

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 357 – December 23rd – Revelation 14:1-20

Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation

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| Morris, Leon | <i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969 |
| Mounce, Robert H | <i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977 |
| Peterson, Eugene H | <i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991 |
| Witherington, Ben | <i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003 |

14:1-5

Witherington writes that these verses "involve a complete contrast to what we have just heard. Here the real Lamb is standing on Mt Zion and with him the 144,000 who bear his name and that of the Father upon their foreheads. As I have argued, 144,000 is probably a symbol for the entire people of God, both Jew and Gentile in Christ. Caird's explanation of this text is as follows: (1) John is alluding to Ps 2; and (2) what is being envisioned is the preparation of the army of the Lord for the final battle."

Verse 1

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ ἄρνιον ἑστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος Σιών, καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες ἔχουσα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb
ἑστὸς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s ἵστημι
stand

ὄρος, ους n mountain
ἑκατον one hundred
τεσσαρακοντα forty
τέσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four
χιλιας, αδος f (group of) a thousand
ἔχουσαι Verb, pres act ptc, f nom pl ἔχω
ὄνομα, τος n name
γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s γραφω write
μετώπων, ου n see 13:16

A picture of the heavenly Jerusalem. The 144,000, as in ch 7, is a picture of all of the saints. Mounce says that the repetition of the same number as ch 7 "is to point out that not one of them has been lost."

Verse 2

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἦν ἡκουσα ὡς καθαρωδῶν καθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν.

ὑδωρ, ὑδατος n water

Cf. Ezek 1:24.

βροντη, ης f thunder

Cf. 1:15; 6:1; 19:6.

καθαρωδος, ου m harpist
καθαριζω play a harp
κιθαρα, ας f harp

Verse 3

καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὡς ψῆδὴν καινὴν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν τεσσάρων ζῶων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο μαθεῖν τὴν ψῆδὴν εἰ μὴ αἱ ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες, οἱ ἠγορασμένοι ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

ᾄδω sing

ψῆδη, ης f song, song of praise

καινος, η, ον new

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

τέσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

ζωον, ου n living creature

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one

δυναμαι can, be able to

μαθεῖν Verb, aor act infin μαθαναω learn

ἠγορασμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

ἀγοραζω buy, redeem

Cf. Rev 5:9. The theme is salvation, hence none but the redeemed are able to sing it.

Verse 4

οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐμολύνθησαν, παρθένοι γάρ εἰσιν· οὗτοι οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες τῷ ἄρνίῳ ὅπου ἂν ὑπάγῃ· οὗτοι ἠγοράσθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπαρχὴ τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἄρνίῳ,

γυνη, αικος f woman

ἐμολύνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
 μολυνω defile, make unclean
 παρθενος, ου f virgin; m undefiled man

I.e. Those who have kept themselves from fornication and adultery – perhaps particularly that associated with pagan religion. On 'virgin' as an epithet for the people of God, cf. 2 Kings 19:21; Lam 2:13; Jer 8:13; Amos 5:2.

Witherington argues that this passage is about preparation for war (see above). He writes, that John "is drawing on the provisions in the Pentateuch for preparing for a holy war (Deut 20; 23:9-10; 1 Sam 21:5; 2 Sam 11:11). Those going to battle were expected to abstain from sexual intercourse. But in Revelation the issue is probably not physical but spiritual.

Believers are not to give in to the great whore Babylon (i.e., Rome) and to the adultery (i.e., idolatry) that she requires."

ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany
 όπου adv. where; όπου ἄν wherever
 ὑπαγω go

I.e. in all his ways. Cf. Mk 8:34.

ἀπαρχη, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

As Christ himself is the firstfruits (1 Cor 15:20,23).

Witherington writes, "If these martyrs are only the first fruits, John had vision beyond his own immediate situation of the rest of the harvest to follow. What is to come after that will increasingly preoccupy the author as the book progresses."

Verse 5

καὶ ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν οὐχ εὐρέθη ψεῦδος· ἄμωμοί εἰσιν.

στομα, τος n mouth
 εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρισκω
 find, discover
 ψευδος, ους n lie, untruth, falsehood

Cf. Zeph 3:13.

ἄμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish

Maybe a reference to the sacrifice which was acceptable to God. Christ himself is the ἄμωμος offering (1 Peter 1:19, cf. Heb 9:14).

Verse 6

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσει ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν,

ἄλλος, η, ο another
 πετομαι fly
 μεσουρανημα, τος n mid-heaven, high in the sky

αἰώνιος, ον eternal, everlasting
 εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

The final appeal before judgement.

καθημαι sit, live

ἔθνος etc. see on 5:9

Verse 7

λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

φοβεομαι fear, reverence
 δότε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl διδομι
 δόξα, ης f glory
 ὥρα, ας f hour, moment
 κρισις, εως f judgement
 προσκυνεω worship
 ποιήσαντι Verb, aor act ptc, m dat s ποιεω
 θαλασσα, ης f sea
 πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well
 ὑδωρ, ὑδατος n water

This appeal to a pagan people is similar to Paul's appeal to the inhabitants of Lystra in Acts 14:15.

Verse 8

Καὶ ἄλλος δεῦτερος ἄγγελος ἠκολούθησεν λέγων· Ἔπεσεν, ἔπεσεν Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἣ ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

δυετερος, α, ον second
 ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany
 ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιπτω fall, fall down, fall to one's ruin

Cf. Is 21:9. In the context of the early church 'Babylon' is a reference to Rome (cf. 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21). For the phrase 'Babylon the great' cf. Dan 4:30.

"It is a symbol for the spirit of godlessness which in every age lures men away from the worship of the Creator. It is the final manifestation of secular humanism in its attempt to destroy the remaining vestiges of true religion. Society set free from God is its own worst enemy." Mounce .

οἶνος, ου m wine
 θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
 πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality
 πεπότικεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ποτιζω
 give to drink

Cf. Jer 51:6-10. "The heady potion of Rome's seductive practices inevitably involves the wrath of God." Mounce.

Verse 9

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ,

τρίτος, η, ον third

προσκυνεω see v.7

θηριον, ου n animal, beast

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image

χαραγμα, τος n mark, stamp

μετωπον, ου n forehead

ἢ οἱ

χειρ, χειρος f hand

A counter proclamation to 13:15,17.

Verse 10

καὶ αὐτὸς πίνεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἀγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου.

πίνεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s πινω
drink

Cf. Job 21:20; Ps 75:8; Is 51:17; Jer 25:15-38.

κεκρασμένου Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen
s κεραννυμι mix, pour

ἀκρατος, ον undiluted, full strength

ποτηριον, ου n cup

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

"The angel is saying that those who defect to emperor worship will drink of the wine of God's wrath poured out in full strength, untempered by the mercy and grace of God." Mounce.

βασανισθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s
βασανίζω torment

πυρ, ος n fire

θειον, ου n sulphur, brimstone

"A figure taken from God's judgement upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24; 20:10; 21:8)." Mounce.

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb

"Christians had borne the shame of public derision and opposition; soon their antagonists will suffer before a more august gathering." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "Recall that this material began with a call to repentance. These horrific effects are not inevitable unless one refuses to repent and to cease following the dragon."

Verse 11

καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

καπνος, ου m smoke

βασανισμος, ου m torture, torment

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
eternity

ἀναβαινω go up, ascend

In awful comparison with the ceaseless worship of the four living creatures in 4:8.

ἀναπαυσις, εως f relief, rest

νυξ, νυκτος f night

Mounce responds to those who are critical of such pictures of hell saying, "The teaching of the NT on the eternal consequences of wilfully rejecting the love of God as manifested in the death of Christ for the sin of man does not allow us to put the doctrine aside as sub-Christian or reinterpret it in such a way as to remove the abrasive truth of eternal punishment. It was Jesus more than anyone else who spoke of the fires of hell. Better to enter life maimed, he said, than having two hands 'go to hell, to the unquenchable fire' (Mk 9:43-44). The story of the rich man tormented in the fires of hell who begged to have Lazarus dip his finger in water to cool his tongue (Lk 16:19-31) was told by Jesus. After due allowance is made for the place of symbolism in apocalyptic, what remains in these verses is still the terrifying reality of divine wrath poured out upon all those who persist in following Antichrist. What the angel has proclaimed so vividly must not be undermined by euphemistic redefinition."

Verse 12

Ἶδτε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

ᾧδε adv here

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Cf. 13:10.

τηρεω keep, observe

ἐντολη, ης f command, instruction

πιστις, εως f faith

"The implication is that this is the way to avoid the previously mentioned fate. Eternal issues are at stake when it comes to how one lives one's life and in whom one places one's ultimate faith." Witherington.

Verse 13

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης·
Γράψον· Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ
ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι. ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα,
ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, τὰ γὰρ
ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

γράφον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφῶ
μακάριος, α, ον blessed, happy

The second of seven beatitudes to be found in
Revelation (cf. 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6;
22:7,14).

νεκρός, α, ον dead
ἀποθνήσκω die
ἄρτι now, at the present

The meaning must be that they are blessed
from the moment of their death.
Witherington writes, "It is possible that these
last two Greek words are one word – ἀπαρτι.
If the latter is the case, as Beasley-Murray
argues, then what is meant is assuredly rather
than henceforth. Thus the saying would simply
be emphatic and without time reference. It is
equally plausible that here as in Rev 13, where
the first fruits were mentioned, John is
expressing his belief that he lives on the eve of
a significant number of martyrdoms. He would
be thinking of what their faithful witness unto
death would accomplish from now on."

ναί yes, yes indeed, certainly
ἀναπαήσονται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 pl
ἀναπαύω give relief; midd relax, rest
κόπος, ου m work, labour, trouble

I.e. not simply from mundane labours but also
from the troubles that have arisen from their
steadfastness to the faith.

ἀκολουθεῶ follow, accompany

God will not forget what they have done and
have endured (cf. Heb 6:10). "Their works
follow them in the sense that there can be no
separation between what a man is and what he
does." Mounce.

Verse 14

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ νεφέλη λευκή, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν
νεφέλην καθήμενον ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου,
ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον
χρυσοῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ δρέπανον ὀξύ.

νεφέλη, ης f cloud
λευκός, η, ον white, shining
καθημαί sit
ὅμοιος, α, ον like

The description would seem to demand that
this is the risen Christ (cf. 1:13). "The
background is Daniel 7:13-14) in which 'one
like unto a son of man' comes with the clouds
of heaven to receive universal and everlasting
dominion." Mounce.

Some, however, such as Morris, argue that this
is an angel because of the way he is addressed
and commanded by another angel in the
following verse. Mounce replies that the angel
of v.15 is simply a messenger who acts as
herald of the command of God.

κεφαλή, ης f head
στεφανός, ου m wreath, crown
χρυσός, η, ον made of gold, golden
χειρ, χεῖρος f hand
δρέπανον, ου n sickle
ὀξύς, εια, υ sharp

Verse 15

καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ
κράζων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλη τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τῆς
νεφέλης· Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου καὶ
θέρισον, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι, ὅτι
ἐξηράνθη ὁ θερισμὸς τῆς γῆς.

ἄλλος, η, ο another
ναός, ου m temple, sanctuary

The command comes from the very presence
of God.

κραζῶ cry out, call out
πέμπω send
δρέπανον, ου n sickle
θερίσον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s θερίζω
reap, harvest
ὥρα, ας f hour, moment
θερίσαι Verb, aor act infin θερίζω
ἐξηράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ξηραίνω
dry up; pass be ripe
θερισμός, ου m harvest, crop

Witherington writes, "In the OT both harvest
and vintage are regularly used as symbols of
judgment either on God's people or on their
foes (cf. Hos 6:11; Lam 1:15; Jer 51:33).
Possibly the closest parallel is Joel 3:9-14,
which refers to a double harvest of grain and
grapes. Isa 63:1-6 speaks of God returning
from the winepress with garments dyed with
the blood of the heathen. These images are
here combined with Dan 7:13, the familiar son
of man image."

Verse 16

καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης τὸ
δρέπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐθερίσθη ἡ
γῆ.

βάλλω throw, cast
ἐθερίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s θερίζω

The picture here is probably of judgment, not
of a mixed harvest of wheat and tares.

Verse 17

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ἔχων καὶ αὐτὸς δρέπανον ὄξυ.

A second and more graphic picture of judgement is presented in vv 17-20. This second picture is of the fierceness of the wrath of God against the ungodly.

δρέπανον, ου n see v.14

ὄξυς, εια, υ see v.14

Verse 18

καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, ὁ ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός, καὶ ἐφώνησεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ ἔχοντι τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξυ λέγων· Πέμψον σου τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξυ καὶ τρύγησον τοὺς βότρυας τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἤκμασαν αἱ σταφυλαὶ αὐτῆς.

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

"As the altar is elsewhere connected with the prayers of the righteous (6:9-10; 8:3-5), we are probably to understand here that the prayers of the faithful play a definite part in bringing about God's judgement upon the wicked." Mounce.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. 8:3-5.

φωνεω call, call out

πεμπω send

τρυγαω gather, pick

βοτρυς, υος m bunch (of grapes)

ἀμπελος, ου f vine

ἀκμαζω become ripe, ripen

σταφυλη, ης f (bunch of) grapes

Verse 19

καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐτρύγησεν τὴν ἀμπελον τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν.

ληνος, ου f wine press

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

For this picture of judgment elsewhere in Scripture, cf. Is 63:3; Lam 1:15; Joel 3:13; Rev 19:15ff.

Verse 20

καὶ ἐπατήθη ἡ ληνὸς ἔξωθεν τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ληνοῦ ἄχρι τῶν χαλινῶν τῶν ἵππων ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων.

πατεω trample

ἐξωθεν adv outside

πολις, εως f city, town

Probably meaning Jerusalem. "Judgement 'outside the city' ... must certainly be an allusion to the One who suffered for the sins of man 'outside the gate' (Heb 13:12; cf. Jn 19:20). Those who refuse the first judgement must take part in the second." Mounce.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as

χαλινος, ου m bit, bridle

ἵππος, ου f horse

σταδιοι, ων m (pl) stades, furlongs (about 200 metres)

χιλιοι, αι, α thousand

ἑξακοσιοι, αι, α six hundred

The number of stadia is the subject of several textual variants. "The distance, 1600 furlongs (some 184 miles), has been variously interpreted. Geographically it is the approximate length of Palestine. Symbolically it squares the number four (the number of the earth: 'four corners of the earth,' 7:1; 20:8; 'four winds of the earth,' 7:1) and multiplies it by the square of ten (the number of completeness; cf. 5:11; 20:6). The judgement of God, portrayed ideally as taking place outside of the holy city, extends to all men everywhere who find themselves beyond the pale of divine protection." Mounce.

Reddish comments, "God's wrath is part of his love. It is God's wrath, God's justice, that responds to the cries of the martyrs under the altar in 6:7-11. It is God's wrath that hears and responds to the prayers of God's people in 8:3-5. God's love for creation and the people of God created means that God cannot ignore the cries of his people on earth nor the whole creation that has been groaning for redemption (Rom. 8:18-25). For John, the wrath of God is the wrath of the Lamb – the Lamb, John never lets us forget, who was slain; the Lamb who has conquered by his own death. The self-sacrificial death is a part of God's response to a world that cries for justice."