

REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 3 THE FINAL CURTAIN

STUDY ONE

A Surprising Preview of Coming Attractions

Revelation 14:1–13

The angel sounds his message and reveals that God takes full responsibility. I love that this grand book has a great ending. I'm so old-fashioned . . . I love it when stories end well.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THROUGHOUT history, many cultures have celebrated seasons of plenty and peace, progress and prosperity through *parades*. As you stand by and experience the celebration, you can't help but feel the joy bursting from the beat of the drums, the music of the band, the flow of the dancers, and the cheers of the crowd.

In the ancient world, when one nation defeated another, the conquering army would march back to its capital in a procession led by their returning king. The whole city awaited eagerly for their arrival. When the masses glimpsed the army parade, they would run out of the city gates to greet the warriors and celebrate.

Nestled within the center of the book of Revelation is the picture of a heavenly parade made up of angelic beings singing songs of hope and raising shouts of praise to God in celebration of His victory over Satan, sin, and death.

You might be surprised, however, to see this heavenly march is *not* led by the image of a mighty warrior-king. No, the one at the front of the crowd is a slaughtered Lamb, and following Him are those who suffered and died for Him. Yet this is no funeral procession. Rather, it is an everlasting, joy-filled parade that proclaims the good news of the Lamb to the whole world.

Let's join the celebration!



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

When John described his vision of the heavenly throne room, he noted that the angelic beings worshiped God “day after day and night after night” (*Revelation 4:8*). Take a moment now to participate in the eternal song of praise to your good and loving Father.

Father, I praise You for what You have done and for what You will one day do. Yet I recognize that You are working right now to do something amazing in and through me. Help me yield to the Holy Spirit to transform me as I open Your Word today. In Jesus’ triumphant name I pray. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Lamb’s main foe in the war depicted in Revelation is the dragon—Satan—along with its two closest companions: the beast and the false prophet (see *Revelation 13*). As with any war, each side bore a sort of insignia that allowed everyone to know who stood on which side. According to *Revelation 13:16–17*, how did the world know who fought for the dragon?

Those who bore this mark did so only because they worshiped the beast and swore allegiance to the dragon. In *14:1–13*, John welcomed the slaughtered Lamb’s army in its full heavenly glory. And though John included no battle record, this army proceeded in joy because the Lamb had already claimed the victory.



Observation: The Procession of the Lamb

As you read of the procession of this slaughtered Lamb in *Revelation 14:1–13*, imagine yourself in the heavenly crowd participating in the celebration of the Lamb’s victory. Hear the songs of praise. Feel the joy. And savor the moment.¹

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A Portrait of Triumphant Saints—Revelation 14:1–5

According to *Revelation 14:1*, where was the Lamb standing and who followed His victory parade? What uniform did this army wear that distinguished it from the beast’s soldiers?

Like any great parade, this heavenly celebration was accompanied by music—a symphony of “many harpists” (*Revelation 14:2*) and a “great choir” (*14:3*) as loud as “the roar of mighty ocean waves” (*14:2*). According to *14:3*, who participated in this chorus? According to *14:4–5*, why were they considered worthy to sing this song of victory?

A Series of Heavenly Announcements—Revelation 14:6–13

The slaughtered Lamb led the march through heaven, and behind Him walked the four living beasts, the twenty-four elders, and the 144,000 saints. Next in line were three angels, who each added his unique voice to the celestial chorus.

In *Revelation 14:6*, John saw an angel carrying what he describes as the “eternal gospel” (NASB)—the message of the good news of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection that is available for *all* people. What message did the *first* angel proclaim regarding this eternal gospel in *14:7*?

What message of judgment did the *second* angel proclaim against Mount Zion’s rival city in *14:8*?

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What message of doom did the *third* angel proclaim in [Revelation 14:9–11](#)? What consequence would befall those who worshiped the beast, accepted his wicked mark, and marched in the dragon's army?

Finally, the music concluded with a voice from heaven. What message of blessing did this voice proclaim in [14:13](#)?

When you walk away from a parade, your heart sometimes carries with it new emotions—a weightiness of the significance of the celebration. Now let's explore the immediate significance of this parade for all who follow Christ.



Interpretation: Following the Lamb

In interpretation, we use our observations to determine the meaning of the text and to discern timeless theological truths. To aid you in the process, use your Bible-study tools, like Pastor Chuck Swindoll's commentary, *Insights on Revelation*, or [Constable's Notes](#) at netbible.org.² Keep these resources handy as you answer the following questions.

In the Lamb's heavenly procession, the 144,000 sealed believers followed Him wherever He went ([Revelation 14:4](#)). Based on the context of this passage, *how* did these believers follow and imitate the Lamb? What does it look like to follow Jesus—not only as the risen King but also as the slaughtered Lamb—today? For help answering this question, see [Revelation 14:12–13](#).

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The series of heavenly announcements commenced with a proclamation of the “eternal gospel” for all people (*Revelation 14:6*). The term *gospel* refers to “good news.” The declarations that followed the first, however, sounded more like bad omens than glad tidings. In what sense were the messages of the second and third angel truly good news—not just for believers but for all of creation?

If you and I are corrupt like our times are corrupt, we will have no message for those who are lost. If our mouths are filled with lies and if we are known as individuals who lack integrity, no one will listen to what we have to say about the Lord Jesus. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Zion versus Babylon

Revelation 14:1–13 depicts two rival armies: the Lamb of Mount Zion (*Revelation 14:1*) and the dragon of Babylon (*14:8*). Each of these locales plays essential significance in the Old Testament, and the contrast between these two regions would have jumped out to John’s readers. Let’s correlate these themes to understand John’s message.

Read *Psalms 48:1–8*. What does this passage reveal about Mount Zion? What city was built there? What is God’s relationship with this mountain? What happens to enemy armies that seek to assault Mount Zion?

What does Babylon represent? Remember, Babylon was the wicked empire that desecrated Jerusalem, dragged the people of God into exile, demanded they adopt pagan practices, and defied the one true God with their idolatrous worship. If you have time, read through *Daniel 1–6* to see these atrocities in action.

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How would John's readers have thought about this image of Babylon? How should Christians reading Revelation today understand the symbolism of a fallen Babylon?

How does seeing this contrast between Mount Zion and Babylon help you better understand the message of *Revelation 14:1–13* and the Lamb's victory parade?

Babylon represents the political, economic, and religious system of the day. That system is wicked to the core—totally evil. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: The Leader of the Parade

In John's vision, he saw the slaughtered Lamb *first*. Jesus led this procession down from Mount Zion to claim victory over Satan, sin, and death through His own death and resurrection. The image of this parade reveals an essential timeless truth that we can apply to our lives today:

GOD TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY

Though it may feel like Satan, that sinister dragon, has his claws wrapped around this world, we know that Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb, will claim final victory and set right everything Satan has corrupted. We know this because God is *good* and because He is *sovereign*.

How does this truth offer comfort to your soul as you find yourself caught in the crossfire of the war of the Lamb and the dragon? What does it look like practically for you to step out in faith in light of this truth?

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Although God takes full responsibility, we must still decide and act, risk and respond. Our actions matter! What role does your own personal accountability play in the grander picture of God's sovereign rule? In what areas of your life is He leading you to take responsibility for your thoughts, words, and actions?

The Lamb has won the victory! Let this truth cause joy to erupt in your heart. But don't keep the excitement to yourself. Share this truth with disheartened believers and with discouraged nonbelievers. Invite them to join the parade and march together into an eternal celebration of what God has done for us.



A FINAL PRAYER

As you conclude your time in God's Word, say this prayer from Pastor Chuck:

Thank You, our Father, for taking full responsibility over our lives and our times. Thank You for the reassurance that You are never confused, never frustrated, never at a loss to know what to do next, never surprised, never learning, never in need, always faithful, always sovereign, always good, always just. You are over it all and in it all and through it all. In Jesus' victorious name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the article, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014).

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer and content strategist, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2003, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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