

THE FINAL WORDS

(A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION)

PART II

REV. VINCE FINNEGAN



SEPTEMBER 11 - OCTOBER 2, 2012

JOHN 16:33

“...IN THE WORLD YOU HAVE TRIBULATION, BUT TAKE COURAGE;
I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.”

REVELATION 14

The vision focuses on one aspect of the future that is God's promise to Israel about the return of the remnant to Jerusalem. The picture does not include the Christian church made up of Jews and Gentiles. Their exclusion from this particular vision does not indicate an exclusion from the events that will occur at this time. The church is just not the focus of this vision and is the focus elsewhere. (Remember John communicates parts of the whole picture within each vision, like looking at the big valley.)

Revelation 14:1 The lamb (used 28 times in Revelation) is seen in heaven until now when he has returned to the earth. He is represented as a lamb rather than the many other appellations or names that are his. The lamb, one of the most docile animals, ends up as the world conqueror. Sheep epitomize meekness and followership – the most important qualities necessary for a theocracy.

Jesus is standing on Mount Zion indicating his return. Psalm 48:1-ff; Zechariah 2:1-13; 6:12-13; 8:1-13; 14:1-21.

Psalm 2:6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain."

Psalm 132:13 and 14 For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

Hebrews 12:22 You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem....

They have the name of Jesus and Yahweh on their heads. That indicates they are overcomers according to 3:12 and 22:4. They are in contrast with the followers of the beast who have his mark on their foreheads or right hands (13:16).

The 144,000 Israelites that were sealed in 7:4 believed in 11:13, and here they are on Mount Zion with the Messiah. Israel's relationship with Yahweh demonstrates and illustrates His unyielding love, mercy, and faithfulness.

MERCY

- Yahweh loved and called Israel to be His own. Deuteronomy 7:6-11; 10:14 and 15
- Israel failed to remain faithful to Yahweh. Ezekiel 16
- Israel's current state because of their unfaithfulness is temporary separation from Yahweh. Romans 11:7, 8, 25-32; Hosea 1:8-11; 3:1-5; Micah 4:9-13; 5:1-4.

- Yahweh’s faithfulness, unchanging love, and mercy to Israel are staggering. Micah 7:18-20; Romans 11:29, 32
- In the end, the promise regarding the remnant is fulfilled. Revelation 14

Revelation 14:2 The voice was not only loud, but melodious. 19:5 and 6

Revelation 14:3 The Lamb and the 144,000 sing a new song because of the new occasion – a day of great rejoicing for the prophecy will be finally fulfilled. The scene is reminiscent of the first time David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem in 2Samuel 6:12-19. He rejoiced, danced, and praised Yahweh and hence began the most wonderful time for Israel and Yahweh. The prophets spoke of this future great day. Isaiah 51:1-23; 52:7-15; Jeremiah 31:10-17; Zeph. 3:11-20 and Zech. 2:1-13

They sang the song from Zion but before the throne with the living creatures and 24 elders. Everyone in heaven and earth rejoiced.

In chapter five, the creatures and the 24 elders were singing a similar song that now the 144,000 join in.

Revelation 5:9

They sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

The 144,000 were purchased from the earth. The KJ has “redeemed” instead of “purchased.” “From the earth” is explained in the next verse as “from among men.” The day this will happen, there will be only 144,000 Israelites redeemed – those who hold the credentials described here.

Revelation 14:4 “Not defiled with women,” “kept themselves chaste” - the meaning can be twofold. During a time of gross immorality when the beast is reigning, these men do not follow what the world is doing in the wicked sexual immoralities. The second possibility was they kept themselves completely free from intercourse with the pagan world system. They lived up to what is implied in their betrothal to Christ. Virginity is ascribed to the people of God in the OT (2 Kings 19:21; 18:13; and Lamentations 2:1). Unfaithfulness to God is likened to improper sexual relations in Ezekiel 16 and Hosea 5:4.

2 Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.

Revelation 21:9

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

These "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" implies the future, not their past. We are not talking about Christians made up of the Gentiles and Jews who believed before the end of the age but those of Israel who do not believe until the very end. The church has its blessing also, but right now it is not the topic of this vision.

Israel, the believing biological descendants of Abraham, remains as God's "first fruits."

James 1:17 and 18

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Romans 11:1ff

Revelation 14:5 That these people are saved and honored speaks impressively of the loving kindness and faithfulness of our Father, Yahweh. Lamentations 3:22 and 23; Exodus 34:6 and 7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 9:7

Revelation 14:7 Seems like one last chance for people to repent before the final wrath of God is poured out on the earth. God wants all men to be saved and none to suffer His wrath.

Revelation 14:8 This is the first mention of Babylon that will be elaborated on in the coming chapters (16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). The phrase "Babylon the great" occurs six times in Revelation. It will be the last great world empire ruled by the beast that is prophesied about in many Scriptures. The influence of Babylon on the world is similar to the days of Noah but not quite as bad because there will still be some who believe (more than eight).

The place of punishment for the wicked commencing immediately after death and lasting throughout eternity is the common worldview of hell. The picture with some degree of variation is a place of perpetual hot flames tormenting the devil, demons, and all the wicked humans. Children's cartoons, church fathers, theologians, and those in most church pulpits all believe this non-biblical view of hell to some degree. Edward William Fudge in his books, *The Fire That Consumes* and *Two Views of Hell*, provides detailed biblical information on this subject.

The Old Testament provides great insight for understanding the New Testament and certainly the book of Revelation. In the Old, the destiny of the wicked is stated clearly and has not changed.

Psalm 1:4-6 The wicked are like chaff which the wind blows away, will not stand in judgment, the way of the wicked will perish (“perish” means to pass from or cease from existence, not eternal torture).

Psalm 9:5 Destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever; 6 –the enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins, the very memory of them has perished’; 16 – wicked is snared; 17 – the wicked return to Sheol (“destroyed” means to ruin, put out of existence, kill, neutralize, annihilate, vanquish, and not imperishable).

Psalm 11:6 and 7 Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face. [Fire and brimstone annihilate.]

Psalm 31:17 Let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol [grave or reign of the grave].

Psalm 37:9 Evildoers will be cut off; 10 – yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there; 15 - their sword will enter their own heart; 17 - the arms of the wicked will be broken; 20 – but the wicked will perish; and the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, they vanish—like smoke they vanish away; 22 – those cursed by Him will be cut off’; 28 – the wicked will be cut off; 34 the wicked are cut off; 36 – he was no more; 38 – transgressors will be altogether destroyed; the posterity of the wicked will be cut off.

Psalm 68:2 As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish before God.

Psalm 104:35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more.

Psalm 112:10 The desire of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 119:119 You have removed all the wicked of the earth like dross.

Psalm 145:20 The LORD keeps all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.

Proverbs 10:7 The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot.

Proverbs 10:25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation.

Matthew 3:7-10 John warned the arrogant, self-assured Pharisees and Sadducees that they could be cut down like a tree and thrown into the fire.

Matthew 3:8-12 Jesus is both Savior and judge. The destiny for the wicked is burning like chaff in unquenchable fire. The fire, not the chaff, is unquenchable. Some fires burn out before all is consumed but not this one.

Matthew 7:15-19 False prophets and their followers will be cut down like bad trees and thrown into the fire.

Matthew 13:36-43 The sons of the evil one are like tares gathered and burned in the furnace of fire at the end of the age.

John 15:6 Those who fail to abide in Jesus like a dried up branch will be gathered and cast into the fire.

Chaff, trees, tares, and dried branches are all highly combustible in any fire, and in the fire that is unquenchable, they have total destruction. Perpetual fuels in these analogies are absurd and would not enter the mind unless someone suggested the thought.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-9 Destruction means to ruin utterly, consume, dissolve, to put an end to, do away with, demolish, and exterminate. Eternal destruction has two connotations: 1) destruction in the age to come rather than now, and 2) destruction that has everlasting, unchangeable results.

Matthew 7:13 and 14 Jesus contrasts the few with the many and life with destruction.

Matthew 13:36-43 “Weeping and gnashing of teeth” is a commonly misunderstood expression Jesus used (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; and Luke 13:28). “Weeping” is a common biblical symbol for fear, misery, or extreme grief (Isaiah 22:12; 16:9; Jeremiah 9:1; Lamentations 1-4; James 5:1; and Revelation 18:9). “Gnashing of teeth” describes the fury of people who are enraged. Psalm 37:12; Psalm 112:10; Lamentations 2:16; and Acts 7:54

Matthew 5:22 “Fiery hell” in the NASB foot the literal is “Gehenna of fire.” It also occurs in Matthew 18:9 and Mark 9:43-47. The Greek word Gehenna is the translation of a Hebrew expression meaning the “Valley of Hinnom.” (See *Living Sacrifice*, chapter nine, Heaven and Hell.) Gehenna was located southwest of the old city of Jerusalem and became the abominable site of child sacrifices to the pagan god Moloch in the days of Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Kings 16:3 and 21:6). Thus, it earned the additional name “Topheth” which means a place to spit on or abhorred (Isaiah 30:33). Jeremiah predicted that this horrible valley would someday be filled with Israelite corpses in Jeremiah 7:31-33; 19:2-13. The Jewish historian Josephus says that this valley was heaped with the dead bodies of Jews following the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 69-70 AD. In Jesus’ day, given its horrible history, Gehenna was a well-known local term for the fiery place of judgment to come.

Another Greek word is also translated “hell” in many English translations of the Bible, and that is the word “Hades,” with its counterpart in Hebrew “Sheol” which simply means grave or gravedom.

Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:4 and 5 Those who (like Plato) believe in the immortality of the soul or spirit wrongly understand this verse. The word “soul” is from the Greek *psuche* that is translated both “soul” and “life.” Man’s killing power stops with the body and ends with the present age. The only death any human can inflict is temporary, because God will raise the dead and give the righteous eternal life and the unrighteous eternal death. Fear God because He is the one who determines eternal death or eternal life. “Hell” is again the word “Gehenna.”

Matthew 25:41 The phrase “eternal fire” holds a two-fold understanding: 1) the fire is not in this age but the age to come, and 2) the effects of the fire are unchangeable and everlasting.

John 3:16 Eternal life is contrasted with those who perish; 36 – believers gain eternal life; those who do not obey will not see life.

Romans 2:6-11 Paul says nothing of eternal suffering in hell.

Romans 6:23 The two extremes are very clearly communicated

Jude 7

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Genesis 19:23-29 The smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace. The cities were completely destroyed. To this day, no one is completely certain where these cities were because there is nothing left. Sodom and Gomorrah are the type given for us to understand God's final judgment.

Genesis 3:19

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

When Jesus returns, all the dead who are Christ's will be resurrected. This event is called "the resurrection of the just" (Acts 24:15; Luke 14:14). Those who partake are called "the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36). This resurrection is also called "the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:5 and 6), "the better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35), the resurrection "to everlasting life" (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29).

The Scriptures speak of another resurrection "the resurrection of the unjust" (Acts 24:15), "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29), resurrection "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). This resurrection is for all who are not in the resurrection of the just. Revelation 20:5 refers to them as "the rest of the dead."

Revelation 14:10-12 This section is not necessarily talking about God's final judgment on the wicked with the lake of fire. Remember what we have already read about fire and brimstone (sulfur).

Revelation 6:12-17 Great earthquake

Revelation 8:7 There came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

Revelation 8:8 At the second trumpet, a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea.

Revelation 8:10 At the third trumpet, a star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers...

Revelation 9:17 and 18 The sixth trumpet - 200 million horsemen – "the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and

smoke and brimstone. A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.”

Revelation 11:13 Another great earthquake

We cannot now conclude from these verses that God will keep the wicked alive forever to inflict everlasting pain, to suffer endlessly in conscious agony.

Revelation 14:10 Drink of the wine of the wrath of God because in verse 8 they drank of the wine of the passion of her (Babylon’s) immorality. The cup of God’s wrath is a frequently used Old Testament symbol of divine judgment (Job 21:20; Psalm 60:3; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15-38; and Obadiah 16) as it is here.

Revelation 16:19

The Lamb opens the seals, and the angels blow the trumpets and carry on the judgments, so indeed their torment is in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb.

Revelation 14:11 “The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever.” The first time the word “smoke” is used in the Bible is with Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 19:28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

Psalm 37:20 But the wicked will perish; and the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.

Isaiah 34: 9 and 10 Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land will become burning pitch. It will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate; none will pass through it forever and ever.

Revelation 19:1-3 " And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever."

Revelation 14:11 “No rest day and night” means they cannot escape the torment that will be theirs. “Day and night” occurs elsewhere, in Revelation 4:8; 7:15; 12:10, and 20:10.

Revelation 19:20 and 21 “Lake of fire” occurs only in Revelation. Here it seems to indicate their annihilation. This takes place before the thousand year reign, before the final judgment, after the second resurrection. They received their eternal damnation before anyone else.

Revelation 20:7-10 The punishment is for the beast, false prophet, and the devil and not the wicked. The phrase “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” is difficult to square with the rest of the Bible and simple logic.

Revelation 20:11-15 The lake of fire cannot be a literal fire in that it destroys spirit beings, death, and the grave.

Revelation 21:8 Twice it is called the second death which can be understood based upon the entire Bible as death that is irreversible and eternal.

Revelation 20:10 The phrase “day and night” is used elsewhere in Revelation.

Revelation 4:8 The four living creatures ... day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

Revelation 7:15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple;

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night."

Revelation 14:11 "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."

“Day and night” used in Revelation is not referring to 24 hours, rather the recurrent actions and continuously. The phrase “forever and ever” also is used repeatedly in Revelation indicating eternal, unending. In 20:1, the devil is chained in the abyss for one thousand years where he continued to live, whereas the lake of fire seems to be contrasted to the abyss in that it represents eternal destruction and ending.

Revelation 21 shows us that after all the evil is completely eliminated forever, Yahweh finally realizes His purpose of the ages which is to dwell among His people in a loving harmonious relationship. With the entire scope of the Scriptures in mind, it is not reasonable to think that Satan, demons, the beast, the false prophet, and wicked people continue to exist somewhere. They will all be totally annihilated for eternity.

Revelation 14:12 The destiny of the wicked has been described in all its gruesome detail, and the faithful are saved from this terrible wrath.

Revelation 14:13 The dead in Christ are blessed when we consider the destiny of the wicked and embrace the promise of the righteous. They are blessed in being about to sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), in having part in the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6), and in having right to the tree of life (Revelation 22:14). Revelation 14:14-16 follows the explanation of why they are pronounced "blessed" now in particular, namely, the Son of man on the cloud is just coming to gather them in as the harvest ripe for garner.