

## Revelation\_14

In the chapter 13 the dragon seems to be using his might to empower the two beasts. The majority of humanity is ruled by his raging idolatry. The dragon's tyranny appears as prevalent and matchless power that overcomes the saints and holds the entire world in his satanic grip of cruelty, and vile moral decay. In the verse # 8 is the exception: the entire humanity is **not** in the dragon's pangs: the souls in the Lamb's Book of Life worship **not** the king of demons. In the v# 9 - **these** have the hearing ability of the living. Our Lord's Spirit is voicing His judgment in the # 10. Suffering saints are rewarded; wickedness is condemned. As the violent storm is raging, an entirely different vision appears in the first verse of this chapter # 14.

**1]** Behold, the Lamb stands on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand with His Father's Name written in their foreheads. God's Almighty Lamb beams to destroy Satan's darkness. 666 is a definite number. It might appear so big and endless beyond our human horizon; the fact is: our Lamb's Truth is beyond comparison greater and more powerful than any evil forces and the entire power of darkness. The entire demonic host trembles as they remember His majestic Name [James ch 2: v 19]. Here we see the measureless dimensions of this Revelation. Our Father's Lamb is forever on the mount Sion. In the Acts 7: 55 our brother Stephen is in the midst of the fallen king's furnace [Daniel ch 3] and, at the same time, our brother is on the mount Sion with the Mighty Lamb of God beaming through him. King Uzziah worships his own pride and approaches our Lord's altar with incense - contrary to our God's order [2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 26: 19]. When the priests rebuked him the king's wrath flares up and, that same moment leprosy appeared on his forehead. This was godless worship, blaspheme, Uzziah's number 666. In Deuteronomy 6: 8 God's Word is given to Israel to be a token on their hand and an ornament on their forehead. All their intensions and all their labors and strivings must be guided by God's Word and in full harmony with His commandments; only that way they are safe, sound and victorious in their holy faith. 144,000 with our God's seal in their foreheads are listed in the chapter # 7: 3-10. Between the

chapters # 7 and # 14 we read about many visions signifying many great and amazing developments and changes. These 144,000 sealed have not departed from their Savior and Master. Now we see them with their King. They have not lost their seals because their life is in Christ their Savior and in Him there is no loss; only gain after gain. The genuine believers follow our Savior from the testing forty days in the wilderness all the way to the open tomb. All that prayerfully embrace victory in the desert remain victorious in Christ. These chapters [7 – 14] reveal an abundance of understanding and enlightenment concerning this book – this Revelation – and, the entire Bible. The character of Eternal Almighty God – our Father and our Savior – is also confirmed in His omnipresence. The Lamb was slain since the world's foundation [chapter 13: 8]. The Lamb is on the mount Sion while He is hanging on the pillar of suffering and shame – on Golgotha. He has been with His Heavenly Father all the time He was among us – in the flesh [John 8: 16 & 16: 32]. In this book a part of encouragement for us is to see His glory and victory **in** His suffering and endurance. This revealing fact is helping us to dwell in Him and continue in humble loyalty to His Spirit dwelling in us. When we suffer in our pilgrimage, He suffers with us. The truth is that He suffers more in our suffering as the One Who bears us in His loving and caring arms and, patiently suffers our infirmities on & on. Since He is in us and we in Him, when we suffer with Him we also rule as kings under our Lord & King of kings. Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us this awareness that in our suffering, in our rejoicing, in our regrets for our failures, in our gratitude and praise for His accomplishments, always we are with Him on the mount Sion. Let us look at some Bible records **what is** this mount Sion which is Mount Hermon [Deuteronomy 4: 48]. In the Psalm 65: Sion is the place of our God's praise and our covenants fulfillments. In Matthew 21: 5 the prophecy of Isaiah ch 62 is fulfilled: our King comes to His people, the daughter of Sion, and the entire ch 62 abounds with the blessedness of that glorious relationship that grows toward perfect unity. Psalm # 133 presents Hermon and Sion in beauty and blessedness of our Lord God blessing His people with unity, consecration, and anointing in holiness of true adoration. All of that beauty and abundant blessings are only foreshadowing the everlasting fulfillment in our blessed Redeemer, Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 12: 22-29 we, the genuine children of the everlasting Gospel [v 6] **have come** onto the Mount

Sion and to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the City of the Living God, and to a numberless host of angels. In the center of this bliss and beauty is Jesus: our Mediator, the Great High Priest, King and Lord.

**2]** From Heaven is heard sound like a great thunder and like massive amount of water in commotion blending with a multitude of harps. Harps are not very loud musical instruments but when they all harp in harmony the volume is multiplied. Our Lord's Gospel thunders our God's judgment since Adam's sin. The same Gospel sounds healing & comfort to the penitent hearts; it inspires power and endurance to His faithful witnesses & martyrs. In this Revelation, symbols, allegories, parables, and literal meanings are all blending in one passage, but taking turns in another &, interpretations follow or, precede the linked text. The voice in this verse as massive as 'many waters', and loud like 'great' – rolling - thunder leads; harps follow in concert. Our great King, our Creator and Savior, leads by the first recorded step of His work. He sees that all is good. He blesses His creatures, celebrates the completion and gives instruction for living. He leads all His godly witnesses and all true leaders – prophets, kings, apostles, and faithful disciples. His voice is mighty and powerful in this verse and, just as powerful and mighty in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19: 12-18. All of God's people, Abel, Stephen and all following them sound in harmony with Him - the First & the Last.

**3]** This multitude sings a new song to the throne, to the four living beings, & to the elders. No man alone can learn this song but the 144,000 – all the redeemed from this earth. How did these worshippers learn their song? They are redeemed! Saved men are not instantly transferred into full 'perfection in the flesh'. We need steady learning the guidance by Christ's Spirit and His Gospel application in our daily walk. Our consistency confirms our safety in Him and our harmony with our Father's good and pleasant Will. That way He promised us that He will be fruitful in our daily walk and make us fruitful in His marvelous Work. All the translations I have read in English indicate the 'location' of the singing multitude as "before the..." What is revealed in "singing before the throne, before the four living beings, and, before the twenty and four elders"? In Matthew 23: 22 our Lord tells us that our respect toward heaven and the throne of God is indivisible from our reverence toward God. Are these three levels like

worship, reverence & respect? Within this passage and other similar texts I have not noticed some 'places' behind the throne or on one of the two sides of the throne. Singing before the throne, I perceive, signifies a spiritual position and condition of the multitude in relationship to the throne and to the Almighty God in His glory and majesty. In the same new song the worshippers offer adoration to our Father in Christ and to the Son – our Lord and loving Master. In this same hymn they reverence and admire the four living beings and the entire arrangement on and around the throne; all that magnifies our Father in Christ deserves our admiration. In the same harmonious harping the full number of the redeemed honors, loves and appreciates every faithful prophet, apostle, elder, and encourages all the little ones in Christ's Family [Matthew 18: 10]. In Christ's Spirit we worship our Father, love the entire Family He redeemed and offer Him our own selves. We cannot intentionally ignore, neglect, or exclude any Gospel teaching or any section of our new life in Christ, and still retain His full assurance that we are in His Spirit's Fellowship. Intentional partial loyalty is total disloyalty in disguise. Our Master enables us to learn this ever new song only in sincere faithfulness. Here, the number of 144,000 indicates not a limit or possible exclusion of any soul redeemed & delivered from the power of sin. This number symbolizes the fullness of the total redemption in Christ's ransom. It also indicates that there cannot be anyone self-elected, self-redeemed, self-delivered. Christ alone saves. James 3: 2 and 1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 8 tell us that we do offend God's perfect Holiness and we are not sinless as long as we live in these earthen vessels [2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4: 7]. In 1<sup>st</sup> John 3: 2 we are **presently** God's children and Christ's appearance **transforms** us into His likeness and enables us to see Him **as He truly is**. In # 3 every man having this living hope in Christ purifies himself striving and praying to grow toward His likeness – His perfect example. As long as we live in our mortal body our experiences take moments or longer time. Between our conversion and 'seeing Him as He is' **is His** constant loving care [Romans 8: 30]. That song is like new. Adam and Eve sang that song before their fall [which was our fall also]. Abel and Enoch sing that eternal praise; and Noah, Abraham, David, Isaiah, Daniel with his three fellow Israelites, many prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all the little ones redeemed, sing of **the Mighty**

**Lamb's ransom.** Throughout these millenniums this praise is **ever new**. As the gift of **God** is **eternal life** through **Jesus Christ our Lord**

[Romans 6: 23], so the harping His praise is **everlasting**. As His gift of Life is eternal, never aging, so the praise & adoration of the Lamb, the Ransom Giver, is forever new, eternally fresh & joyful. The following two verses indicate condition, activity, and position in our Father's grace, of these 144,000. 4-5] 144 are not defiled with women; they are virgins. They are faithful followers of the Lamb. They are redeemed from among men; the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. In their mouth there is no guile. They are faultless before God's throne. In the # 3, the last part, these are redeemed from the earth. Let me align their attributes as listed in these two verses [# 3 & 4]: redeemed from the earth, undefiled with women, unconditionally faithful followers of the Lamb, redeemed from among men. In Ephesians 4: 4-6 the only redemption is in Christ, the Son of God. By the grace of our Heavenly Father in Christ our Savior's sacrifice, we receive this salvation by faith. There is **no other** salvation & new life; only in Christ. This text contains no needless repetitions. In the Book we see some early anointments. In Jeremiah 1: 5 our Lord reveals to this prophet that he, Jeremiah, was sanctified and ordained before his birth. Judges 13: 5 records the angel's announcement about Samson's consecration to happen before he was born. John, the Baptist, was filled with the Holy Spirit while his body was still in its developing process. In a wide sense these individuals, elected for such unique tasks, were also "from among men – from the earth". These 144 are redeemed one time and, redeemed continually. This is the eternal redemption. They were not defiled with women. Marriage is our Creator's perfect design and is not defiling - in its character. Our sin is corrupting all we do. A male can defile himself with a saintly woman without any defilement or involvement of hers; without any awareness or sin of her own: **his sinning defiles him**. If this defilement [in the first part of # 4] were in some way linked to marriage, it could have something to do with the plural form of the noun women. God has designed the marriage as monogamy and having more than one wife at the same time is obviously departure from the design revealed in God's creation. The last sentence in the # 3 is not about physical redemption; the physical side is

excluded. In Romans 8: 23 we are waiting for the redemption of our body. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15: 50-58 flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; corruption cannot inherit incorruption. Our present body shall be changed. In Isaiah 4: 1 seven women take hold of one man, saying: We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach. In Jeremiah 3 Israel and Judah are compared to two corrupted women – adulteresses addicted to harlotry. Isaiah 4: 1 tells of seven harlots. These seven refuse the Bread of Heaven and the garment of Christ's righteousness. All they desire is His Name; not in Truth – only as deceitful appearance – to deceive their illegitimate children and the entire world by boasting with the Name they never had in reality. The true 144 follow not sevenfold deception. The 144 follow the Lamb solely and wholly to the end of the battle and straight into His glory – just as He leads them. They belong not to the hordes of corruption and decay. They are the five wise virgins in Matthew 25: 1 & on. They are espoused to the One Husband; to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ. The 144 have their redemption completed by the mercy of our Heavenly Father, by the grace in our Lord Jesus Christ and their place is on the Mount Sion. The Lamb is in their midst; the Center of their worship. They are named the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. Some translations named them 'the firstborn'. In Exodus 4: 22-23 our God's message to Pharaoh is: Israel is My firstborn! Let My son go, that he may serve Me. The chapter 12 accounts for two groups of the firstborn: rebellious, that died and obedient -delivered through the blood of the Passover lamb. The Passover lamb foretells God's Ransom-Lamb. In Exodus 34: 20 an unclean animal must be redeemed by a lamb or, without redemption, the unclean must die. In Deuteronomy 21: 17 our Lord commands double inheritance to be the portion that belongs to the firstborn. Beside the material possessions the double inheritance traditionally included leadership. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5: 17-20 tell us to apply double honor to the believers gifted with godly leadership and Gospel teaching. These verses also imply that our adversary attacks with shrewd force the fervent gifted laborers. Our Lord tells us in Matthew 5: 12 to rejoice when we suffer for the sake of our testimony. The reward is both - great in the time present and in eternity. Encouragement to rejoice is in many Bible passages: Matthew 18: 23, Luke 6: 23; 15: 5, Romans 5:

2; 12: 12, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6: 10, Philippians 1: 18; 2: 16-18; 3: 1 and many others. We share the double inheritance: here we have suffering, comfort & joy. In eternity is our everlasting joy celebrating the mighty Lamb's victory. In Luke 10: 20 our Lord teaches us that our great joy is not in what we do in His Name, but what our Heavenly Father gave Him, His Son, to do for us. Our Father is pleased to give His own Son this high honor to be the Lamb of God, our Ransom. Our Lord Jesus offers Himself to please His Father perfectly. This eternal love of the Almighty God now and forever is open to all who trust and obey the Gospel teaching. To them He gives power to partake of the great privilege: to be followers of Christ for a time here and joint heirs with our King of kings forever. In Deuteronomy 26: 1-11 is the teaching about the first fruit offering: a joyous celebrating the abundance of our Father's blessings upon the Promised Land and His people Israel; a feast of gratitude to our Lord. In John 17 our Savior's prayer is recorded. Throughout this record the Son delights to delight the Father. Words fail me to describe how eternal heavenly love beams from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father. In the verse # 6 our blessed Savior says: I have manifested thy Name unto the men which Thou gave me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gave them me and they have kept Thy word. As our Redeemer delights to please the Father so He rejoices in His disciples' desire to keep the Father's Word. I perceive that this is the first fruit offering: Father, I delight doing Thy will. There is no hesitation, no procrastination, no begging to persuade, only giving of self and, receiving - with gratitude and praise. As the glory, majesty, beauty and purity of our Father's holiness is perfectly presented in Christ, so the 144 trusting and obeying our Father's Word revealed in the Son, received the power to be members of the blessed heavenly Family; the Father's gift to the Son and the Son's offering of gratitude to the Father. In their mouth there is no guile; they are faultless before the throne of God. Their spiritual virginity we see in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the verse # 4 relates to other attributes ascribed to the 144. Our Master's genuine disciples are like a chaste virgin wholeheartedly committed to her beloved bridegroom – waiting for him. His guidance is their soul's fervent endeavor and they will not follow human organizations to support man-made religions. Our Lord redeemed them from earthly – godless living and lifeless existence. He also redeemed them from

following deceivers and self-deceived religious authorities [falsely so called]. All other professing – nominal “Christians” are beguiled and beguile others: Life & Truth is only in Christ.

**5]** In the mouth of the 144 was found no guile; they are without fault before the throne of God. The chapter 21 verse 27 confirms: Into the Holy City **in no wise** enters anything that defiles, neither *whatsoever* works abomination, nor *makes* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Ch. 17: 14 gives more confirmation to these facts: and they that are with the Lamb *are* called, chosen, and faithful. James 3: 2 admits our side of the truth: In many things we offend all. As in many other questions, the apostle Paul is guiding us toward clearer understanding and deeper insight. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15: 51-52 tell us: ...we shall all be changed in a moment, at the last trump. Philippians 3: 8-15 unveil Paul's confession and encouragement to us. Our Father loves us in Christ and considers us perfect on Christ's merit. He is changing us now toward His perfection. Our Father's love for all that is Christ's in us is our encouragement to grow toward perfection; not to be weary because of our imperfection, deficiency; not to be slack since “God loves me anyway”; not to grieve His Holy Spirit, but be humble in our confession & fervent in our service. We are far from perfection – in our flesh. In Christ – we are faultless before our Father's throne. O, the amazing grace and patience of our Heavenly Father in His dear Son, our Lord and Savior.

**6]** John saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel for all men. This angel is a heavenly messenger. All the redeemed from sin and death that still labor in this world of sin and darkness, all spread the same heavenly Message: the Gospel of salvation only by God's grace, only on Christ's merit, received by faith alone and manifested in faithfulness alone. From the first to the last verse of the entire Holy Scripture, it is the **everlasting** Gospel. All God's children proclaim **this Gospel** and confirm their testimony **by living it** - prepared to **die for it**. They are joined, supported and protected by the heavenly messengers. The battle is not ended yet. **The victory is certain**. The message is declared to every person, group, nation, and language. If any person or group professes faith in Christ but denies the Gospel invitation to any man or race, that professing person or group knows not our Lord and Savior. The Gospel is not in



their hearts. When we see the humanity reveling in sin, groping in darkness, deaf for the Gospel, blind for its Truth, let us continue in prayers and praises, in witnessing by godly example and words. The real victory is secured: we are Christ's soldiers; He is our Captain; we're His laborers; He our Master. All three angels declare important parts of the saving Gospel and dire judgment for rejection of it.

**7]** It is a loud testimony: Fear God and glorify Him! His judgment is now! Worship the Creator! This is not a gospel of sin-tolerance. This isn't a gospel to scare us into blind carnal idol-worship. The true Gospel demands our highest reverence for THE God worthy of eternal honor and glory. We owe our heart and mind, soul and body, to the Most Holy Judge of sin; the One always true and righteous; the only One that never judges wrongly. We rightly fear our offence against God. The true God is not a mean spirit that we should be scared from Him. The ever living One is Holy and Majestic. He is not an idol or a man with unpredictable temper. Our Lord told us what is pleasing Him and also good for our soul and body. His commandments are not obstacles to us. His precepts are accommodating our needs. The fear of God is loyal adoration in the highest reverence, the deepest gratitude and endless longing for full obedience. All, which men do in His Name - our blessed Lord Jesus - all in the Gospel teaching, is glorifying our Heavenly Father. It is glory to our Father when a tearful sinner cries: God, be merciful to me, a sinner [Luke 18: 13-14]; when a former leper worships our Lord with unrestrained gratitude for healing; when Stephen facing martyrdom delivers a brilliant sermon, not defending himself, but Christ's Gospel. [Acts 6] It is glory to our Father when our Lord and Savior condemns hypocrisy [Luke 11: 44] and 'cleanses' the temple [Matthew 21: 12]. Throughout this Book is the glory of our Father God and from eternity and in endless eternity our God's glory fills the universe; He calls us to enter in. Next part of this verse # 7 tells us that we owe reverence and glory to our God for the hour of His judgment is come. In John 12: 31 **now** is the judgment of this world and its prince casting out. In Luke 11: 31-32 our Lord tells: the queen of the south shall condemn the impenitent generation. The men of Nineveh condemn indifference toward the Gospel. Our God's condemnation has been manifested right after the

first lie, after the first murder, in the great flood, in the days of Lot. God's condemnation of evil is in His eternal character, and in His creation since Adam's fall. Many signs of our God's displeasure are revealed: in the history of humanity and Israel, in this Revelation and, in the experience of every man. The Holy Scriptures declare the message of our God's grace and justice, mercy and condemnation. Nothing & nobody can discount His holiness. The very existence of, and all the changes in the entire creation testify of God's goodness and holiness; this is a constant invitation for every man to adore the Creator. By ignoring or rejecting God's order in His creation men refuse His blessings and choose to experience His judgments. God's judgment of our contemporaries is **now** while His mercy and grace are still being offered. We honor our Father by heralding His final judgment and proclaiming His day of salvation in Christ, the only Redeemer of all penitent sinners. Our testimony is true when we live accordingly.

**8]** Another angel declares: Babylon is fallen, **is fallen**, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Some men suggest that this city is that tower in Genesis 11: 14, others think it is the capital of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel... Others would try to prove that this must be Jerusalem; some others point to Rome. I think all of them are right in their words – in part. **All** is included: the fallen Babylon is the fallen humanity. Since when this city **is fallen**; since man started building upon the foundation of sin-deception. Before the blinded man laid a 'stone upon a stone' and until there will be left **no** 'stone upon a stone', that city **is fallen**. The awful destruction **is in** the sinful construction. Our Father gives us the privilege missed by many blind sinners: to see the world in darkness as it is: **fallen! Fallen!** It is essential for our proper focus, perspective, and undivided – wholehearted – adoration, for our brave and cheerful fight on the battlefield, for our eager labor in our Master's vineyard, for our unwavering separation from sin and darkness, **never to doubt of this truth: Babylon is fallen**. When we know that all sinful plans and achievements are fallen, while they are still raging against our heavenly citizenship, our spiritual eyesight is free to behold constant victories of God's Lamb and our Soul is free to thrive in expectation of our King's final and eternal

triumph. That is faith of our brother Stephen facing martyrdom, but seeing the open Heaven. That is faith of our elder Peter sleeping in double shackles, between two guards in anticipation of martyrdom in Acts 12. That is faith of our apostle Paul and brother Silas in Acts 16: 16-34; **that is** true faith. After suffering so much and observing our Lord's power in Philippi, they preach the Gospel boldly in Thessalonica in Acts 17. That is the faith and testimony of the 144 on the Mount Sion that follow the Lamb wherever He leads them; the faith **of & in** the Lamb, our eternal King Jesus. Here and today, when we pray for that faith and confidence in Him, and embrace these virtues, we are also on the Mount Sion with our souls' royal Bridegroom. Yes, Babylon is fallen and our God's Lamb stands on the Mount Sion with 144 thousand **He has redeemed from among men**. The fallen city is great, not because of the multitude of her citizens and subjects, not because anything can be great in sin and death; she is great with satanic deception and cruel wickedness. **Our God's justice and judgment** against her **is infinitely greater** here and now; and **forever**. She made all nations drink the wine of her raging immorality, corruption and manifold decay. All men offer some influence one to another. Our manner of living day by day, our labor and results of it tell the people around us whether we **follow the Lamb** or the god of this fallen dead world. Large cities, with millions of people: millionaires in luxury, sick and starving men in ghettos, universities misusing and abusing the wonders of our God's creation to deny our Creator's existence, religious centers studying the Bible to preach perversion, all are that fallen Babylon. Yes, I have no doubts, that Rome, Jerusalem, London, New York, Tokyo, Moscow, Peking and many others – all over this world in sin – are only parts of the great Babylon; the humanity dead in sin; as we all were till the merciful, mighty arm of our crucified and risen Lord delivered us. The wine is attractive to all deceived but is the deadly poison to all trapped in its addiction. In Genesis 19 that last night wickedness was raging, but in the morning the sign of our God's just indignation was clearly manifested. Their smoke rises on and on before our eyes of faith in God.

**9-10]** The third angel declared with a loud voice one more essential part of the genuine Gospel message: If any man worship the beast and his image, and

receive his mark in his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink the wine of God's wrath in full strength poured into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone before the Lamb and His holy angels. There are many opinions concerning our Creator's character. I am under strong impression that all the opinions are influenced by the writer's, or speaker's knowledge and ignorance; mine also. I wonder if some denominational teaching is false by purpose, or presented in sincere ignorance. Here we see the three angels presenting three essential teachings of the true Gospel. Another fundamental Gospel teaching is mercy, grace and eternal love of God. This teaching is not verbally expressed in the verses 6-11, but is strongly implied in the messages of the three angels. The loud calls: to worship our Creator, to be mindful of Babylon's fate and the consequences of false worship, are strong and clear indications of our God's loving care and salvation offer. False teachings present our God as a cruel judge that has pleasure in condemning man for the least sin. Presenting our Lord as indifferent or tolerant to intentional disobedience and deliberate sin - is another extreme - also false. Our God is Holy, Just, Righteous, Merciful & Loving as He reveals in His Word. He is not like some imagination or personal perception of a carnal - sinful - mind. Our God has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures as much as we need to learn how to seek and find Him, to trust and obey Him. If we heed His invitation, refuse Babylonian deception, God gives us all we need to live in the Fellowship of His Holy Spirit - the only safe position for us all. Men that ignore our Creator's evidence in the nature around them, reject our Lord's call to true worship, and despise His Gospel warning concerning sinful, carnal existence in Babylon, elect to worship the beast and his image. These are Satan's marks on their forehead and their right hand. Rebellion against our God is the path of suicide.

Rejection of the Gospel-salvation is also self-condemnation. Our Lord's judgment of all evil is just and sure. None can escape. Signs of our God's condemnation are evident in the Scriptures and in the extra-biblical evidences of our time. Rebels suffer already in the time of their disobedience. Contrary to the happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment, feigned by many, the world in darkness is very unhappy. Sinners get sick, have accidents, and suffer loss of possessions. They

also suffer envy, hatred, bitterness and anxiety. Until God's final judgment, all temporal consequences of foolish rebellion do not silence God's invitation to the Savior and His offer of mercy and salvation. After all temporal disappointments, sinners do face God's just and righteous judgment. His mercy must not be taken as sin-tolerance. Their torment includes this bitter awareness: their long time rejection of the only salvation – no more available. Our Lord and only Savior, now is their just Judge. All godlessness is condemned. The faithful witnesses, often rejected & afflicted, now see the judgment they are redeemed from.

**11]** The smoke of sinners' torment ascends up forever and ever. The beast, the marks of his name or his image cannot give real rest to their falls worshipers. The # 9 says "If any man worships..." # 10 declares: "The same shall" face God's judgment. # 9 is in the present tense, # 10 the future tense, and # 11 is everlasting - eternity. The present time is our decision making. When the future becomes experience the men that made wise decision shall rejoice and not desire to change it. The people that made wrong, foolish decisions will not be able to change their eternal destiny. Our God never fails. He will not compromise His grace and judgment. Noah's testimony lasted many decades. The great flood is a clear sign of our God's displeasure with sinners' rebellion. In Jonah's 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter our God sends this prophet to Nineveh, a wicked city, to herald our Lord's judgment against the people's evil-doing. A marvelous repentance flooded the nation. Our God's patience and mercy has been revealed and confirmed – to all the penitent men in the verse # 10. Perhaps only 100 – 150 years after Jonah's prophecy, the prophet Nahum declares: The burden of Nineveh. God's wrath is reserved for His enemies! [1: 1-3]. The Lord, slow to anger and great in power, does not acquit wickedness. Our Almighty God is holy in His mercy and in His judgment. We see in Matthew 12: 41 two sides of humanity: true repentance of former sinners condemns rebellion of stubborn impenitent evil-doers. Salvation is not in anyone's ancestry or affiliation; salvation is only in Christ; received by faith, witnessed in faithfulness, rewarded now and forever. In this verse [11] the "Smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever" includes all the signs of our God's just judgment - from the cities of the plain [Genesis 13: 12] to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter's 3: 9&10: none of our Father's faithful will perish, and, in wickedness,

none can ever escape His justice. Christ is our Savior. As we are guided and instructed by these Scriptures, the Day-Star in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter's 1: 19 rises in our heart; and the Sun of Righteousness sustains our soul [Malachi 4: 1]. We behold the smoke ascending from Sodom's destruction; its ashes tell and foretell consequences of sin. Our **God is gracious, just and holy.**

**12]** Here is the patience of the saints: here are the keepers of God's commandments and the faith of Jesus. Our Lord Jesus is our perfect example and all the faithful – recorded in the Scripture – encourage us to endure in strife and suffering by the power of Christ's Spirit. In Him is great gain that lasts forever.

**13]** The Truth sounds from Heaven: Blessed are the martyrs and all that are faithful to the end! The Holy Spirit testifies: after their hard labor they enter into rest; their good deeds are preserved and His fruits multiplied. Let this testimony echo in our heart to the end of our pilgrimage, as Stephen and Paul had it. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4: 6-8 Paul tells us: I am ready to be offered: the time of my departure is near. I have fought a good fight, finished my course and kept the faith. Our Lord, the Righteous Judge, has His crown for me and for all that love His appearing. Stephen says in Acts 7: 56: The Heaven is open! My **King** I see.

**12-13]** Here is the patience of the saints: here are the keepers of God's commandments and the faith of Jesus. The Truth sounds from Heaven: Blessed are the martyrs and all that are faithful to the end! God's Holy Spirit testifies: after their hard labor they enter into rest; their good deeds are preserved forever. Here – in this world - is the time and place to pray for patience that we might grow in our faith and knowledge of our Savior and Lord [Ephesians 4: 13]. Faith without the basic knowledge of His Gospel is incomplete. Real faith is **with** a sincere desire to learn, understand and apply His Word [1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:2]. Knowledge without faith and obedience is just another form of rebellion and perversion. Men can study God's Word without any desire to be faithful and all they achieved is - self-condemnation. Our Father blesses fervent desire to be faithful; He opens our heart & mind to grow in prayerful study of His Word. Growing in the likeness of God's Son we see the purpose and value of suffering. We see in Luke 16: 19-22 that Lazarus, a sick and dying beggar is blessed with

patience and faithfulness in the midst of his misery. In Hebrews 11 is a long list of the faithful; in their blessedness we are blessed and encouraged to endure. By faith and knowledge of God's Son – by faith and knowledge of our Father's Living Word, the Word recorded in this Book, we see our Lord and Savior walking before us, leading us through suffering to glory. We see Him, our King of kings, Lord of lords, Victor of victors, and our souls' Heavenly Bridegroom. Even in the times of apparent quietness, when we are not persecuted openly, the worldly manners of living in sin, ungodly laws and requirements in business, worldly friendship, celebrations, gentile patriotism, and total indifference toward God and His Word, teach us to remain patient and watchful. Many passages in this Book tell about the blessedness of patient suffering in the Name of our Lord and Savior. In the midst of our suffering we are not alone: our Lord's presence and His Spirit's blessed guidance and protection are with us all the days of our pilgrimage. For sinners the world is treacherous. For Christians this world is a fruitful field. Life in Christ is wonderful and joyful. At the end of our journey our Lord gives us His great reward for all He has done for us to keep us in His grace. He is rewarding His good works in our heart and our daily walk in the light of His Gospel all the way till He takes us to glory. Our present experience of His grace and His loving care for us give us only a pre-taste of eternal glory.

**14]** Behold a white cloud! On the cloud is the crowned Son of man with a sharp sickle in His hand. This sign is Omni-dimensional: past, present and - forever. **Our Lord is** in glory: before the world was created. [Job 38: 4-7]. He is in glory on the way to Golgotha and on the pillar of suffering and shame; [Matthew 27: 46 & 50-54 & Luke 23: 28-31 & 42-48]. **Christ is in glory forever and ever** [chapter 19: 13]. All we find in the Holy Scriptures about His glory are some parts of His glory & majesty; a revelation from Him to us. He admonishes us to be brave and strong to **follow Him** when **we** are tested or tempted. We know our trials are but for a moment, but His glory is eternal. His golden crown tells us: **He is the Crown** over His entire universe. A harvesting tool is in His hand. He is ready for the harvest, but He is still waiting. A loud Message must be completed before the harvest foretold long ago, get completed in Christ's full triumph. In Mathew 9: 36-38 our Lord says: the harvest is great... He tells us similar words in Luke 10: 1-

2 right after His appointment of His seventy messengers. Our need is a godly understanding of the Gospel proclamation and our proper application all the time of our short pilgrimage. We must work. Time flies. Long before Matthew and Luke, Jeremiah in 8: 20 tells: The harvest is past, the summer ended, and we are not saved. About a century before him, Isaiah told harvest of Moab, an enemy of God's people: For their refusal to obey our Lord and receive His blessings; they must face His righteous and just judgments. In Matthew 28: 20 our Lord Jesus says: He is with us to the end. In the end, we are with Him forever.

**15]** An angel comes out of the temple. He shouts to the Lord of harvest: The harvest of the earth is ripe! Reap with Thy sickle! This angel does not command our Lord. **He** sends **His** angel to shout God's harvest. He sends His twelve, His seventy, all of His faithful, and all of us today. [Matthew 10: 1 & 28: 19; Mark 3: 14 & 6: 7; Luke 6: 13 & 9: 1] We are all messengers with the same one Message: our God is the Almighty Creator of the universe and the only Savior of the entire part of humanity that did repent for their sins. All who truly repented, trusted and obeyed the grate Message of His righteous judgment, justice and mercy, salvation and everlasting life in Christ, God's Son, all are lead by His Spirit from dust and ashes of sinful existence to His eternal glory, and all proclaim the everlasting Gospel; all are Christ's messengers. Our Lord and Master, the Messenger above all messengers, says in Matthew 24: 14 that this Message will be proclaimed to all nations and **then shall the end come**. This angel of Gospel messengers [# 15] by his mighty voice is echoing the longing and prayers of all true messengers: Christ in glory marks the end.

The measure of sin and iniquity has been fulfilled [Genesis 15: 16], the number of the redeemed is being fulfilled [Romans 11: 25], all true believers are ripe for Christ's glory; all the rebels are ripe for His final judgment. Many times there were partial harvests, many times limited judgments. Now the end is here. Another insight into Gospel harvest is given to us in Matthew 13: 37-43. In John 4: 34-38 the Master, Chief Sower, feeds upon doing His Father's good pleasure: to finish the work His Father sent Him to do. In this verse [# 15] the harvest of the earth is ripe, the grains are dry, and time to sow and grow is past. Now is the



harvest time and the good grains are ready for our Master's barns. In the same verse the tares are ready to burn in fire unquenchable. Harvest is the end of time. For each person the end of his or her earthly journey is the time for that person to be harvested into rest and bliss of our King's glory. [Matthew 13: 43] Final harvest is at the end of this world [Matthew 13: 39]. Harvest is the time of separation [Matthew 3: 12 & 13:41-43]. This angel [in Revelation 14: 15] comes out of the temple. Our Lord's temple in Israel was in the tabernacle. There was proclamation of our God's commandments. There were offered sacrifices acceptable to our Lord, circumcision of separation from the world, covenant making and fulfilling promises. The physical body of our Lord Jesus is a temple in John 2: 19 & 21. From His temple comes forth the entire Gospel teaching & in His walk is the perfect Gospel witness. Each faithful believer is a temple of our Lord and declares our Savior's testimony [1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6: 19]. Christ's Church in the midst of the sinful world is Christ's Temple proclaiming and practicing His teaching [1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3: 16-17]. Our Lord's desire is to fulfill His Father's promises in finalizing His salvation. This same desire is in each believing heart and in His entire Church. We all have this longing for harvest. Let us pray for patience and endurance as we sow the seed - at times with tears and sweat - for our harvest will be with great joy [Mark 4: 26-29]. Blessed are all who faithfully serve the Lord of harvest.

**16]** He that sat on the cloud swung His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. Great is our God. The Lord of glory has His ways and means of completing His great salvation work from sowing through cultivating to harvesting in each new born child of our Father; in His entire Church and throughout human history: from Adam to the last soul included in His precise number of 144 - all the redeemed. In Matthew 9: 37-38 our Lord Jesus says to His disciples: The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; you pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, to send laborers into His harvest. In Matthew 13: 37-43 our Lord interpreted His story about the Sower after He said in the verse 30: Two crops grow together. The verse 40 tells us in the end of the world the evil crop shall be burned in fire. Verse 43 says: Then shall the righteous shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom. The labor time, growing time, getting ready, all is finished at the time

of harvest. Glorifying our God's grace, starts at new birth, and accelerates forever. The numberless multitude He redeemed by His awesome ransom – everyone - is saved and not one is missing; because Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith and of His salvation in us [Hebrews 12: 2].

**17]** From the same temple comes another angel with another sickle; ready for another part of harvest. This angel waits for one angel more, one more messenger, one additional message. After that message-declaration the waiting is over, this second angel will execute the will of God as the message declared. In Matthew 24: 36 our Lord says that only our Heavenly Father knows the day and hour of its fulfillment. He is referring to the preceding prophecy. I believe this is applicable to all things from the smallest to the greatest. Not only the day and hour of the final harvest has been set and not changeable, but the end of each man's journey is known to our Father. I believe at the end of my life in this body my harvest is done. At the end of the world the general and complete harvest will be finished. In Matthew 24: 14 our Lord Jesus says that His Gospel of His Kingdom shall be preached in the entire world...; and then shall the end come. The final - general – harvest comes after witnessing is ended. All faithful witness the true Gospel. Witnessing is performed by daily walk in the light of the Gospel Truth and by words. The entire Church of Christ heralds the judgment day at the end of this day of saving grace. In the closing chapter of this book verses 11 & 12 righteous and holy men are encouraged to continue & endure in faithfulness to the end.

**18]** Another angel comes out from the altar. He has power over fire. By a loud voice he shouts his call to the angel with the sharp sickle: Swing thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the earthly vine; for her grapes are fully ripe. This angel as a heavenly messenger represents all Christ's Gospel messengers and witnesses. As soon as this angel finished his loud witness, the angel in the # 17 starts the last harvest. This angel comes out from the altar. We see Christ, our Great High Priest, in His Father's presence In Hebrews 9: 24-28. The altar in this verse 18 signifies our Priest, His offering, and the ongoing cleansing in 1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 7&9. The fire on the altar in this # 18 is Christ's eternal intercession for us before His Father. Hebrews 4: 14-16 give us admonishment to hold fast our testimony.

In John 1: 12 Christ gives power to the believers to be God's children. Trusting and obeying our Master, we are in His power to sustain the flame on His altar in our heart and life. Proclaiming His Gospel we participate in that power over fire. Our souls' longing for the final harvest and the end of sin and woe is a loud cry in the hearing of our Father and the heavenly angels. This angel shouts: The earthly vine grapes are ripe. Our God's question in Isaiah 5 is to the disobedient believers that stubbornly misuse and abuse God's gifts and blessings. Here is the harvest of the fruitless vine that bears wild – useless grapes. Our Lord's grace and patience is not available for rebellion; the end is coming. In Habakkuk 2: 3 our God's vision never fails; it is fulfilled as God has appointed it. Wild, sour grapes will ripen as such and, if left to themselves, they get worse... The day of grace ends, invitations to repent and believe the Gospel cease, the iniquity fulfilled its fullness [Genesis 15: 16], **the judgment time is here**. Our Lord Jesus says in Luke 13: 24-28 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in but shall not be able once the Master of the house closed it. For **impenitent** workers of **iniquity** is reserved weeping & gnashing the teeth; **judgment is inescapable**. 19] The angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, & cast it into the great winepress of God's wrath. No part of God's abundant grace is an encouragement to continued rebellion. Our Lord Jesus paid the awful debt to our God's divine justice for all sinners who trust and obey God's Son. He purchased us with our sin to deliver us from sin and our well deserved punishment. Our sin He burned up suffering in hell on Golgotha; and He kept us as His possession and an offering to our Father. Now we belong to Him with our whole heart, mind, soul and body, time and strength. For every curse of robbery and stealing we commit [Malachi 3: 9] we must repent, make restitution, and seek His mercy. Nothing can purge our sins but the blood of God's Lamb, **the only Redeemer, Savior, Deliverer and Lord**. Is this God's despotism? **NO!** This is the only way of life! All other ways lead to hell. See it in the next line. 20] God's wrath-winepress was trodden outside the City, and blood poured out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of sixteen hundred furlongs. O, Lord, grant us understanding again! Every time I experienced our God's wrath in my soul, He did not do anything; but His wrath was evident. He didn't take away His mercy, grace, and the joy of His salvation in

Christ! Yet I lost all these! What happened? In my disobedience I gave power to Satan and my adversary oppressed me. I had no power... My sin stood between my Savior and me. I disabled myself and no more was I able to sense God's presence and receive the blessed influence of His Holy Spirit. There is no place in Heaven or under Heaven away from our Father's sight and presence. My rebellion confused me and left me in darkness. Every time I sincerely repented and turned to my Redeemer, He delivered me and renewed me in grace. In the verse number 16 of this chapter is a very brief reference to the harvest of godly crop; just like in our Lord's story about Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16: 19-31. In the verse 22 we see just a short statement: Lazarus died and now he is in Abraham's bosom. The rest of the story is about sinner's fate. In the end, all stubborn sinners that cleaved to Satan must share his fate for entire eternity. The prophet Joel in the chapter 13 speaks about the harvest of the wicked and about full press of great wickedness... This winepress is a symbol, a sign of our God's condemnation. Everything and all placed in it is judged. In Ezekiel 21: 2 he is sent to judge Jerusalem's iniquity. In 22: 2 she is called the bloody city and that abominable condemnable attribute is repeated in Ezekiel in more places. In the four Gospel books we read as much as has been recorded for us about our Lord's suffering on the pillar of agony and shame. In Hebrews 13: 12-14 our Lord Jesus suffered without the gate to sanctify us by His own blood. We are called to follow Him bearing His reproach. In the world of sin, vanity and vain glory we have no abiding city, but we are looking forward to the manifestation of the New Jerusalem, the true eternal City of God. Almost two millenniums ago the sacrifice of God's Lamb was manifested outside Jerusalem, the bloody city of murderers. At the end of Revelation 14 the judgment-press of all murderers is trodden outside the City. All sinners that rejected the redemption in Christ must suffer outside the City of Righteousness. All judgments, all condemnations and all abominations belong to the bloody city of rebellion against our Savior and Lord. In the New Jerusalem is the full fellowship in the Spirit of God's Son under the Father's everlasting blessings. What is the message of the sinful blood-flood pouring out of the winepress here? This bloody flood reached up to the horse bridles. In the psalm 32 verses 1, 2 and 9 give us an interesting picture. Blessed is the man forgiven and covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no

iniquity, but gives him a spirit without any guile. This far is the citizenship of the Heavenly Jerusalem. #9 warns us: Be you not as a horse without understanding. Its mouth must be controlled with a bridle. This is an urgent admonishment: do not step on the path that leads you to the righteous and just judgment of God. The final judgment stops all self-will, corruption and hypocrisy of wicked murderers. Egyptian army had horses [Exodus 14: 9 & 15: 19]; United Canaanites had many horses [Joshua 11: 4-6]; Syrian kings used many horses [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 20]; many enemy-armies had horses. Many persecutors and murderers of God's people boasted of and trusted in their many horses. They all fell before our God. In the deep flood of their own blood our God's judgment stopped all oppressions and blood-shed. This number of furlongs - the extent of this blood-flood is a message in symbols. In Genesis 4: 23-24 we see raging wickedness: Cain's vengeance of 7-fold Lamech increased to 77-fold. God's grace is our remedy. In Matthew 18: 21-22 our Lord multiplied His grace forgiving from 7 times to 70 times 7 – numberless. Number 40 is recorded in many records of suffering and endurance in faithfulness. Elijah journeyed 40-days in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19: 8. In Luke 4: 2 our Lord Jesus fasted 40 days.  $40 \times 40 = 1600$ . Suffering consequences of sin is much greater than anything we can suffer and endure with our blessed Lord as we battle in faith.