

sharp sickle <sup>15</sup> used for reaping, in His hand. <sup>15</sup> And another angel came out of the temple [speaking on God's behalf], crying out with a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is dry ["...nothing can be gained by waiting longer...all the elect have been won..." (Becker, 231)]." <sup>16</sup> And the one sitting on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped [thus God will finally gather His children and bless them forevermore].

- b. **Unbelievers** – <sup>17</sup> And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar [again, speaking on God's behalf]; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather [not the chaff, which we might expect, but] the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe [the time for repentance is over]." <sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God [imagine people being squeezed like grapes]. <sup>20</sup> And the wine press was trodden outside the city [where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt. 25:30 NAU)], and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles [4-5 feet deep], for a distance of 1,600 stadia, [about 200 miles]. // That is a lot of blood; we can also think of 4 x 4 x 10 x 10, the complete judgment of the whole earth! *That day is coming!*

**Conclusion:** So let us praise God for His salvation! Amen!

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# Praise or Punishment

## How Will YOU Spend Eternity?

Based on Revelation 14:1-20 NAU

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2011

Wednesday, 9/7 → 7:00 † Sunday, 9/11 → 8:00 & 10:45

9/18: BC & SS 9:00; Worship 10:00; Picnic 11:30

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ, even though many deny or ignore this fact, *eternity is coming for everyone!* Some will praise God forever and ever for His saving work, while others will be punished without ceasing.

- Jesus and the Church – Praise:** <sup>1</sup> And I looked, and behold, Jesus the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion [the HEAVENLY Jerusalem], and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand [the number which symbolizes the invisible Church of all time], having the Lamb's name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads [see chapter 7]. // Even though the devil, beast 1, and beast 2 are powerful (Rev. 13), the almighty God will save His Church!
  - God's voice and the Church's praise** – <sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, like a sound of many waters and like a sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. <sup>3</sup> And they [all the members of the invisible Church] sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders [they are all in heaven and giving God their praise]; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth [with Jesus' holy precious blood; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rev. 5:9].

b. **Members of the Church are described** – <sup>4</sup> These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins [in other words, by God's grace, they REMAINED FAITHFUL TO JESUS, the Bridegroom]. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes [like Jesus said: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me..." (John 10:27 NAU)]. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb [see Dr. Becker, 218]. <sup>5</sup> And no lie was found in their mouth; they are without blemish [How? Because God cleansed them with Jesus' blood; 1 Jn. 1:7; Dr. Becker: "The lies of which they...may have been guilty have been forgotten by the God who promises not to remember our sins." Jer. 31:34; 221]. // Now, back to the earth!

## 2. **Three Angelic Announcements – Punishment:**

- a. A final plea to avoid punishment – <sup>6</sup> And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those sitting on the earth, namely to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; <sup>7</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come, and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." // This is a potential big picture of vv. 6-7: After the false theology of the middle ages (500-1500), God raised-up Martin Luther and others to proclaim the eternal gospel to the world. Those who effectively hear also fear, glorify, and worship the maker of h. and e.
- b. Our enemies have been defeated – <sup>8</sup> And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her

immorality." // Who is Babylon and what does it mean to participate in her immorality? Dr. Becker, 225-226.

- c. Punishment for all who go the way of the world – <sup>9</sup> And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand [Rev. 13:16-17], <sup>10</sup> he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength [not watered down] in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb [God wants to save, but He will also punish]. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."
- d. <sup>12</sup> Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus [GOD enabled them to persevere, to continue with faith in Jesus; also, their lives are characterized by commandment-keeping]. <sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord [continue in Jesus to the end]..." "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them [as the evidence of their faith]." // Some receive the mark of the beast → unending torment; others faith in Jesus → eternal peace and rest!
3. **The Final Reaping:** These events describe the final Judgment (Joel 3:13; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43):
- a. **Believers** – <sup>14</sup> And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man [Jesus], having a golden crown on His head and a