

The Global Gospel

Revelation 14:1-20

Rev. Brian Bill

July 18-19, 2026

After the sermon last weekend, a woman shared her reaction to Revelation 13.

Scared out of my mind at the beginning.

Joyful at the end.

Frantic about those that I love that are doubters.

We discovered that while the methods of deception may change, Satan's strategy has never changed: to counterfeit God's work, to capture people's devotion, and to steal the worship that belongs to Christ alone. His goal is simple: if he can't destroy God's people, he'll try to deceive the world into worshiping someone other than Christ.

We were challenged with this truth: *Because Satan is a master counterfeiter, we must give our ultimate allegiance to Christ alone.*

We ended by focusing not on the Antichrist, but on Jesus Christ.

One day every counterfeit kingdom will crumble. Every idol will fall on its face. Every beast will be judged. Every false prophet will be silenced. Every deceiver will be thrown into the lake of fire. But Jesus Christ will still be on His throne...He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Lamb who was slain. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the conquering King of kings and Lord of lords who will return in glorious triumph to reign and rule with His followers forever and ever.

Last week the spotlight was on the beast. This week the attention returns to where it belongs...on the Lamb. Here's the big idea: *Because final judgment is certain, make sure you are following the Lamb today.*

1. Rest in the security of salvation. When we come to Revelation 14:1, John sees the Lamb in the radiance of His victory standing on Mount Zion: ***"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."*** Mount Zion refers to the mountain top that is part of Jerusalem. Jesus, as the fulfillment of all

the sacrificial lambs offered in the Old Testament, will reign and rule as the Son of David from the city of David.

We were introduced to the 144,000 sealed believers in 7:3-4. While commentators differ about their identity, the main point is that not one of them is missing or wiped out by the travails of the Tribulation. One pastor writes, *“So He had 144,000 and He ended with 144,000...if you begin in grace, you will end in glory.”* Jesus promised to protect His possession in John 6:39: *“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”*

Verses 2-3 tell us these believers were also busting out into song: *“And I heard a voice from Heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.”*

Michael Burns passed along how the King James translates verse 2: *“...and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”* I love how it paints such a vibrant picture of Heaven not as a quiet, somber place, but as a joyful celebration where a massive choir’s harmonious singing mixes the power of a roaring waterfall with the gentle sweetness of harps. The mention of harps has led many people to picture Heaven as a place where everyone sits on clouds harping their harps. Throughout the Old Testament, harps were often associated with joyful praise, victory, and the deliverance of God’s people.

That’s exactly what’s happening in Revelation 14. I appreciate this insight: *“The redeemed are celebrating the greatest deliverance imaginable. They have been rescued from sin, preserved through tribulation, and now stand safely in the presence of the Lamb. Heaven is not a place of boredom or passive existence, but a destination of exuberant, God-centered worship where every note celebrates the victory of Jesus Christ.”*

Notice also that the redeemed are singing *“a new song.”* In Scripture, a new song is the natural response to salvation. Only the 144,000 could learn this song because only they had experienced this unique deliverance through the Tribulation. The psalmist anticipated this kind of worship in Psalms 33:3: *“Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.”*

In addition to being sealed, standing secure, and singing, they also lived separated lives according to verses 4-5: ***“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, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.”*** These believers lived out their loyalty to Christ, much like what we read in 2 Corinthians 11:2: ***“For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”***

Notice we’re called to be faithful to Christ and to ***“follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”*** As Kyle Idleman states, we’re to be followers, not fans of Jesus. A “fan” can admire from the stands without sacrifice. A “follower” stands with Christ no matter the cost. When I meet someone new in the community and they tell me they go to church, I’ll often ask how long they’ve been a Christ-follower. On several occasions, this question stumps them because they’re not accustomed to the phrase.

Asking someone if they are a “Christian” often invites a cultural answer. But asking how long they’ve been following Christ immediately shifts the ground from passive association to active, daily discipleship. Jesus framed it like this in Luke 9:23: ***“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*** The word *daily* shows that following Christ is to be an ongoing lifestyle.

Having shown us the security of those who belong to the Lamb, John now hears Heaven announcing the message that every person on earth still needs to hear.

2. Respond to the global gospel. Normally, it’s humans who are entrusted with sharing the gospel but in verses 6-7 we see an angel as a missionary: ***“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. 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.’”***

This reminds us that, even in the midst of judgment, God extends grace and mercy. I find it fascinating that the angel’s gospel presentation includes elements we don’t always emphasize today. He calls people to fear God, give Him glory, recognize that judgment is coming, and worship Him as Creator. I agree with this statement: ***“In an age that rejects absolute truth, dismisses accountability, and denies God’s***

role as Creator, these truths are essential. The gospel is not merely an invitation to improve your life; it is a summons to bow before the sovereign Creator before it is too late.”

This week, I made a post on Facebook celebrating God as Creator, pulling together verses from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Bible to show that God made everything, and He made everyone. I included an image which graphically portrays that as people made in the image of God, we are human at every stage of life – from embryo, fetus, infant, toddler, adolescent, teen, young adult, adult to elderly.

As we learned during Go Con last fall, the gospel is for ***“every nation and tribe and language and people.”*** The gospel is global because God loves the whole world. No one is beyond the reach of His grace, and no one is exempt from His call to repent. This is the final worldwide invitation before the final worldwide judgment. As the angel preaches the good news, we see the ultimate fulfillment of Matthew 24:14: ***“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”***

Before Christ comes in judgment, He makes sure the world hears the good news one final time.

This week, I recorded a podcast with our Youth Assistant, Micah Kongkousonh, and 17-year-old Allie Cox about what they learned at Lead the Cause, which was an evangelism conference in Colorado. They were equipped with an acrostic based on GOSPEL to help them share their faith.

Play Video Clip

The first angel announces the global gospel. The next angel announces what happens if the invitation is rejected.

3. Recognize that God’s judgment is just. Because God is perfectly holy and completely righteous, every judgment He renders is entirely just. I appreciate this insight: *“He never overreacts. He never makes a mistake. He never condemns the innocent or excuses the guilty.”* In verse 8, we read that Babylon’s fall is announced before it even happens: ***“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.’”*** God speaks of Babylon’s judgment as though it has already occurred because His judgments are certain. The fate of Babylon will be addressed in greater detail when we come to Revelation 17-18.

I read a post recently which reminded pastors to share the gospel on a regular basis for at least two reasons.

- Someone in your congregation may be hearing the gospel for the first time.
- Someone else may be hearing it for the last time.

Babylon's fall raises an obvious question. If this great world system falls, what becomes of those who refuse to repent and receive the Lamb? The third angel answers with sobering clarity.

4. Remember that Hell is real. The third angel delivers the strongest warning in all of Revelation. According to verses 9-11, those who worship the beast and receive his mark will face everlasting judgment in Hell: ***“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, 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. 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.’”***

Friends, we must resist the urge to water down God’s wrath, which is ***“poured full strength into the cup of his anger.”*** The word ***“wrath”*** means, *“indignation”* and ***“full”*** has the idea *“full strength, not diluted.”*

The fact that God holds a cup of wrath and makes those under judgment drink is found more than 13 times in the Bible. It is the idea behind the cup Jesus wanted to avoid if possible (Matthew 26:39). One pastor writes: *“You think you’ve seen the wrath of God in the Old Testament work out in various judgments? You haven’t seen anything yet. The time is coming when the wrath of God will be poured out full strength.”*

Revelation 16:1 refers to the ***“seven bowls of the wrath”*** of God. The idea of wrath offends modern sensibilities. Many people are comfortable talking about God’s love but uncomfortable talking about His wrath. Yet the Bible teaches both. God’s love is not sentimental, and His wrath is not sinful. His wrath is the settled, holy opposition of a perfectly righteous God toward everything that is evil.

Several years ago, a denomination wanted to include the popular hymn, “In Christ Alone” in their hymnal but only if they could change a line that they found offensive: “*When on the cross Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied.*” They asked permission of the hymn writers, Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, to change it to, “*When on the cross Jesus died, the love of God was magnified.*” The songwriters refused to allow them to change the words.

Unfortunately, a growing number of professing Christians have abandoned the Bible’s clear teaching on the eternity of Hell, embracing views such as universalism or annihilationism instead. But Scripture leaves no room for either and we don’t have the authority to edit God’s Word to fit our preferences. Friends, Hell is not a myth, a metaphor, a scare tactic, or a temporary place. It is a real place of real judgment where those who reject Christ experience conscious, ongoing, and eternal torment.

Notice three truths about Hell from this passage.

- **Hell is the outpouring of God’s righteous wrath against sin.** The text says God’s wrath is “*poured full strength.*” There is no dilution, no mixture of mercy. Those who reject God’s offer of grace will one day experience His perfect justice.
- **Hell is a place of conscious suffering.** The words “*tormented with fire and sulfur*” describe ongoing, personal punishment. Jesus Himself spoke more about Hell than anyone else in the Bible because He wanted people to flee from it.
- **Hell is eternal.** Verse 11 says, “*the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever,*” and “*they have no rest, day or night.*” The punishment is not temporary, nor do people cease to exist. Just as eternal life is everlasting for believers, eternal judgment is everlasting for those who reject Christ. Remember this: Hell is eternal...but escapable, if you respond before it’s too late.

Hell is not an easy doctrine, but it is a biblical one. We cannot faithfully preach the gospel while ignoring the reality from which Jesus came to save us. The same Savior who stretched out His arms in love also warned repeatedly about the danger of eternal judgment.

Let me come back to the podcast with Allie Cox. She was greatly impacted by something one of the speakers shared about the urgency of sharing the gospel: “*Life is short. Hell is hot.*”

The cross is where God's perfect love and perfect justice meet. Because Jesus willingly drank the cup of God's wrath, all who trust in Him receive the cup of salvation. Those who refuse Christ, however, will one day drink the cup of God's righteous wrath.

It's good for us to think about Hell. Pastor Andy Davis said it well:

"Ironically, I believe that a healthy biblical meditation on Hell has the power to make Christians happier than ever. It is a paradox, but it is true. The more we meditate on what we deserve but have been delivered from, the more a number of things happen: Your thankfulness to God and to Christ will greatly increase. Your perspective on your own present sufferings will be helped. You will turn away from murmuring and complaining. You will live a life of great joy and gratitude to God for what He has done in delivering you. Apart from understanding this doctrine of eternal conscious torment, the words 'savior' and 'salvation' have little meaning...if we do not grasp our grave danger, we do not see the need for a savior or salvation."

According to a recent study, 73% of Americans believe in Heaven and 62% believe in Hell, but hardly anyone believes they're going there. I share the sentiment of evangelist Hyman Appleman, *"If I could scare you out of Hell, I would."*

John doesn't leave believers staring into the fires of judgment. Immediately after the strongest warning in Revelation comes one of its sweetest promises. Just as God's wrath is certain for those who reject Christ, God's blessing is certain for those who belong to Him.

5. Rejoice in the blessing of believers. After the sobering warning about eternal judgment, the scene changes dramatically. John now offers a word of hope and encouragement for those who belong to Christ in verses 12-13: ***"Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 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!'"***

The world may look at those who are martyred and see tragedy, but Heaven calls them blessed because death is not defeat for the believer but the doorway into the presence of Christ.

Notice three blessings for those who die in the Lord.

- **Rest.** Every hardship, every persecution, every burden, and every struggle has come to an end. Their warfare is over, and they enter God's eternal rest.
- **Rewards.** The text says, *"their deeds follow them."* We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but God graciously remembers and rewards every act of faithful service done for His glory. Nothing done for Christ is ever wasted.
- **Relationship.** The greatest blessing of Heaven is not the absence of pain but the presence of Jesus. Those who die in the Lord are with the Lord forever.

Because final judgment is certain, make sure you are following the Lamb today.

6. Ready yourself for the final harvest. Why should weary believers keep enduring? Because history is headed to a final harvest, where the wheat and the weeds, the sheep and the goats, the saved and the unsaved, will be sorted and settled.

Listen to the gravity of 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."* This is a clear reference to Jesus Christ, echoing Daniel 7:13 and His favorite title for Himself in the Gospels. The golden crown speaks of His sovereign authority and victorious reign. A sickle is a hand-held agricultural tool with a curved, hook-like blade used primarily for reaping crops like wheat. The word **"sharp"** means, *"swift and piercing."* The sharp sickle reminds us that He is coming not merely as Savior, but as Judge.

The sickle is used for two different harvests. The first is the grain harvest, referring to the gathering of God's people. Just as a farmer gathers precious grain into his barn, Jesus will gather everyone who belongs to Him. For believers, the harvest is not something to fear but something to anticipate. The One who redeemed us will also receive us. We see this in verses 15-16: *"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.’ So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.”

Farmers know that wheat and weeds look remarkably similar during the growing season, but at harvest, the difference becomes absolute. That’s exactly what Jesus says in Matthew 13:30: ***“Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, ‘Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”***

The first harvest gathers grain into the barn. The second gathers grapes into the winepress. The contrast could not be greater. One harvest brings joyful redemption; the other brings righteous judgment.

The second harvest is the grape harvest, which describes the judgement of the ungodly in verses 17-20: ***“Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 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.’ 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. 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.”***

Throughout the Old Testament, the winepress is a vivid symbol of God’s judgment against unrepentant sin. One example is found in Joel 3:13: ***“Put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great.”*** Here it portrays the crushing weight of God’s holy justice against those who have persistently rejected His Son. This fulfills what Jesus said in Matthew 13:39: ***“The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels.”***

Many of us have sung “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” without realizing its imagery comes directly from this passage: *“Mine eyes have seen the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.”* The One who will one day tread the winepress of God’s wrath first drank the cup of God’s wrath on the cross for all who trust in Him. Those who receive His sacrifice will never have to endure His judgment. Those who reject Him will face the wrath He once offered to bear in their place. This is reinforced in Revelation 19:15: ***“From his mouth comes a sharp sword [He hath loosed the fateful lightning of***

His terrible swift sword] with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.”

Whether literal or not, the description of bloodshed in verse 20 is intentionally shocking: “...and blood flowed from the winepress, as *high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.*” A horse’s bridle is about five feet high, and 1,600 stadia is approximately 180 miles, roughly the length of Israel from north to south. To help us grasp the magnitude, picture a river of blood five feet deep stretching to Chicago to the east, Madison to the north, Des Moines to the west, and Springfield, Illinois to the south. The point is not to calculate the exact volume of blood but to feel the overwhelming weight of God’s judgment against sin.

This imagery is meant to unsettle us. Revelation refuses to let us domesticate God’s holiness or soften the seriousness of sinful rebellion against Him. The Judge of all the earth will do what is right, and His judgment will be complete. That’s why the repeated calls of this chapter are so urgent: Fear God. Worship the Creator. Trust the Lamb.

These verses remind us that Jesus comes twice. The first time He came carrying a cross. The second time He will come swinging a sickle. The first time He came to absorb God’s judgment. The second time He will come to execute God’s judgment. Today He offers salvation; one day He will administer justice.

All of this raises one obvious question. Will you be gathered with the wheat, or will you be thrown into the winepress? Listen to what John 3:18 says: “*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*” This verse teaches two surprising truths.

- If you believe in Christ, you will not be condemned.
- If you don’t believe, you’re condemned already.

In other words, if you choose not to be saved, you are condemned right now, and you’ll be condemned in Hell forever. Do nothing and you’ll go to Hell because that’s where everyone is headed. The only way to avoid that destination is by being converted through faith in the finished work of the Savior, who stood in as your substitute when He paid the price for all your sins by dying in your place.

Sin always exacts a payment. Either Jesus as the Lamb of God bears your sin, or you do. The wrath of God will either fall on you or upon the sinless substitute. If anyone goes to Hell, it's despite what Jesus has done. He died in your place and has paid your penalty. He took the blow and absorbed all your sins. But you must repent and receive the payment on your behalf.

Because final judgment is certain, make sure you are following the Lamb today.

As I close, I keep thinking about the woman who spoke with me after last weekend's message. She said she was *"scared out of my mind at the beginning, joyful at the end, and frantic about those I love who are doubters."* Revelation 14 leaves every one of us in one of two places. Either we're rejoicing because we belong to the Lamb or we're unsettled because we have not yet been saved.

If you belong to Christ, you can leave today with joy because the Lamb will gather you safely into His harvest. But if someone you love is still far from Christ, don't let your concern end with this service. Pray for them. Pursue them. Dare to share the gospel with them. The harvest is coming, and there is still time...for now.

And, if you're not certain of your own salvation, listen to these pleading words from Charles Spurgeon.

"...remember that what we do know about the doom of the lost is enough to make one's hair stand on end, and one's heart almost to cease to beat; so, I beseech you, do not risk that doom for yourselves. Escape for your lives; look not behind you; but fly to the one refuge which God has provided. Whosoever will entrust his soul to Jesus Christ shall be eternally saved. Look unto him who wore the thorn-crown, and repose your soul's entire confidence in him, and then, in that last great day, you shall see him seated on the white cloud, wearing the golden crown, and you shall be gathered, with the wheat, into his garner. But if you reject him, do not think it wrong that you should be cast with the grapes into the winepress of the wrath of God...God save all of you from ever suffering that doom, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen."

Invitation Prayer

Our mission at Edgewood is to glorify God and make disciples of Jesus in our families, among our neighbors, and among the nations.

1. Families. This past week, we partnered with parents in making disciples of children through VBS and two weeks ago we equipped our students with evangelism training in Colorado.

2. Neighbors. We just sent a team of 18 leaders to Celebrate Recovery's Summit Conference, where they joined thousands of others from around the world, to better equip our leaders to reach those in need of healing from hurts, habits, and hangups. We are also partnering with Samaritan's Purse by sending a Disaster Relief Team to North Carolina to do some rebuilding work (we've already sent two teams there for hurricane clean-up). They will leave next Sunday morning and will be gone from July 26-31. We still have openings for a second team that will be serving August 30-September 4.

Amanda Hodge
Ben Hodge
Donny Knight
Darryl Knoles
Ron Leemans
Doug Moore

3. Nations. This year, we are sending over 50 people on short-term mission trips to India, Mexico, Kenya, and Japan. The Japan trip will leave in late August, and 12 people will be headed to Kenya early Wednesday morning.

I'm going to ask the team to come up front now.

Beth Bill
Brian Bill
Cheryl Bivens
Randy Bivens
Tammy Deaton
Addy Holmquist
Chasity Holmquist
Evie Holmquist
Alan Johnson
Julie Johnson
Claire Kuriscak
Jamie McWade

We will be partnering with EBC Go Team Partners, and former missionary interns, Bobby and Lisa Bechtel alongside the Hope Foundation. Some highlights include:

- We'll be ministering to a school of over 1,000 students as we seek to encourage staff and students.
- Our team will be leading Vacation Bible School, using some of the ideas from our just-completed VBS on the 23rd Psalm.
- The missionary offering for VBS this week will be used to purchase books for their library.
- Edgewood has sent \$25,000 to Kenya to be used to construct a new building for a church. We'll visit this site and dedicate it to the Lord.
- We'll also be delivering gifts from 25 Edgewood members who sponsor children in the school.
- Church members, along with our mission's budget, has purchased 70 goats, which will be given as gifts to the staff.
- I will be leading a pastor's conference, and Beth will be speaking to their wives.
- I'll be preaching in two churches.
- When the rest of team heads back, Beth and I will travel to Nairobi to spend time with Edgewood Go Team partners Jerry Novak and Jim and Sybil Eberhard.

New Member 10:45 – Greg Hullett