

Verses 6 through 11 are the three announcements from three angels. The messages are final warnings that the time to decide is now or never. While some commentators see the seals, trumpets, and vials of wrath as a repeat from different viewpoints, I see them as somewhat chronological. The seals I believe to be God allowing evil to turn people to faith from the time of Christ to His return, most of which affected a quarter of the earth. I interpret the trumpets destroying the things man worships and depends on during the first 1260 days of the last seven years. They affected a third of the earth warning mankind that a final judgment was about to arrive. I think that is also the 1260 days of the two witnesses, which I believe is the true church sealed by God, is proclaiming the gospel and warning of the coming wrath (11:3ⁱ)ⁱⁱ. During that time and after the Antichrist is revealed God's people give a final Holy Spirit enabled witness to the world (2 Thessalonians 2:3ⁱⁱⁱ). At the same time the Antichrist gains power and by the end of that first three and half years has been given the power to conquer the believers (12:5-7^{iv}). It seems to me that at that time or shortly after addresses our passage today when the grain harvest of believers takes place, often referred to as the rapture (14:14-16^v; consider Daniel 12:11^{vi}). That would explain why we see the saints with Jesus on Mount Zion at the beginning of this chapter (14:1^{vii}). In Matthew 24:29-31^{viii} Jesus tells us that He will gather His elect after the tribulation of those days. In the verses before that Jesus described persecution and many false prophets which lines up with what we are reading in Revelation.

If my understanding is correct, the trumpets of tribulation are the first half of the last seven years followed by the bowls of wrath in the last half. If the saints are gathered to Christ around this midpoint, they will not be present for the wrath of God upon the whole earth. We see in verses 14-16 the harvest of the bride. Chapter 15 begins with the saints in heaven praising God in song followed by three and a half years of the wrath of the Lamb ending in the final harvest of the wicked, which is seen in the final verses of this chapter. That harvest of the wicked, referred to as the grape harvest that will be trampled in the wine press and is elaborated on in chapters 15-18. A description of this time in Daniel leads me to believe some people will reject the mark of the beast, come to faith, and survive until the Day of the Lord (Daniel 12:11^{ix}).

I want to emphasize that my understanding of these passages has changed over time and very well may change in the future. I am sharing my current view, not a definitive interpretation. My present understanding is that there are figurative interpretations and partial fulfillments that have taken place, but I also believe that there are literal fulfillments to come, possibly in our lifetime. The church has always expected the soon return of Christ and that is a good attitude to maintain. We should always be ready to give an account of our life (Romans 14:12^x). At the same time, I can see how recent developments such as the return of Jews to Israel, the coalition of Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey, rising antisemitism, the creation of AI and facial recognition, as well as digital currency have paved the way for the Bible's predictions to come to pass.

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.

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.” Revelation 14:6,7 The first angel flies directly overhead proclaiming the gospel to all who live on the earth, all people everywhere. His close proximity means that everyone will hear the message clearly. No one will be able to say they did not hear the gospel. Hearts will finally yield or be hardened in defiance of God.

Some believe that what the angel proclaims is verse 7. That would not be what we normally mean by the gospel. It would mean to reverence God the Creator and give Him glory and worship, which of course is only possible through what Jesus has done for us (John 14:6^{xi}) That means the gospel is similar to the gospel proclaimed by the stars (directly overhead) and the goodness of God in creation (Psalm 19:1^{xii}; Romans 1:20^{xiii}), which is a universal message for all cultures and all time! Some interpreters say that is the reason for the expression “eternal gospel.”

There are three views regarding verse 7: Universalists believe all saved, people may go to hell but eventually they will be purified and go to heaven. The exclusivist view is that those who place their faith in Jesus, or those in the Old Testament era who have faith in grace of God alone to save them are redeemed. The inclusivist view says anyone can be saved if by conscience or nature are convicted of sin and call out to God to be saved (Romans 10:13^{xiv}), though they never heard of Jesus, it is still the blood of Jesus that saves them. They believe verse 7 confirms their view.

Another way of interpreting verses 6 and 7 is that gospel of Jesus’ substitutionary atonement by this time in history is well defined as Jesus dying for our sins and therefore that is what the angel is proclaiming. They would say that verse 7 then is not the gospel but rather the obligation of those who have heard the message. In other words, the angel tells of Jesus’ offer of salvation and forgiveness merited through the cross and verse seven is why they should hear and receive that good news! Judgment is on the way. It is a now or never message.

The action of this angel is a clear demonstration that God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9^{xv}; Ezekiel 18:23^{xvi}). The delusion from the beasts and cultures’ acceptance of the beast has influenced so many that God responds by sending these three angels with their final warnings. The world heard the message from the two witnesses and saw them rise (11:9^{xvii}). There is also the message in the wonder of creation. The Antichrist’s evil nature will have been displayed in his war on the saints (13:7^{xviii}). That would seem to be enough to turn anyone with an open mind, and yet the heart of God goes out to bring in souls before the wrath of God is poured out by sending these angels with their messages of invitation and warning. If chapter 14 is chronological, this takes place just before the gathering of the saints to heaven in 14:14-16^{xix}. If God’s heart is so earnestly desiring that none perish, how eager we should be to take every opportunity presented to us to share the good news of Jesus.

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.”* Revelation 14:8 The second angel is announcing the downfall of Babylon (paganism or idolatry/greed, the culture’s worship of the things of this world (Isaiah 21:9^{xx}; Jeremiah 51:7^{xxi})). It is stark contrast with the virgins of verse 4^{xxii} who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Notice that Babylon made *all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality*. We see this today in our own culture. We are shamed by our culture for calling out sin and the laws that have been changed to legitimize it. We are told we must

tolerate perversion or be punished if we do not. But that is not enough. Now we are told we must embrace what the Bible calls sin. Those who do not are cancelled by culture. Their voices are silenced. Their businesses are boycotted and harassed. What they are saying is that you must embrace their sinful behavior. Acceptance has become mandatory. **They will not tolerate any view but their own while claiming that we are intolerant.** And if we point out the physical repercussions of sin, we are excluded from public debate, silenced, and ignored. The insanity of sin causes people to protest in favor of countries that would execute people for the causes that they applaud. What is bizarre is that they cannot see the contradiction!

Babylon and its hanging gardens were once one of the wonders of the world. It had conquered Israel and much of the known world at its height of power. But it had been conquered, and at the time Revelation was written it was a small village. So, it is not the village that God is speaking of but a metaphor for human achievement or human pride, like the tower of Babel in opposition to God. ***The kingdom of Babylon is a symbol of the wicked world system that rejects God and does as it pleases.*** In 17:5^{xxiii} *the kingdom of Babylon will be symbolically depicted as a "prostitute."* The idea is that the powers at work in the world are enticing people to commit spiritual adultery against the one to whom they owe their faithfulness and devotion.^{xxiv} The first readers saw it as Rome. *"Society set free from God is its own worst enemy."*^{xxv} We will see it fall in chapters 17 and 18, but the angels announcement means the fall is certain. God has determined it, so it is as good as done. With the saints safely on Mount Zion and those in the earth having made a final choice against God, the way is cleared for the wrath of God resulting in the collapse of man's governments. Worldliness and self-seeking will end.

Do we live as if we believe that? The kingdoms of man will all fall. God will establish His kingdom upon the earth, and it will be very different from what fallen man has built.

What does Babylon cause nations to drink? A passionate, maddening, wrath cup! The wine of idolatry sown in the world reaps the wrath of God. In other words, while they are encouraging and even demanding people enjoy idolatry, worshiping the gifts rather than the Giver, what they are really doing is heaping up wrath against the day of wrath (Romans 2:5^{xxvi}; Proverbs 11:4^{xxvii}). Sin causes its own wrathful consequences, but then there also comes God's justice. God will not let evil go unpunished (Exodus 34:7^{xxviii}). That is why the first angel proclaimed the eternal gospel. It is the only way to avoid the wrath of God upon sin.

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,* ¹⁰ *he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.* ¹¹ *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."* Revelation 14:9-11 The third angel calls out a warning to the world. I think we should apply "flying directly overhead" to all three angels. Their warnings are for all who are alive at that time. Everyone must hear. The choice they make must be clear. Worship God or the beast but hear the consequences of

each. This may come before the beast begins his campaign to mark everyone so that all will know the consequences of doing so.

Here is another parallel. In the previous chapter we read of the wrath of the beast against the saints (13:15-17^{xxxix}). If anyone does not worship him, he goes to war with them to annihilate them. In verse ten in our passage for today we read that if anyone worships the beast he will drink of the wine of God's wrath. "Cup of God's wrath" is seen in Job 21:20^{xxx}; Psalm 75:8^{xxxi}; Isaiah 51:17^{xxxii}; Jeremiah 25:15ff^{xxxiii}. **All people will face man's wrath or God's. Man's wrath is for a short season for refusing to worship a man, but God's wrath is forever for worshipping that man.** There is one man we should worship, the God man who drank the cup of the wine of God's wrath in our place. In the garden of Gethsemane, He asked that if it was possible to remove the cup from Him (Luke 22:42^{xxxiiv}). But He chose to drink it if there was no other way to save us.

What He saved us from is in verses 10 and 11. In a word it is hell. The torment is eternal. Some believe that once punishment is equal to the sins the people are annihilated. John Stott has said that he believes this. But we have this text in verse 11 that is very clear on eternal torment. Also see 20:10-15 where we again read, "day and night forever and ever." Those in hell will not change (22:11^{xxxv})! As wrath is being poured out, they will sin yet more by cursing God, which we will see in chapter 16^{xxxvi}. Day and night the fire and sulfur and the smoke of their torment goes up forever. What makes it worse is that they see the glorious presence of the Lamb. People say that hell is the absence of God. They have not read this passage. They will see the glorified Christ and His angels the whole time and curse Him.

Jesus talks more graphically and often about hell than any other person in Scripture (Mark 9:47,48^{xxxvii}). His heart is the heart of God which desires justice but also desires that all should come to repentance and be saved. He desires it to the extent that He would send these three angels to give everyone a final warning. Right now, we are commissioned to warn people, but when we are gone God will see that the message still goes out. **Hell should only be preached with tears!** Remember Jesus' tears over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41,42^{xxxviii}). He knew the torture they were about to put Him through and yet He wept over their demise. That is the heart of God.

Sometimes we are wronged in such an egregious way that we wish the person who wronged us would reap what they have sown. We forget how we have wronged our Creator by not giving Him the honor and gratitude that is due Him. We act in ways that are contrary to His beautiful and glorious nature and do not even wince (Jeremiah 6:15^{xxxix}). But when *we* are wronged, look out! We want justice! I believe God wants us to share His heart, to see how gracious and forgiving He has been toward us and to be the same toward those who wrong us. One of the greatest miracles you will witness is when a believer forgives a person who has taken the life of a loved one. That is only possible when we have begun to grasp the forgiveness of God for all our wrongs.

I want to emphasize that people who take the mark will know exactly what they are doing and will have heard of the consequences. They will choose to believe a lie because of their desire for the things of this world that are passing away. They will worship the beast because they believe he can deliver to them the things their souls crave. But sin never fully delivers on its promises and costs more than you ever expected to pay.

¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 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!" Revelation 14:12,13 Does "here" refer to verses 6-11 or verse 13? I think it may be both. The message of the three angels is that we must choose between worshipping God or the beast and the things this world can offer us. If we add verse 13 to the message, we must choose between the eternal gospel or eternal wrath. How blessed it is to die in the Lord! Our deeds follow us and are rewarded. Those deeds that were done in the flesh are covered by the blood of Jesus. *¹⁷ then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."* Hebrews 10:17 And the good deeds of our new life in Christ will be rewarded. *¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,* 1 Peter 1:17 *²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father; and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.* Matthew 16:27 Rest and reward await those who chose Christ over this world and persevere. This is the seventh and last time the Greek word translated as persevere is used in Revelation. That may be because it is followed by the harvest of the saints, our gathering together unto our Lord.

Those who die in the Lord are eternally blessed, for to die is to be in the presence of the Lord. God rewards us for our labor. His interest rates on our heavenly investments are out of this world (Matthew 6:19,20^{xi}; Matthew 25:21^{xli}). The curse of toil from the fall in the Garden will be lifted. We will serve the Lord, but it will not be laborious, for working by the sweat of our brow was a part of the curse (Genesis 3:19^{xliii}). To serve our Lord is now and will be even more so then a glorious privilege; that will be our joy.

Hamilton comments on these verses, "*Do you need motivation to keep the commandments of God and to keep believing in Jesus? Brand your brain with the images of the redemption of the faithful and the punishment of the wicked in 14:1-11. Do you need help fighting the temptations of the world? Ask God to bring to mind the fall of Babylon and the wine of God's wrath that those who worship the beast will drink. When Babylon tempts you, think of how she will fare on the Day of Judgment.*"^{xliii} I would add that we should also meditate on the wonder of standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, our faces aglow with His glory (14:1^{xliv}).

Questions:

- 1 Go over the view presented at the beginning of the message.
- 2 Review the opinions of what the first angel announces.
- 3 What does his action tell us about God?
- 4 What does the second angel announce?
- 5 Define Babylon. What is its allurement to you?
- 6 What is the cup and who drinks it?
- 7 Who faces wrath and for how long?
- 8 How do earth dwellers react to God's wrath?
- 9 How should we react to evil done to us?
- 10 What is the call to perseverance?

ⁱ Revelation 11:3 (ESV)

³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

ⁱⁱ I interpret the two witnesses in connection with the two churches that were blameless in chapters 2 and 3. The passage in chapter 11 says they are the two candlesticks and two olive trees. Chapter one says the candlesticks and are the churches. Perhaps two olive trees is indicative of an abundant outpouring of the Spirit on the true church in those last days.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (ESV)

³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

^{iv} Revelation 13:5-7 (ESV)

⁵ And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,

^v Revelation 14:14-16 (ESV)

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

^{vi} Daniel 12:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

^{vii} Revelation 14:1 (ESV)

¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.

^{viii} Matthew 24:29-31 (ESV)

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

^{ix} Daniel 12:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

^x Romans 14:12 (ESV)

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

^{xi} John 14:6 (ESV)

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

^{xii} Psalm 19:1 (ESV)

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

^{xiii} Romans 1:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

^{xiv} Romans 10:13 (ESV)

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

^{xv} 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

^{xvi} Ezekiel 18:23 (ESV)

²³ Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

^{xvii} **Revelation 11:9 (ESV)**

⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,

^{xviii} **Revelation 13:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,

^{xix} **Revelation 14:14-16 (ESV)**

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

^{xx} **Isaiah 21:9 (ESV)**

⁹ And behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!" And he answered, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground."

^{xxi} **Jeremiah 51:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad.

^{xxii} **Revelation 14:4 (ESV)**

⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,

^{xxiii} **Revelation 17:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."

^{xxiv} James M. Hamilton Jr., *Preaching the Word: Revelation—The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 285.

^{xxv} D.A. Carson

^{xxvi} **Romans 2:5 (ESV)**

⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

^{xxvii} **Proverbs 11:4 (ESV)**

⁴ Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

^{xxviii} **Exodus 34:7 (NIV)**

⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

^{xxix} **Revelation 13:15-17 (ESV)**

¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

^{xxx} **Job 21:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

^{xxxi} **Psalms 75:8 (ESV)**

⁸ For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

^{xxxii} **Isaiah 51:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.

^{xxxiii} **Jeremiah 25:15-16 (ESV)**

¹⁵ Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. ¹⁶ They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them."

^{xxxiv} **Luke 22:42 (ESV)**

⁴² saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

^{xxxv} **Revelation 22:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

^{xxxvi} **Revelation 16:9 (ESV)**

⁹ They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

^{xxxvii} **Mark 9:47-48 (ESV)**

⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’

^{xxxviii} **Luke 19:41-42 (ESV)**

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

^{xxxix} **Jeremiah 6:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown,” says the LORD.

^{xl} **Matthew 6:19-20 (ESV)**

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

^{xli} **Matthew 25:21 (ESV)**

²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

^{xlii} **Genesis 3:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

^{xliii} James M. Hamilton Jr., *Preaching the Word: Revelation—The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012)

^{xliiv} **Revelation 14:1 (ESV)**

¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.