

Book of REVELATION

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Lesson XXXVII (Revelation 14: 9-13) Retribution for the Worshippers of the Beast

1. Vss. 9-11. Retribution for the worshippers of the beast.

a. A third angel announces the punishment that will be inflicted upon the worshippers of the beast.

1) Babylon is fallen

2) Now is described the lot of those that drank “of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,” i.e., who worshipped the beast and his image; for this worship is spiritual fornication.

b. “Saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark” etc.

1) See ch. 13:14ff.

2) The worshippers of the beast are identical with those that receive his mark.

3) In the narrower sense they are those that worship antichrist in his final manifestation; but they are representative of all that love and serve the antichristian world throughout the centuries till the end of time. All the commit “fornication,”

c. “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,” etc.

1) This wrath of God was already in the “wine of her fornication,” vs. 8.

2) It is now poured out, or prepared, without mixture in the cup of God’s indignation or anger.’

A) The cup of God’s anger is filled.

B) It is filled with pure, unmixed wrath. In the world, as they received the “wine of the wrath of fornication” from Babylon, they drank the wrath of God mixed in the intoxicating drink of Babylon’s lusts and sinful pleasures. All this is ended now. Pure wrath they are now given to drink.

d. “And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone,” etc.

1) This is the result of the pouring out of the wrath of God.

2) Fire and brimstone are to be understood figuratively, yet so that they can signify actual bodily suffering, and not merely “pangs of conscience.”

3) Their torment is inflicted upon them “in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

A) We may infer that this also implies the presence of the “144,000” that are with the Lamb.

B) They are all concerned in this just retribution for which they have longed and prayed for God’s sake.

C) “in the presence of” does not merely refer to the moment of judgment: nor, of course, does it mean that they shall be in the same place with the Lamb and the holy angels; but it does mean that they shall be witnesses of God’s righteous wrath upon the wicked, and that, too, with a holy delight: it belongs to their public justification.

D) “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,” etc.

1) “The smoke of their torment” is figurative language in connection with the “fire and brimstone.” The fire is not quenched!

2) “For ever and ever,” I.e. emphatically without end, everlasting. Eternal punishment of the wicked is clearly taught here as in other places of Scripture.

3) And this everlasting punishment shall be continuous, there will be no respite; for “they have no rest day or night,” I.e. in their torment. Hell is here presented as a pure, unmixed, continuous and everlasting suffering of the wrath of God.

4) “Who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name,” i.e. whoever commits fornication with the antichristian world, and in any way allies himself with Babylon. This is repeated here to emphasize the heinous character of this fornication as a sufficient ground for so terrible a punishment.

2. Vs. 12. The patience of the saints.

A. “Here is the patience of the saints; (here are) they that keep,” etc.

1) The meaning is: here is the reward of, the justification of, the basis for the patience of the saints.

2) For their lot is not with the wicked: they are blessed. vs. 13

B. Their patience consisted in this that

1) They kept the commandments of God, i.e. worshipped Him, walked in His way.

2) And the faith of Jesus, i.e., the faith in Jesus, and the truth in Christ.

3) And that, too, in spite of the wrath of the beast, and in the midst of tribulation.

3. Vs. 13. The blessed dead.

A. “And I heard a voice from heaven,” etc.

1) John hears a voice from heaven, commanding him to write.

2) Whose this voice is the text does not designate, but the context suggests: the Lord’s.

3) The voice instructs John to write:

A) That they that die in the Lord, i.e., that are in the Lord (Christ), and as such die, are blessed.

B) “Henceforth,” i.e., not immediately after death (though this is perfectly true), but from the viewpoint of the end.

B. “Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest” etc.

1) The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, as He dwells in believers. In so far He is the same as “the voice from heaven.”

2) He interprets the blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord.

A) “That they may rest from their labors.” Labors here refers to their toil and suffering and tribulation which they endured in the world. From them they now enjoy complete rest. The former things are no more.

B) “And their works do follow them.” The works in the Lord, i.e. of the Lord through them. They follow them, i.e., not merely in the form of the reward of these works, but the works themselves have eternal value for God’s eternal house.

Lesson XXXVIII (Revelation 1: 14-16) Vision of the End of the World

1. The chapter closes with a vision of the end of the world.
 - a. Also in ch. 6:12ff. The end of the world was pictured. (The sixth seal).
 - b. But there is a difference in viewpoint:
 - 1) In the sixth seal the end of the world was presented from the viewpoint of the destruction of the physical universe.
 - 2) Here the viewpoint is that of the ripened harvest of the earth. All things are ready for the end, both with regard to the righteous (the harvest, vss. 14-16), and to the wicked (the vintage, vss. 17-20).
2. Vs. 14. "And I looked (or "saw", R.V.) and, behold a white cloud" etc. Here John is given to see a new vision, as is indicated by the expression, "And I saw." The vision is that of Christ in His Messianic glory coming for judgment:
 - a. That it is Christ that is revealed here, and not an angel as some would have it, is evident from the whole description:
 - 1) He is sitting on a white cloud. A cloud overshadowed Him on the mount of transfiguration, Matt. 17:5; A cloud intercepted Him at the ascension, Acts 1:9 it is said that He will come with the clouds, Mt. 24:30, 26:64: or in a cloud, Lk. 21:27. Cf. also Rev. 1:7. The cloud is white, symbol of His glory and purity; He comes to judge in righteousness.
 - 2) He is one like unto the Son of man." This is the familiar expression that describes Christ in His Messianic glory. It is derived from Dan. 7:13. Cf. Rev. 1;13. It is especially this expression that forbids us to think of any other than Christ Himself.
 - 3) "On His head a golden crown." The original word for crown here refers not to the royal diadem, but to the wreath of victory. Christ is Victor over the world and over all the powers of darkness. As such He here appears.
 - b. And that He appears here as the One that is about to judge the earth is symbolized by the sharp sickle He holds in His hand. The sickle was a crooked blade used for the ingathering of the harvest. Christ is the Harvester. The whole earth is His harvest-field.
3. Vs. 15. "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice," etc.
 - a. It is especially from the mention here of "another angel" that some conclude that also the One mentioned in vs. 14 must be an angel: because
 - 1) "Another angel" implies this.
 - 2) And this second angel issues a command to the One sitting on the white cloud. It would be quite inconceivable that an angel would bring a command to Christ, Who is exalted far above the angels.
 - b. However:
 - 1) "Another angel" distinguishes this one from the angels that were mentioned previously in this chapter.
 - 2) This angel does not command Christ but, evidently, merely serves as a messenger to bring the command to Him.
 - c. This angel "came out of the temple." cf. ch. 11:19. The temple is God's heavenly dwelling place, where He dwells as the covenant-God, Who will surely realize His heavenly covenant till His tabernacle shall be with men forever. That the angel came out of the temple signifies, therefore:
 - 1) That it is from the covenant-God that He carried the command to Christ: "Thrust in they sickle and reap."

- 2) That the covenant is about to be realized.
- d. It is from God, therefore, not from the angel, that the command to reap issues forth.
 - 1) Christ as the Mediator, in His human nature, is subordinate to the Father, His Servant. From Him Christ receives the command to reap.
 - 2) Besides, it is now “the day and the hour” which the Father only determines. The command specifies that it now is the time for the harvesting of the earth.
- e. As to this “harvest” we may note:
 - 1) That it must, evidently, be distinguished from the “vintage” which is described in vs. 17-20. The two are not the same, even though both deal with the end of the world
 - 2) That it represents the ingathering of the elect into the heavenly kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. This is often compared to a wheat harvest. Cf. Matt. 9:37, 38; 13:29, 30, 37ff; Mark 4:29; Luke 10:2.
 - 3) That there is a definite time for this harvest; it cannot take place at any time: “for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” The harvest, therefore, must be ripe. This implies:
 - a) That all the elect are born and have been redeemed and called.
 - b) That the church has fully served its purpose in the world; the measure of their works (bearing the testimony of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, etc.) and of their toil and suffering is completely filled
 - 4) That this “harvest” implies:
 - a) That the earthly career of the Church is ended, cut off. The Church is taken out of the earth.
 - b) That through the change of the then living believers, and through the glorious resurrection of the saints that are “asleep,” they are gathered into heavenly glory.
- 4. Vs. 16. “And he that sat on the clouds, etc. The ingathering of the elect is here presented as the work of Christ in person. He is the Sower of the wheat; His is the harvest.

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