

These days, Christianity and Jesus are so often misunderstood. Some treat Jesus like a politician. As if the gospel is purely about a certain political persuasion and a particular way the government should function. Others think about Jesus like a therapist. Where is a nice person who can help other broken people with their problems and maybe even help them become better people. And that's fine if you need Him, but you can always choose a different therapist or none if you don't need it.

Some act like Jesus is just another team to cheer for. Like Christianity and the gospel is just a team we root for and we want to win. Everyone else is the enemy and hopefully we can defeat them.

Most people tend to see Jesus as just a nice option. It's good if some people need to embrace the gospel and become believers. But really it doesn't matter what religion you choose because it is all up to you. and none of us really know what is true anyway.

All of these and others fundamentally misunderstand Jesus and the gospel. Jesus does some of these things sure, but He is not just an option. And the gospel is not something we can take or leave. The message of Jesus is one that we must respond to because it has eternal consequences. The entire direction of our lives, not just now but after our deaths and into eternity, is determined by it.

Revelation 14:6-20 reminds us of the gospel.

### **I. We should worship God in response to the eternal gospel (v. 6-7).**

This is what we see right away in the passage.

The eternal gospel is being proclaimed to the world.

And they, and we today, need to respond to it.

We should respond to the gospel.

And we respond with worship.

Let's take a look.

Verse 6, **"Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people."**

This chapter has visions of three different angels.

Each of the angels makes a proclamation.  
So we see this first angel flying through the sky.  
And it flies right over John's head.

And this angel is proclaiming the gospel.  
But what is interesting to see is that the gospel is called eternal here.  
It is not just preaching the gospel.  
It is proclaiming and preaching the eternal gospel.  
What does it mean by that?

It means the gospel is eternally true.  
It does not ever change.  
The message of the gospel does not need to shift and move.  
It has not changed over time.  
The message and the gospel that we preach in this church is the same  
gospel that Jesus Christ and the apostles preached in the 1st century.  
The gospel is eternal and has not been lost over the years.

It is also eternal because it does not need to be updated.  
There are those who want to say the Bible is too old.  
Christianity needs to have its morals or values updated for our modern  
world.  
But the gospel is eternal.  
It has always been the same and always will be.  
The gospel does not need to be changed by us, we need to be changed by  
the gospel.

It is also eternal because we are preaching the same message.  
The angel proclaims what we always have.  
And this proclamation goes out to the world.  
It goes forth to everyone who dwells on the earth.

Now that phrase **"those who dwell on the earth"**  
Usually describes unbelievers.

It is those who do not know Jesus and who do not follow Him.  
Because these are the people who need to hear the gospel.

It is not hidden in secret places.

The gospel is not a hidden truth or a secret that we only want to let the true believers in on.

We do not keep the gospel hidden unless you give me enough money.

We do not hide the gospel until you have been around long enough.

The gospel is opening and boldly declared all over the world to every place and every people.

It is declared to everyone.

The eternal gospel is declared to everyone everywhere.

All over the world in every place and nation and tongue people will hear the gospel.

Some will hear it from angels and their dreams, like some in closed countries have reported.

Some will hear the gospel from missionaries.

Some will hear the gospel from their friends and family.

Some will hear the gospel in ways we cannot imagine.

But every place will have a chance to hear the gospel.

What started at Pentecost will be completed.

Before Jesus returns, everyone will have a chance to respond to the gospel.

They will hear about the love of Christ.

They will hear how Jesus died on the cross to save them.

How Jesus Christ offers us eternal life not just up in heaven after we die but eternal life here and now.

They will hear that the kingdom of God has invaded the world and they can be a citizen in this kingdom.

Everyone will have a chance to respond to it.

Verse 7, **"And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."**

Here the angel tells us how we are to respond to the gospel.

It tells us what a positive response or what reception of the gospel looks like.

First, it looks like fearing God.

It looks like living as if God is real.

As if Jesus Christ will come to judge the living and the dead.

Living as if God is watching.

It is not about shaking in terror.

But it is about living as if the gospel is true.

You cannot just pray and say you accept the gospel.

You then need to live as if you believe the gospel is true.

To receive the gospel, you must fear God.

To receive the gospel, we must also give God glory.

We are always glorifying something.

We are always praising something.

We need to give God His glory.

We can do this a number of ways.

I think it is more than just saying like athletes do "I give God the glory."

It means that our every actions are meant to bring praise to God.

That we work in a way that glorifies God.

We live in a way that when people see us, it makes them say positive things about God even if they aren't Christians.

The last way to respond to the gospel is worship.

Genuine worship of God.

Worship can be hard for us because we normally just think of it in terms of music.

And that is a time of worshipping through song.

But we are always worshipping.

Our hearts and our devotion are always directed somewhere.

But we are not always worshipping God.  
Sometimes our devotion is directed towards money, or lust, or any other idol we can think of.

The word for worship has the idea of prostrating ourselves.  
It is the physical falling down before something in worship.  
It is the physical positioning ourselves in worship towards something.  
And we physically put ourselves before things all the time.

But to receive the gospel, we have to become worshippers of God.  
Receiving the gospel means our lives are shaped around Jesus.  
Because He is the Creator.  
The passage mentions that He made the heavens and earth.  
He made all things.  
He made us and fashioned us in our mother's wombs.  
So, He is worthy of our worship.  
To refuse to worship Him is to reject the one who made us in love and care.

The reason to respond to the gospel is the coming harvest.  
There is judgment that is coming.  
This is one of our essential beliefs as Christians.  
We can disagree and interpret parts of Revelation differently.  
But everyone has to agree that one day judgment is coming.  
Christ will judge the living and the dead.  
And the only way to pass the judgment.  
The only way to be judged not guilty is through accepting the gospel.

There is overwhelming evidence against us of our guilt.  
Every sinful deed.  
Every sinful word.  
Every sinful thought has been recorded and will be presented.  
Our good deeds will not be weighed against our bad ones.

All of our deeds will be compared to the beauty, perfection, and holiness of God.

The only way we can get out is to take the plea deal.

We plead to Jesus and beg forgiveness.

We fear God, give Him glory, and worship Him.

We believe that Jesus offers us the only way out.

And Jesus will plead guilty on our behalf.

He will take all the punishment for our sins.

And we can be declared not guilty.

And we better receive the gospel.

Because our day in court is coming.

## **II. Eternal judgment awaits those who refuse the gospel (v. 8-11, 17-20).**

Those who refuse Jesus' offer will regret it.

Because the only thing that awaits those who refuse the gospel is eternal judgment and eternal punishment.

Verse 8, **"Another angel, a second, followed, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.'"**

First, we see this second angel.

The second angel has a short message to proclaim.

And it is the fall of Babylon.

Babylon in this context, I think, is the antichrist's empire.

It is the empire of Satan and the enemy that had conquered the world.

Babylon is often used symbolically.

The apostle Peter refers to the Roman Empire as Babylon.

So, I don't think this has to mean that the antichrist will revive the Roman Empire or the Babylonian Empire and call it that.

But this is God naming the reality.

These empires are not the greatest achievements of humanity.

They are no different than all of the sinful empires that have come before.

And what we see is that this great empire.

This great beast that conquered the nations is finished.

It has fallen and news of its fate is spreading.

And her end.

The fall of this empire and defeat of evil will come at the time of judgment.

It will come at the very end of Revelation.

It will come at the return of Christ.

This passage seems to be skipping ahead in time.

Or it is giving us a preview of what is to come.

Yes, the antichrist will rise.

Yes, the false prophet will deceive and plenty of people will take the mark of the beast.

Sure, the world will be conquered and the church looks defeated.

But Babylon will fall and be judged.

And her judgment is based on her own sin.

We see that she has forced and enticed all of the nations into sexual immorality.

It has led the people away from God's commands.

Away from God's ways.

And it has forced and pushed people into accepting the sexuality of Babylon.

Sexual immorality in the Bible is always a large term.

It is meant to encompass every kind of sexual sin.

Because all of it is what the empires of the world push us towards.

But one day it will be judged.

Verse 9, **"And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,"**

Now the third and final angel appears.

It continues the same warning of judgment.  
It warns any who fall for Babylon.

There is a loud warning for anyone who worships the beast instead of God.

Any who decide to worship things other than Christ.

Anyone who falls for the image of the Beast.

And anyone who chooses to receive the mark of the beast.

Anyone who wants to be marked by the beast will be marked for judgment.

Because the mark of the beast is always tied to worship.

Verse 10, **"he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger,"**

Anyone who has done this will face judgment.

And the judgment is drinking God's wrath.

Here, God's wrath is compared to a cup of wine.

And this cup is filled to the brim.

There is no room to swish it around.

All of the strength and wrath and judgment against sin is here in the cup.

God's wrath is often described in the Bible as a cup.

This is why Christ prayed in the garden that the cup would be taken from him.

The cup have to drunk from those who have rejected Christ.

God will no longer hold back His wrath.

You can drink from the cup of sin the world offers.

But it will lead to drinking a cup of judgment.

Throughout history God has held back His judgment.

He allows the wicked to get away with evil.

He allows the wicked to go unpunished on earth.

But they do not escape.

And the punishment that comes will be terrible.

Verse 10-11, **“and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”**

This is the fullness of the cup.

It is an eternal punishment.

This is what we usually call hell.

And there is no better description

I do not preach about hell every week.

But it is here in the text.

And I am not going to apologize for it or try to explain it away.

It appears that those who reject Christ will face judgment.

And the fullness of that judgment is terrible.

It is being tormented with fire and sulfur.

Now, maybe that is just symbolic.

Maybe hell isn't filled with fire.

But it doesn't sound good or fun.

There will not be a party or a good time in hell.

And this will continue forever.

The smoke of their torment and suffering goes on forever.

Day and night with no rest.

Because true rest is only found in Christ.

All those who worship the beast.

Who worship the enemy and who bear his mark.

They will face eternal judgment.

There are no second chances in the next life.

We all worship something.

It will either be Jesus, or the antichrist.

The judgment is described again.

And it appears to be described as a harvest.

I think there are two harvests.

The first harvest is 14-16 and that describes the harvest of God's people.

And the last part of the chapter is the harvest of the wicked.

Some disagree with me and think it is all about the wicked.

But we are going to save the good part so we can end on the good news of the gospel.

Verse 17, **"Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle."**

Another angel of harvesting appears.

He comes out of the temple of heaven.

Out of the throne room where God is.

And he has a sharp sickle.

He has a tool of harvesting and it is harvest time.

Verse 18, **"And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe."**

Another angel speaks to him.

And this is the angel over the fire.

Which is probably the fire of judgment.

The fire we have just seen awaits the wicked and unbelievers.

He tells the other angel to begin the harvest.

And to harvest the grapes.

In this vision John sees the harvest as the harvesting of grapes.

Verse 19, **"So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."**

It's a pretty easy harvest.

It is a vision after all.

The angels swings the sickle and all of the grapes are harvested.  
And they are thrown into the winepress of God's wrath.  
This again appears to be the fate of unbelievers.

The picture here is of grapes being crushed into wine.  
They are pressed down in the winepress.  
It is the symbolically describing the fate of unbelievers.  
Those who worship created things instead of the Creator.  
They will one day be crushed.

Verse 20, **"And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia."**

Now this is an image.  
It gives us the crushing of the wine.  
And it happens outside of the city.  
I think this points to the wicked not being able to be in New Jerusalem or in the city of God.  
They are cast out into the darkness.  
And it is out there they will be crushed.  
Which is the same place Christ was crucified and crushed for our sins.

And this image is fairly dramatic.  
The grapes being crushed are now described as blood.  
And there is so much that it almost covers a horse.  
As if the horse was wading across a river.  
And the blood spreads over 200 miles.

That would have been horrifying for John to see, which is the point.  
Some interpret this as a literal battle at the end which will result in this much blood.  
I think it is just symbolic.  
And it is talking about the real horror and completeness of the judgment God will bring.

I am less sure why God chose this particular number.  
But I do know that it is telling us the day of judgment is coming.  
No one will escape.  
And the fullness of God's wrath will come on the earth.  
All those who choose to fight against God.  
The armies who rise against Him will fail and be crushed.

We have a choice.  
We are going to drink from a cup.  
We can choose to drink from the cup of Babylon.  
We can drink from the cup of sin.  
And it will taste great and be really fun.  
Until the day of judgment.

Or we can drink from the cup Christ offers.  
We can accept the gospel.  
We can accept the gift of Christ  
And we can drink from the cup of the New Covenant that He offers.

### **III. Eternal blessing awaits those who receive the gospel (v. 12-16).**

Those who drink from the cup of Christ will be blessed.  
Those who accept the gospel.  
Those who place their faith in Jesus Christ will receive eternal blessings.

Verse 12, **"Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus."**

This is what we are to take from the passage.  
This is how we are supposed to apply it to our lives.  
This is how the coming day of judgment should affect us.  
It is a call to endurance.  
It is a call for the saints to finish the race.  
To not quit running after Jesus.

The gospel of Jesus is not just a one-time thing.

We do not just accept the gospel once when we went down an aisle.  
It is not just something we believe one day when we pray a prayer.  
The gospel of Christ is something we cling to.  
It is an anchor in the storm.  
It is something we hold onto no matter what ever happens in life.  
No matter what the enemy throws at us.  
No matter how we are tempted or sin or fail.  
We are to endure.  
The Christian life is a marathon and endurance.

And we endure by keeping the commandments of God.  
Endurance comes from still obeying Jesus.  
From doing what He has asked us to do.  
No matter how hard or how unpopular those commandments can get.

And we endure by keeping the faith.  
By not abandoning the faith handed down to us.  
We endure by continuing to believe the gospel.  
By continuing to believe Christ died for our sins.

Those who endure will be blessed.  
As long as we endure all the way to our deaths.  
Verse 13, **"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"**

Listen, those who die while trusting in Jesus are blessed.  
They are not cursed.  
It is not something tragic that has befallen them.  
Those who die in the Lord are blessed indeed.

They are blessed because they can find true rest.  
They are allowed now to rest in true peace.  
The peace that can only be found in Jesus.

And their deeds do follow them.

Every moment of faithfulness.

Every moment of belief in the face of doubt.

Every moment of obeying the commands of Jesus even when no one was watching or even when it was hard.

It will echo into eternity.

What I need you to hear now.

Is that those who have embraced the gospel, death is the path to blessing.

It is not the end.

It is one step into eternal life.

And the harvest is coming for believers.

Verse 14, **"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand."**

Here we have a harvest described, but I think this one is for believers.

Because the Son of Man is coming.

He is on the clouds and has a crown.

This is how Jesus is described in Daniel as the ancient of days.

This is how Christ return in the clouds is described.

And Christ comes first not to punish but to gather His people.

To bring His sheep home to the eternal pasture.

Verse 15, **"And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."**

The angel calls out that it is time to harvest.

The hour has come.

The hour of His return and the hour to gather his people.

Verse 16, **"So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped."**

So, Christ harvest his people and gathers them.  
All of the earth will be harvested.  
Some will be gathered to eternal judgment.  
And others will be gathered to eternal joy.

We need to embrace the gospel.  
The eternal gospel is being declared right now.  
We must all put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and in Him alone.  
We must believe that He is our only hope in life and in death.  
We must accept the free gift of His grace.  
We must acknowledge that we are so broken and have fallen short.  
We need to call out and beg for mercy.  
And anyone who dares to do so.  
Any sinner no matter how wicked or no matter how far gone and find  
forgiveness and mercy.  
They can find undeserved grace at the foot of the cross.  
And those who do so will be blessed forever.

If you have not responded to the gospel, you need to before it is too late.  
The day of the harvest is coming.  
And we never know when the days of our death could come.  
And once that day comes there is no more hope and there are no more  
chances.  
But today you have another chance.  
And every second you live until that final breath will be another chance to  
come to faith in Jesus.  
I invite you to come.  
To put your faith in Him.  
And find the blessing you have always looked for.

And those of us who have already embraced the gospel.  
Those of us who have chosen to follow Jesus.  
Do not quit.  
Continue to hold fast to our faith.

Hold fast to Jesus.  
Endure until the end.

I do not know what will come in the days ahead.  
Whether in the days of our country or our own lives.  
But I know what comes at the very end.  
And may we be found faithful in the days of the harvest.  
May we endure and hold onto Jesus.  
Because He is holding onto you.

Just stop struggling against Him.  
He wants to save us and bring us home.  
If we will only let Him.

The eternal gospel awaits our response.  
Those who reject the gospel will be eternally judged.  
Those who accept the gospel will be eternally blessed.