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ANGELS OF JUDGMENT

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
REVELATION 14:9-20
NUMBER 24

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REVELATION 14:9-20 "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and 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 ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto 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 that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And 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, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress; even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

In verses 6-7 of this chapter we saw the judgment of the first angel. God will give every member of the human race a fair chance. These verses give us the principle that grace always comes before judgment. In verse 8 we saw the second angel and this was judgment against internationalism.

REVELATION 14:9 "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand" In these verses 9-18 we will see judgments against those who adhere to religion. First the system is judged and then all those who adhere to the system is judged.

"If any man worship the beast" is a first class condition and means that they do worship the beast. He is the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. He is the political leader of a confederation of ten nations. This is the worship of a person and the system he represents. "Receiving his mark" refers to his endorsement. Those who have his mark will be able to buy food and property and will be able to engage in business or take part in any of life's activities. You have to be "in the circle" in order to get ahead during the rule of this dictator. Behind all of this is a principle. In this ten-nation federation there is the union of church and state. The Bible is perfectly clear on this point that there can be no personal freedom where this condition exists. It is only in a nation where the church and the state are separate that people are free to live as they desire and speak as they desire and vote as they desire. No system should come along and try to combine divine institutions and human institutions. Divine institutions are for the whole human race. You can't combine human institutions with Christian institutions without causing tragic situations.

As an illustration, consider the local church. The local church is a divine institution and it is to teach doctrine and it allows people to use their own volition. Marriage is not a Christian institution, it is a divine institution provided for the

whole human race. Marriage is not for Christians only but for every member of the human family. In a healthy nation you have a certain number of believers. They are said to be "the salt of the earth". We need to keep these things very clear in our minds.

Let us think of the wedding ceremony as an illustration. In a very strict sense having a wedding in the church is a combination of the church and the state. Let us always remember that getting married in a church does not guarantee to the parties involved that they will have a happy and constructive marriage. Many people think that if they have a wedding in a church it will give them good luck. But let us remember an elaborate marriage ceremony in a church doesn't make a marriage go. Let us be sure that there is a line of demarcation between Christianity and the State. Another illustration of this principle is the nation of India and their worship of the cow. Under Buddhism the people of India worship the cow and will not eat beef. Thus we see religion ruling a nation and the results have been tragic. There are enough cows in India to feed the hungry multitudes but their religion causes them to pass the opportunity by and many thousands starve to death every year.

Therefore in this verse we are face to face with the curse of the union of church and state.

REVELATION 14:10 "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" This is judgment and the lake of fire. This is the figure--to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Later on we will see the cup of the wrath of God. Jesus spoke of "the cup" and asked the disciples if they were able to drink of this cup. They said they were, but they didn't understand what Jesus was really talking about. Christ was the only one who was able to drink of that cup, for in it was poured all the sins of the human race. In those last three hours on the cross, Jesus drank from that cup and he drank down the sins of every man. So here is the cup of God's wrath and fury and these unbelievers will drink of that cup of God's wrath. So the principle is this--unless you let Christ drink the cup for you, you will have to drink of the cup yourself. Accept the fact that Christ drank of the cup for you in his first coming, or else in his second coming, you will have to drink of the cup of his judgment.

Here is a goblet full of poison. You either trust Christ to drink it for you, or in the end you will have to drink it for yourself. So the question comes to these Tribulational people--who is going to drink the cup, you or Christ? Christ is judgment for your sins or you are in judgment alone. Those who adhere to the warning are saved, and those who do not are lost.

And remember, this is concentrated wrath. Religion is the worst evil in all the earth. Saul of Tarsus was the worst sinner in all the earth and he was the most religious man in the earth. He was legalistic and highly religious but when he met Christ all this changed. "The cup of his indignation" refers to the fact that God is indignant because of his propitiation. Man is the object of God's love, and salvation had been provided for every man. Love comes from the grace of God; but man is sinful and God cannot let his love flow through to sinful man. Righteousness and justice, two of the characteristics of God, both make it impossible for God to condone and accept sin. So Christ went to the cross to solve the problem and God's righteousness and justice were both satisfied by what Christ did there. When a person rejects

the salvation provided for him at the cross then the indignation of God the Father falls on him and he gets a full blast of the righteousness and justice of God. So at the beginning of the Millennium the believers will enter the 1,000 year reign with Christ, but the unbeliever will be cast off the earth, just as they were in the days of Noah. The unbeliever is taken off the earth, the believer is left. In the rapture of the church it is just the opposite when the believer is taken and the unbeliever is left. This is the way to distinguish between the rapture of the church and the Second Advent of Christ. The rapture is a time of resurrection and blessing, the Second Advent is a time of judgment.

MATTHEW 3:11-12 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

LUKE 3:16-17 "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."

These passages give a short description of the baptism of fire. The wheat and the tares are separated. Jews and Gentiles are to be dealt with separately. In Matthew 25 the word "Nations" refers to Gentiles and the judgment for the Jews is dealt with in Ezekiel 20.

"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone" means that they will be gathered up and thrown into the lake of fire. This will be done in the presence of Christ and the believing angels.

REVELATION 14:11 "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Please notice that their punishment lasts forever and forever. The fire is a place called hades. Paradise and Abraham's bosom is the place where the Old Testament saints have been placed, but at the resurrection of Christ their spirits are transferred to the third heaven. So these places of paradise and Abraham's bosom no longer exist, only hades. The Hebrew word is Sheol, which means torments. At the end of the Millennium, Rev. 20:13 tells us that hades will deliver up the dead, they will be given resurrection bodies and cast into the lake of fire forever and forever.

This beast they worship is the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. He is an outstanding personality and a genius. Daniel 7 and 9 and 11 and Joel 2 and 3 describe this beast as a very attractive person. The second basis of this attraction is the image placed in the temple. The mark here refers to an identification tag of some kind and is the mark of his economic and political system. There is no restraint on their negative volition. The Holy Spirit, who has restrained them, will be removed. Worship the beast means to worship his personality. Worship his image means to worship the system. To worship the mark means to worship his economic system.

REVELATION 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

The patience of the saints refers to those who believe in Christ during this terrible Tribulation time. No matter how great the pressure they will continue to trust and have faith. They will be persecuted as no people have ever been persecuted before. They will rely on such passages as--

PSALM 55:22 "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

1 PETER 5:7 "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

The word "patience" is used here for they are under maximum pressure, yet they keep their cool. They are relaxed and live of faith. When you put something like this into the Lord's hands, you leave the timing to him. They waited under pressure. One thinks of ISAIAH 40:31 "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

"Faith in Jesus" is the right wording here. Jesus is used here for this is a human word and refers to his life on the earth and his crucifixion and his resurrection. "Keep the commandments" has the idea of keeping something that belongs to you. They guard Bible doctrine.

REVELATION 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" refers to the fact that a lot of believers are going to die in the Tribulation and God will provide dying grace for them. "Die" is a present, active, participle and means they will not die suddenly but will die from torture. The word "rest" is used here for salvation. The moment you are saved you are positionally at rest already. At the moment of salvation, the Lord does 34 things for you and those 34 things are perpetuated forever. Salvation takes only one second and then in all the rest of your life nothing can be done to take this salvation away from you. You can't commit any sin that will take away your salvation, for your sin is not greater than God's plan. You can't lose your salvation if you sin, and if you sin, all you are asking for is divine judgment. Salvation is of the Lord and not of a person, and if it were from a person then we could lose it easily.

The idea for the Christian is this--remember, you don't have any problems for they are in the Lord's hands and he is well able to care for them. "That they may rest" is a purpose clause and the purpose is no fear, no worry, no frustration of any kind. And the result is that production will always follow such a life as this.

REVELATION 14:14-16 "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto 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 that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." This is the judgment of the fourth angel.

The one like unto the Son of man is Jesus. He wears the golden crown and has the right to judge from his unlimited atonement. The sharp sickle expresses judgment. These judgments which follow here were authorized by Jesus Christ. They have rejected him, have taken things out of his hands, and have practiced anti-semitism. Notice that these are military judgments. This is the principle of divine intervention and Christ is going to defeat the whole military organization of this beast.

The "Thrust in thy sickle and reap" simply means that the time has come for God to go into action. We will pick up the details of Christ's activity in putting in the sickle in Revelation 19:15-21.

REVELATION 14:17 "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." This means another angel of a different kind.

REVELATION 14:18 "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." This angel calls attention to the fact that when Christ puts in the sickle that the grapes are fully ripe. This carries with it the idea that they have had every opportunity to be saved and they refused every opportunity.

REVELATION 14:19 "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." This means the time of judgment has arrived and the trampling of the grapes is a picture of the blood of these who will be slain.

REVELATION 14:20 "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." This is a fantastic slaughter and the blood ran for 176 miles. The slaughter of the King of the North is told in Daniel 11:40-46. The slaughter of the King of the West in Daniel 11:44. The slaughter of the King of the East is told in Revelation 16:12. This is also described in Isaiah 63:1-3. This is the prologue to the Armageddon Campaign.