhibitions when He put on human flesh and became man. He did it willingly, joyfully, for you.

Supernatural beings undoubtedly can see His writing on us. Human beings 'see' it in a different way. The apostle Paul calls us living epistles and says other men read us. It's up to us to determine what type of reading material we are. Endeavor to be more Bible and less Mad Magazine.

Ask yourself, "What publications do I resemble?"

## **#2 - Talk To The Lost Knowing You Have His Fame To Witness To Them (v6-20)**

We endeavor in our study of the Revelation to highlight the grace and mercy of God. This chapter, for lack of a better word, oozes grace and mercy. God dispatches angels to "preach"... "the everlasting Gospel," and warn the lost not to align with the Beast.

Rev 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people -

Rev 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

I delight in a well-executed fly-over of jets from NAS Lemoore. The sound, the sight, the power of it.

**Angel fly-overs will have everyone on the planet looking up and listening .**

The Gospel must be preached to the whole world *before* Jesus can return. It's true - *with regards to His Second Coming, not the rapture*. The Gospel will be preached to every human during the Great Tribulation by an angel.

It is "the everlasting Gospel" because "the hour of His judgment has come." Everlasting life in Heaven or Hell is always on the line, but in the middle of the Great Tribulation, it will be on the line as never before because the clock is counting down.

The angel emphasizes that God is the Creator. God provides the "The heavens [to] declare the glory of God; And the firmament [to show] His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language *Where* their voice is not heard."

Those are the opening words of Psalm nineteen. Creation demands a Creator, and those who seek Him will find Him. Creation *does* witness to mankind.

**Merrill Unger called Creation, "The Oldest Testament."**

Rev 14:8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

A literal city of Babylon will exist in the Great Tribulation. There is also going to be a false religious system called Babylon. We'll read all about their rise and fall in chapters seventeen and eighteen.

The city and the system make "all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The world wants to get you drunk with its excesses.

Never underestimate your unredeemed body with its propensity to sin. It wants excessively. It lusts. It's a monster.

The world, meaning the world system currently ruled over by Satan, tempts your flesh to indulge.

Rev 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand... [Stop there]

A person must consciously choose to worship the Beast. An angel will warn those who inhabit Earth not to do so in language they cannot misunderstand.

Our perspective on the Mark is that, first, a global socio-economic system of cashless commerce will have been established. It will likely utilize a biometric identifier on the hand or forehead, e.g., facial recognition or palm-vein scanning. Everyone will be forced to participate.

Mid-way through the Great Tribulation, the Beast demands to be worshipped. If a person refuses, they cannot buy or sell, or travel, or work, or *anything*. Think of the pressure to swear allegiance to him.

BUT:

Rev 14:10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall 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 ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."



Eternal conscious torment in the Lake of Fire awaits the Beast. He, along with the second Beast who assists him, are the first residents of Hell, confined there at the Second Coming of Jesus.

Anyone who refuses the everlasting Gospel will eventually, eternally, join them.

Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Rev 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' "

The "patience" of those who refuse the Mark means their willingness to endure whatever earthly consequences follow. For multitudes, it will be martyrdom. They will be "the dead who die in the Lord."

- On Earth, trouble followed them in the form of mistreatment and martyrdom.
- In Heaven, "their works follow them."

Do you ever think of death as being "blessed?" "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

**At the end of verse thirteen, you're told the Holy Spirit speaks. *That's huge!***

The Bible elsewhere describes Him 'speaking,' but not like this. In the Church at Antioch, He spoke to the disciples to separate and send Paul and Barnabas to go out to preach the Gospel.

We are not told how He spoke, but we are pretty sure it wasn't audibly.

**God the Holy Spirit does speak audibly here.**

His precious few words are what you'd expect Him to say as the Comforter. "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

- God the Holy Spirit says "Yes." It is more than a word of agreement. It is a reminder that everything God has said in the Bible is "Yes and Amen" (Second Corinthians 1:20). God's Word cannot fail.
- "Labors," according to *Strong's Concordance*, means *pains, troubles, weariness*. Those will give way to eternal "rest." It's as if God the Holy Spirit were singing to you, "Soon your trials will be over... We will meet in the Golden City in the New Jerusalem, All our pain and all our tears will be no more."

There are various approaches and systems of biblical counseling. Take your cue from God the Holy Spirit.

**Godly counsel, resulting in genuine comfort, should never fail to direct the heart to the believer's homecoming.**

Rev 14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Rev 14:16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Jesus said of Himself that the Son of Man will be seen coming upon the clouds of Heaven (Matthew 24:30). He said that He would send His angels to gather the elect (Matthew 24:31).

Jesus and His holy angels are depicted as reapers coming to harvest souls with their sickles in hand.

The harvest is first compared to a crop of *grain* and then to a crop of *grapes*. Each focuses on a particular aspect of the final harvest of judgment at the Second Coming:

- The harvest of grain illustrates the separating of believers from nonbelievers.
- The harvest of grapes illustrates the crushing of the armies gathered against the Lord in the Valley of Megiddo (Revelation 19:19).

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

Rev 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."

Rev 14:19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Rev 14:20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Seven mentions of sickles. Wielded by the mythical Grim Reaper, death personified, the reaper sickle is the iconic representation of death.

Not the Grim Reaper, but angels will assist Jesus by gathering the human race and by separating believers from nonbelievers.

### **More cowbell or not, nonbelievers should Fear the Reaper.**

The "blood" of verse twenty describes the Battle of Armageddon at the Lord's Second Coming. It won't be much of a battle. As Thor said to Bruce Banner of his contest with the Hulk, "I won, easily."

The harvest is overripe. Throughout history, extending into the Great Tribulation, God is patient, striving with sinners, seeking them to save them.

He's waiting, waiting, waiting to provide opportunity to be saved, because the alternative is so drastic, so final, so tragic. One day His longsuffering must end.

**T**he church is not Jesus' posse.

We are His bride, His building, His field, His body. We are the ones who spread His fame. His name is on us, visible to supernaturals, seen by our behaviors by mere humans.

*A.W. Tozer said it best: "If we cooperate with Him in loving obedience, God will manifest Himself to us, and that manifestation will be the difference between a nominal Christian life and a life radiant with the light of His face."*