

6/9/22 Rev. chapter 14, Grapes of Wrath

I want to start with a brief 'prophecy' update.

In Luke 12:54-56, Christ commanded us to try and interpret current events in the context of Biblical prophecy. With that in mind, some of what I want to share tonight is simply an oversight of events we are watching happen, and some of what I'll say tonight is an attempt to interpret these events in the light of prophecy.

The method of controlling a population by bringing order out of chaos has been around for a very long time. It's a method that is used because it works. And at this point in history, peace and safety are much more important to the citizens of this world than freedom and truth.

Here are a couple headlines which show the development of the confusion I'm talking about. I'll read the headlines but I'll also have the links included in the notes I send out.

First, from a recent article in Newsweek;

"47% of West Coast Democrats, 66% of Southern Republicans Want to Secede from the U.S."

<https://www.newsweek.com/47-west-coast-dems-66-southern-republicans-want-secede-us-1609875>

From The Business Insider report:

"Nearly half of Republicans say 'a time will come when patriotic Americans have to take the law into their own hands'"

<https://www.businessinsider.com/47-percent-gop-voters-patriots-take-law-own-hands-poll-2021-7>

This division of our nation into two camps, coupled with increased violence, started on the Left with BLM and Antifa which created a reaction on the Right. And the Biden administration's policies, the exposure of the vaccine, and the intrusion of the LGBTQ agenda into the public-school systems only intensified the anger of the Right; and they have been further emboldened by the possibility of Roe V. Wade being overturned. Both sides are ticked off at current food and gas prices and, of course, each side is blaming the other for all of this.

The threat this poses to the Church in terms of deception is due to contemporary pastors' neglect to clarify the true mission of the Church and their insistence on replacing it with Protestant and Catholic versions of contemporary dominionist, "Kingdom Now" theology. What this means is that the Church, including evangelical Christianity, is more focused on fixing earth and taking our country back than on maintaining our heavenly, eternal perspective.

(Col. 3:1-2) "Therefore, since you have been raised with Christ, strive for the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

(John 18:36-37) "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, My servants would fight . . . But now My kingdom is not of this realm.'"

The other danger in all this, is the false belief among evangelicals that the insights they are experiencing in seeing through the agenda behind Covid and the vaccine, the global threat of the New World Order and the Great Reset, are all evidence of "spiritual discernment". But there's no spirituality involved in any of this. When unbelievers who don't have the Holy Spirit are 'discerning' exactly the same things, it's safe to say that spiritual discernment is not involved in the exposure taking place.

In reality, I believe Satan is the one running the exposure camp, just as he is running the tyranny camp.

Besides the players you saw in the videos I sent out, some of the other names spearheading this movement include Michele Bachman, Franklin Graham, Jim Caviezel and literally hundreds of mega-church pastors. Curtis Bowers is also included and has called this movement, "The Great Christian Reset". He believes the Church's response to the World Economic Forum's Great Reset should be to essentially fight them. Though they would never admit it, or maybe even realize it, all of these individuals believe our struggle is against "flesh and blood" more than "principalities and powers".

The intended outcome of this growing movement is the saving our country, the securing of the freedoms we're losing and the defeat of the global elite's plan for world domination. But they won't succeed in this because God is judging, not delivering, America.

So, let's see if we can bottom-line this: The contemporary evangelical church is being deceived into pursuing an earthly rather than heavenly agenda. They are joining arms with patriotic, conservative unbelievers to "take back our country". And many of the so-called prophecy experts of our generation are sympathetic with this agenda and can't seem to see that this is actually a resurgence of dominionist theology.

They don't seem to realize that Satan is the puppet master controlling both the Trump and the Obama/Biden administrations in order to have a deception designed to be effective to liberals, conservatives, patriots and Christians – to everyone.

But the mission of the Church is not to save the world, but to call as many as possible out of it while there's still time.

Pastors and other evangelical leaders are giving stirring and inspirational speeches, convincing the people that if we rise up and expose the darkness, we will be standing on the firm foundation of righteousness and with God's help, we will win this fight and the Deep State will come tumbling down. This movement has drawn huge crowds and is sweeping the nation through rallies and alternative media coverage.

My whole purpose in sharing these things is to try and prevent any of us from losing our eternal perspective. Satan always tries to bring God's people down to earth; but the Holy Spirit is working to bring us increasingly into our upward calling in Christ;

(Phil. 3:13-15) "This one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should embrace this point of view."

We can't allow the enemy to move us away from the true mission of the Church in this world; a mission that has nothing to do with restoring or saving the United States or defeating the globalists. This is not our world, earthly kingdoms rise and fall, they always have. Our mission is simply to reach the lost, strengthen the body of Christ and move toward spiritual maturity.

Now, let's move into Rev. chapter 14. I want to begin our study of chapter 14 with an introduction by Walter Scott,

"The point at which we have arrived in these writings is a most sad one. Truth has fallen in the streets; the blood of God's saints shed as water; open defiance of God and proud boasting are witnessed and heard; good is almost banished from the earth, and faith in God is almost gone; (Luke 18:8) 'When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'

The Antichrist, ravages in Palestine among the saints, glorifies and deifies himself in Jerusalem and in the temple, deceives the world, and turns the whole prophetic scene into a playground for Satan.

The Beast in pride, persecution, and blasphemy is equally busy as Satan's powerful vice-regent in the wider sphere allotted him. Now is heard the often-repeated cry to Jehovah from the Jewish remnant, suffering more than all others under an accumulated load of distress, 'How long?' The touching appeal strikes a responsive chord in our hearts, as in spirit we take our part in the circumstances: as the Psalmist says, 'Why are You so far away, O Lord, why do you hide in times of trouble'? (Ps. 10:1)"

So, we enter chapter 14 in this environment.

Let's start by reading though the first three verses of chapter 14;

"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. 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. 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."

We know who the one hundred and forty-four thousand are because they're identified in Rev. 7:3-4;

"'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.' And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed."

In chapter 14 these children of Israel are in heaven; their ministry on earth is completed. The fact that all of them are in heaven shows, once again, the price

that has to be paid during the tribulation for taking the gospel to the nations – all were martyred. As Barnhouse puts it;

“These have known the breath of Satan in its last and most violent gasps, yet they now stand in the sight of God without blemish.”

We also saw, in Rev. 7:14-15 the fruit of their evangelistic labors;

“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.”

When we get to Rev. 14:6-7 we will see a new form of evangelism that is completely unprecedented in human history. But first, just a few comments on John’s reference to Zion.

Mount Zion is associated with the throne in heaven, but it will also be the throne of the Lamb on earth;

(Psalm 132:13-14) “For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.”

God has chosen Mount Zion as the place where Christ will be enthroned on earth at His return, when God’s dwelling place moves from heaven to earth.

(Psalm 2:6) “I have installed My King on Zion, upon My holy mountain.”

Spiritually Zion represents God’s heavenly city and throne.

(Heb. 12:22) “But you have come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.”

As related to the millennial kingdom on earth, it represents Jerusalem in Israel, “the city of the great King.”

Have you even just sat back and let your imagination imagine what it will be like in the Kingdom of our Lord when the whole earth has been brought to the perfection and beauty of Eden, and the nations and their cultures and their people travel in and out of Jerusalem for commerce and governmental decisions?

Jesus of Nazareth is ruling the world from the throne of His father David in Jerusalem; He's there, in Person. Israel is head of the nations and the overcomers of the Church age are sharing the throne of Christ and governing throughout the world in their assigned positions of authority.

The lion is lying down with the lamb; children are playing in the fields with every kind of wild beast, and none of the children are harmed.

Thinking about these realities allows us to see past this dark and pain filled world we are living in and see our future. Like Abraham, by faith, seeing that which is invisible. All of this is absolutely going to happen – and it will happen soon.

There are huge advantages to knowing the future – to knowing the truth.

I know we sometimes think this can't be real or even if it is, we are prodigals, who don't deserve that life. Are you worried about what you will say – and about what the Lord will say when you're standing before Him?

This author helps us to have the right perspective on the reality of what is coming. He's commenting on Luke 15:22, which says, "The father said to his servants, 'bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.'" Here's what he wrote;

"This prodigal had prepared a speech for his father, but he was so touched by the father's love that he could not finish his speech with the words, 'Make me as one of thy hired servants.' By carefully reading the context we find that he was given no chance to say so by his father. The father had heard enough. Without waiting for his son to finish his speech, he ordered his servants to quickly bring out the best robe to put on his son, the ring to be put on his hand, and shoes to be put on his feet. Such salvation as this reveals how God will treat you and me: it is not how we think we will be treated by Him. If it were according to our thinking, we would at best be a hired servant forever. We think of ourselves as sinners, but God declares we are children. We think we will perish, but He seats us at the table. There is absolutely no danger of saying too much about the grace of God. We think we are not worthy to be called sons, but He does exceedingly above that which we could ever think of."

Now, let move to Rev. 14:6-7;

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His Judgment is come. Worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters.’”

This is a first; an angel circling the globe offering a world in rebellion against God, one last chance to worship the true God instead of the Beast.

You would think there would be a massive, positive response to this gracious offer, especially in light of all that humanity has seen in the judgments that have pounded the earth.

However, like we saw in Rev. 9:20-21, repentance is not the response of the majority of those alive at this time;

“And the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and brass and stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

It doesn’t matter how convincing the demonstrations are that God gives, the citizens of this world have become a corporate expression of Pharaoh; their hearts are hardened and no amount of angelic appeal will soften them.

Just as a side-note.

(Matt. 24:14) “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

I know many Christians see this verse as being meant for the Church. They see this as one of several exhortations in the New Testament to the Church, to reach the nations with the gospel before we are raptured. But listen to the verses right after Matt. 24:14 (vs. 15-16);

“Therefore, when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

That’s the context. Matt. 24:14-16 isn’t talking about the end of the Church age, it’s talking about the mid-point of the Tribulation.

In Matt. 24:14 the Lord is *prophetically announcing* the work of the 144,000 and the angel, because as we've seen before, Matt. 24 is Jewish eschatology, not Church age eschatology.

Ok, back to our passage in Rev. 14. Let's move to vs. 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.'*"

This angel is announcing the fall of Babylon *prior to* its fulfillment. Babylon isn't destroyed until ch. 18. Whatever is determined in heaven, will inevitably be realized on earth.

Here's a verse that helps explain the prophetic technique the Lord is using;

(Gen. 41:32) "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God (present tense) and God will shortly bring it to pass (future tense)."

So, when God announces something in heaven that has not yet occurred on earth, since it is God Who said this, it is certain and will soon happen.

We'll spend more time on Babylon in chs. 17 & 18, but let's set the stage a little by looking at some of the things that characterize her.

First, as we'll see, the Beast's followers move from honor on earth to suffering in eternity; the Lamb's followers move from suffering on earth to honor and glory in heaven.

The whole world is going to see the truth of our Lord's words in Matt. 23:12, "*He that exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.*"

World religion at the end of this age is based on self-exaltation, seeking knowledge independent of God in order to become our own gods, making our own decisions about what is right and wrong, good and evil.

Just as the Beast is characterized by arrogance and violence, the followers of the Lamb will be characterized by humility and patience.

And all followers of anyone, if they are genuine in their allegiance, will eventually take on the nature and character of the One they follow.

So, after human history has run its course, this is what we see;

(Rev. 22:10-11) “And he said to me, ‘Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is impure let him be impure still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.’”

Back to the announcement of Babylon’s destruction; as we’ll see later in Revelation, Babylon represents a global religious system as well as a global system of commerce.

Babylon has drawn the hearts of the earth-dwellers away from loyalty to God, to commit spiritual fornication with the idolatry of the Beast system. Babylon is called “the mother of Harlots” in Rev. 17:5.

Here’s how one author put it;

“Babylon the great has strong attractions, not for the religiously minded only, but also for the many who are irreligious. And it is this power of allurements, this fascinating attractiveness of the world, its power to seduce the hearts of men away from God, who has a just claim to their undivided affection, that is emphasized by this vision.”

And David Wilkerson has a great illustration of the *opposite* of allegiance to the world;

“Recently, I prayed with a dear sister in the Lord who is dying of cancer; she has been in great pain for a long time, but what a beautiful testimony she is to all who know her. There is no complaining, no sorrow, no questioning of the Lord’s greatness and faithfulness. She told me she feels a magnetic pull toward Jesus, and that she is now ‘there with Christ’ more than here on earth. She blessed me with her rejoicing hope and rest in the Lord.

I once heard a very righteous minister say, ‘I just want to finish my work and get out of here.’ Some who heard him say this thought he was being unthankful for the gift of life, but the apostle Paul declared virtually the same thing. He wrote, ‘If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account’ (Philippians 1:22-24).”

But as I said, there's more to come. The Lord devoted two entire chapters to Babylon later in Revelation.

Now, Rev. 14:9-10a;

"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, 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.'"

Barnhouse described this section like this;

"Like a bitter drink, the wrath of God will be forced down the throats of those who have failed to recognize that He Who created them has a right to demand their subjection; and that if the subjection is not given, He has the right to judge them."

From the 60's onward, Satan has reproduced himself in humanity increasingly in each succeeding generation. We started with "Question Authority" bumper stickers in my generation, and now we are defunding entire police departments.

We now have a world in open rebellion against the authority of God.

We know the Bible clearly teaches submission to authority, but because of the influence of the enemy, we recoil at any thought of giving up our rights and submitting to the authorities God has set over us.

Listen to this advice from Alexander Solzhenitsyn;

"When Western society was established, it was based on the idea that each individual limited his own behavior. Everyone understood what he could do and what he could not do. Since then, the only thing we have been developing is rights, rights, rights, at the expense of (responsibility)."

"A society with unlimited rights is incapable of standing in adversity. If we do not wish to be ruled by a coercive authority, then each of us must rein himself in... A stable society is achieved not by balancing opposing forces but by conscious self-limitation: by the principle that we are always duty-bound to defer to the sense of moral justice."

God has given authorities to ensure that those who do *not* practice "self-limitation" will not be allowed to harm those who do.

So, what about the “coercive authorities” Solzhenitsyn mentioned? Do we have to obey them?

Did Jesus rebel against the tyrannical authority of Pilate or the Sanhedrin (the “Deep State” of the 1st Century)? Did the apostles rebel against Rome? No, all of them were led as sheep to the slaughter; they did not love their own lives unto death.

Someone might say, “There *were* instances when they *did* rebel against governmental authority, for example;

(Acts 5:27-29) When they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, did not we straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? and, yet you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.”

Whose rights was Peter defending, his own, or God's? It's not an issue of Peter asserting *his* right to preach the gospel, it's Peter defending *God's* right to have the gospel preached - and *Peter's* responsibility to obey Him.

Ok, back to our passage in Revelation 14. The verses are 10b & 11;

“He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 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.”

I'm going to save this passage for our discussion of the Lake of Fire in Rev. 20.

So, now, we're in Rev. 14:12-13;

“Here is the patient perseverance of the saints. Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’”

A few weeks ago, I came across this quote by Sparks that perfectly describes what John is telling us in this passage. Sparks was commenting on 2 Tim. 2:12 which says; “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. . .” Here's what Sparks wrote;

“You know, friends, the idea has been very common in Christianity that it's a great and wonderful thing to be mightily used of the Lord; To be a great evangelist! To be a great teacher! Let me tell you, that's an entirely false conception! The truth is that those who serve the Lord must truly go through the deepest agonies of suffering... Balances are truly kept by God: extra suffering, extra usefulness; little suffering, little usefulness. That's how God keeps His balances. You may be having a more or less easy time, I don't want to dishearten you by saying it may not always be so, but if you really want to be of greater use to the Lord, remember it may be by a deeper discipline of the Lord. And if you're having a particularly difficult time, most likely it's because the Lord is going to meet needs more fully through you. As Amy Carmichael once said, ‘those who suffer most, have most to give.’”

The Tribulation saints, like us, have to patiently endure the pressures and trials of being God's representatives in a world that Jesus, in John 15:18, said ‘hates Him and hates His followers.’ To the extent that the world of *humans* can't get to us, our *spiritual* enemies will make sure to bring as much sorrow and pain into our lives as possible.

The outcome for those who endure is that their “works will follow them” – which simply means exactly what Heb. 6:10 tells us; “God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown for His name.”

Our faithfulness here results in incredible honor in the kingdom of our Lord.

Our last section of Rev. 14 describes the harvest judgment of the nations;

(Rev. 14:14-20) “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. 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.’ So, He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 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 sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ 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. 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 (appx. 5 ft. high for 200 miles)."

There's a passage in Genesis that explains to us how God determines the *timing* for events like this.

(Gen. 15:12-16) "Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: 'Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also, the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete (or lit. "full to overflowing")."

God had His eye on *all* the Canaanites, and when they became so evil and corrupt that to allow them to continue to propagate and spread in the earth would have been like allowing cancer to spread throughout a body. It was time for them to be destroyed, so the rest of humanity could be spared the influence of what they had become.

God did this in the flood, in Sodom and Gomorrah, and in Rev. 14 He's announcing that He will do this again at the end of the Tribulation.

At that time, following the devastation of Armageddon, those who survive will be placed on two sides of the scales. Those who aligned with the Antichrist and those who remained faithful to Christ. The 'tares' are burned (killed); the 'wheat' goes into the Millennial Kingdom to populate the earth.

And as we'll see in Rev. 21 & 22, following the 1000-year reign of Christ in the Millennial kingdom, this current heaven and earth will be destroyed by fire and a new heaven and earth are to be created.

These comments by Sauer can help us keep our perspective on all this;

"The throne of God will be on the new earth. Thereby earth will become as heaven is, for where the throne of God is, there is heaven. Then in this renewed, transformed world, God will, in the ages to come, show to His saints the unbounded riches of His grace in kindness toward us (Eph. 2:7).

Out of His infinite inexhaustible fulness will He cause to stream forth one glory after another in an endless inconceivable sequence of God-filled ages.”

It’s difficult for us to comprehend what “an *endless* sequence of God-filled ages” will be like. But we know that the primary characteristic of *all* of them, is to be the infinite ways God intends to demonstrate His grace in kindness to us. That’s our destiny once our current history has ended.