

Book of Revelation

20. The Harvest : First-fruits



Revelation 14

Introduction

As we look around us today it seems as if those who know and follow Jesus are so few in number, compared to the multitudes of those who don't. Certainly there is much to be done! As we come to Revelation 14 we see that the final harvest will be gathered in as judgment falls on the earth. However before this final ingathering, the first fruits of the harvest will be presented to the Lord.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 14:1-5



Describe the scene the Apostle John sees in this vision. Where is it, and who does he see in the vision? Compare with Hebrews 12:22-24.

(The vision John sees is of what is taking place around the Throne. He sees 144,000 people who have been redeemed and they are worshipping.)



This is the second time we read of a group of 144,000. Are they the same group as in chapter 7:1-8, or a different group? Compare the similarities and the differences, and draw a possible conclusion. Revelation 7:1-8 cf. 14:1-5.



This group of 144,000 is described as 'first-fruits to God and the Lamb'. v4 What does it mean by 'first-fruits' do you think? See James 1:18, Numbers 28:26, Exodus 23:16.

(During a harvest, the grain that ripens first is called the 'first-fruits', and this was always presented to the Lord at the Feast of Pentecost.)

Some believe this group of 144,000 are 'caught up' or 'raptured' earlier than the main harvest and that they are also described as the 'man-child' spoken of in Revelation 12.



What else can you learn about this group of people from Revelation 12:4-6 & 2:26-27?

It is fascinating to try and find out who this group of 144,000 are, but it is **more important** to live in such a way that we can be included in this group!



What kind of relationship do these 144,000 have with the Lamb? Revelation 14:4-5 What does it mean by 'they did not defile themselves with woman?' 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, James 4:4, Jeremiah 3:9

(They obviously have a very close relationship with Jesus, the Lamb, and live in total obedience to Him. When it says that they do not defile themselves with women it means that nothing comes before the Lord in their lives – they are devoted totally to Him.)



We live in a world where it almost seems impossible to be like those described in v5: 'No lie was found in their mouths.' How has the Holy Spirit been teaching and helping you to live like this? Share from your own experience.

Conclusion

There has been much talk about the 'rapture'. Some are expecting it in the near future, while others believe it will be later. It would certainly be wise to prepare ourselves, for as Jesus warned: 'Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.' Let's strive to be like the 144,000 who keep themselves pure and live in obedience to the Lord Jesus.