



Online Bulletin, Sunday, October 24, 2021

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P a s t o r ' s U p d a t e

Text: Revelation 14:1-5

Theme: The Lamb and His Followers!

My purpose for choosing Revelation 14:1-5 for this week's update is not to give an opinion concerning the identity of the 144,000 in the Book of Revelation. Instead, my sole purpose is to seek to understand John's purpose for mentioning the Lamb with the 144,000 at the beginning and ending of the Apocalypse. What is it that he wants to convey to the original readers of the Apocalypse and consequently to Believers through the ages? Before answering this question, I would like to consider the relationship between chapters 13 and 14, after which I shall do a brief survey of the Lamb and then identify who the true Lamb is in the Book of Revelation.

The Lamb and His followers are mentioned here in chapter 14 in stark contrast to the beasts and their followers in chapter 13. In the previous chapter (Rev. 13), we see how the second beast mimics the true Lamb. But he is portrayed as a parody of the true Lamb. He is the False prophet who deceives his followers and persecutes those who follow the true Lamb (note 13:11 "horns like a lamb"). But now in 14:1-5, John sees the real Lamb standing on Mt. Zion. Already in chapter five the Lamb is worshipped by the hosts of heaven because He was the only One found worthy to take the scroll and its seven seals (5:1-14). The Lamb then opened the seven seals (six of them in chapter six).

In chapter seven the victorious, glorified multitude worships the Lamb (7:9ff.). In 12:11, John says that the saints overcame the dragon by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. This Lamb who owns the "Book of Life" was slain before the foundation of the world (13:8). The victors over the beast sang the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (15:2). The beastly kings of the earth make war with the Lamb, but He will overcome them (17:14). In 19:6ff. the marriage of the Lamb and His wife is consummated and in 21:9, John is invited by one of the seven-bowl angels to see the consummate bride of the Lamb (21:9). He describes her as the great city, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. She is the people of God of all ages in both the Old and New Testaments represented by the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (21:12) and the twelve apostles of the Lamb (21:14). The bride of the Lamb, the great city, the holy Jerusalem, has no temple in it, because the Lord Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (21:22). The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, because the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its lamp (21:23). Finally in 22:1ff., John describes the throne of God and of the Lamb in the glorified city where His servants shall serve Him.

From all this we can conclude that the Lamb whom John sees standing on Mount Zion is none other than "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). He is the glorified Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God who died and rose again and is now exalted to the throne of God where he is worshipped by all the hosts of the heavens and the saints on earth.

The 144,000 whom John sees with the Lamb were already described in chapter seven as those of all the tribes of the children of Israel who were sealed (7:4-8). Here in 14:1 we read that they have the "Father's name written on their foreheads." This brings to mind the followers of the beast who received his mark on their right hand and or on their foreheads (13:16). This mark on the foreheads is comparable to the seal of 144,000 in chapter seven which is symbolic of ownership and protection. Those who have the mark of the beast are owned by him and they worship him, while those who have the mark of the Lamb's Father are His possession. Whereas the 144,000 in chapter seven symbolizes the elect on living on the earth, here in 14:1 they represent the elect in heaven. They suffered through trials and hardship on the earth, they were persecuted for their identification with the Lamb, yet all 144,000 made it to glory unscathed. Not one of them was lost. All 144,000 is still with the Lamb!

This I believe, is why John mentions the 144,000 at beginning and ending of his letter (7:4; 14:1). His purpose is to provide encouragement to persecuted believers and to all of God's tormented children. Let them be assured that all those who are united with Jesus Christ, the wounded yet glorified Lamb of God, will always be with Him. No one shall snatch them out of His strong hand (John 10:28-29).

By God's Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis