

Overview (for full chart see handout 1-8-20, Rev 1)

- 8-9 Open 7th SEAL including
 - * 6 of the 7 angels/servants sound their trumpets
 - * First woe
- 10 *Interlude: Explanation of John’s call*
- 11 Continued 7th SEAL
 - * 2 Witnesses in Jerusalem
 - * 2nd Woe Finished
 - * 7th Angel sounds trumpet
- 12-14 Seven Short Visions: Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of Satan
 - * Woman as the Church of God appears
 - * Premortal war with Lucifer continued on earth with Dragon or Serpent
- 14 Three of the Seven Short Visions: 144,000 Sealed, *Interlude: Explanation of Restoration and Christ harvests His Righteous*
- 15 *Interlude: Explanation of Heavenly Temple with 7 Angels with 7 Last Plagues*
- 16 Final scenes of the world
 - * 7 Angels Pour out Plagues
 - * Battle of Armageddon

Chapter 14:

The chapter continues with the cycle of seven short visions that began in Revelation 12:1. Chapter 14 is divided into thirds by the fourth, fifth, and sixth short vision (and chapter 15 begins with the seventh). Revelation 14 swings back like a pendulum from the previous visions of a trinity of terrifying satanic beasts, to the hopeful message of the restoration of Christ’s everlasting gospel. Just like the former saints, the modern disciples are called to follow Christ with exactness.

4th Short Vision: The Lamb and 144,000 Sealed Servants (Rev 14:1-5)

Rev 14:1 “I looked . . .” The phrase, “I looked” or “I saw,” is repeated seven times and opens the next few visions (found in chapter 14: 1, 6, 14, and 15:1, 2, 5, 11). The phrase divides each part of this chapter into three visions. The Book of Revelation repeats this phrase in separate sections thirty-six times. Similarly, “Look” or “I looked” is used thirty-five times in Nephi’s record of the Tree of Life vision (1 Nephi 11-15).

“The Lamb was standing on Mt. Zion” (NR) The Lamb of God is Jesus Christ (spelled with a capital L, to distinguish it from the counterfeit lamb; see John 1:29, 36). The Lamb of God stands on the firm land of Mt. Zion—specifically meaning the place of God’s kingdom. “Zion” is used in scripture to describe:

- 1) Enoch’s city
- 2) God’s dwelling place on earth,
- 3) The saints’ community,
- 4) The central city where God rules at the end of the world (Draper-Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 535).

| “Zion” cited in Scripture | Old Testament | New Testament | Book of Mormon | Doctrine and Covenants | Pearl of Great Price |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Number verses: | 153 | 7 (Sion) | 42 | 191 | 14 |

- Mt. Zion physically is where The Lamb stands ready to work—either on Mt Moriah (the temple mount in Jerusalem), or the New Jerusalem (Independence, Missouri). The Lamb’s name on their foreheads’ contrasts with the wicked beast’s mark in the same place (Rev 3:12; 7:3-8).

- In D&C 133 the Lord restored a condensed overview of the preparation of Jesus' Second Coming through the millennium. We learn the Lord will stand on "mount of Olivet, and upon the mighty ocean, . . . and upon the land of Zion." Mt. Olivet refers to the hillside adjacent to Mt. Moriah, also known as the Mount of Olives (Mt 24; Act 1:12).

"with him were 144,000 people who had this name on their foreheads"
(NR)

The 144,000 represent a large host of God's faithful servants who are sealed and protected by Him (see Rev 7:4). As discussed earlier, Joseph learned through revelation that this group are the church of the Firstborn or those of the sealed "holy order of God" (D&C 77:11).

A similar prophecy of the 144,000 is recorded in D&C 133:18,
When the Lamb shall stand upon Mount Zion, and with him
a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name
written on their foreheads.

D&C 77:11, 144,000

"Those who are sealed are high priests, ordained unto the holy order of God, to administer the everlasting gospel; for they are they who are ordained out of every nation . . . by the angels to whom is given power over the nations of the earth, to bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn."

The number carries symbolic meaning on at least two fronts. Twelve represents God's order, perfected (12 x 12), and is tied to their largest number, "thousands." In Rev 7:4, we learned the number included 12,000 from each of the twelve Tribes of Israel, or "every nation" (D&C 77:11). It helps to understand the symbolism by looking at the etymology of the word, "Israel / *Yisrael* / God strives / he will rule as God" (Strong's #3478). Jacob first received the new name or title Israel, in Genesis 32:28, because "as a prince" he had "power with God and with men," and "prevailed" (KJV), or "struggled with God and with humans and have overcome" (NIV).

When the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke on the 144,000 he "indicated that the conferral of the fullness of the priesthood was a 'sealing . . . on top of the head,' of which the phrase 'sealed on their foreheads' was symbolic." (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:196). On February 4, 1844, the Prophet indicated that "the selection of the persons to form that number had already commenced." Furthermore, Joseph taught that it was through an ordinance conferring the fullness of the priesthood that these high priests could be qualified to be a part of the special missionary force in the last days (D&C 77:11). Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave his opinion too, "At his Second Coming . . . these 144,000 are Gods, as the name on their foreheads specifies; their callings and elections have been made sure; they are exalted personages; they are 'redeemed from among men' (Rev 14:4-5), they have attained perfection" (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1985, 640). If this is the case, they include the righteous men and women who have been sealed and ordained in this sacred manner (D&C 77:11).

Consistent with Elder McConkie's inclusion of both genders as the sealed-high-priests in this verse, the Prophet Joseph wrote a letter from Liberty Jail on Sunday, December 16, 1838, that includes a helpful definition:

And now Dear and Well beloved Brethren and when we say brethren, we mean those who have continued Faithful in Christ, Men, Women, and Children, we feel to exhort you in the name of the Lord Jesus, to be strong in the faith in the new and everlasting Covenant (www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/52; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:232; Dean Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 374-382).

Joseph's definition cannot be transferred to John's words in Rev 14:1, but the message is consistent with modern revelation.

Furthermore, the "high priests" probably includes "high priestess," as the holiest order in the eternal sense is not received singly, but for sealed couples (D&C 132:19). Joseph referred to the "holiest order" as those who received "the Holy Spirit of Promise" as a permanent sealing. This comes after a disciple has valiantly followed the Lord and honored his or her covenants. The Holy Spirit of Promise initially ratifies the authenticity of all ordinance. Then after a period of trials, disciples who have been valiant in their testimonies of Christ will receive an additional sealing—most often in the next life (see D&C 76:53; 88:3; 124:124; and 132:7, 18-19, 26; and my institute handout 07/21/2020).

Rev 14:2-3 "I heard a sound from heaven . . . lyre players . . . They sang a new song in front of the throne . . . no one was able to learn the new song except the 144,000 people . . . redeemed from the earth" (NR) Music fills the heavens. The sacred lyrics of the "new song" are possibly tied to the ordination of those redeemed people. They have been bought back from slavery, Satan, sin, and selfishness. Another "new song" is recorded in the D&C 84:98-102. The song is sung before the throne with the four creatures and twenty-four elders from chapter 1. Chapter 15 includes other lyrics for the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb" (Rev 15:3-4)

Rev 14:4-5 "These . . . are morally clean . . . follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed . . . in their mouths no lie is found—they are blameless" (NR) The KJV and most English translations describes the redeemed as "virgins," which refers to their purity, lack of idolatry, deceitful words, and sexual sins—but not necessarily celibate. In

addition to the NR (New Rendition) cited here, another literal translation reads: “or they are pure” (BLB, Berean Literal Bible). The NASB (New American Standard Bible) also gives room for married couples as it reads: “they have kept themselves chaste.” As the “firstfruits unto God,” those who follow the Lamb will offer (or have offered) their converted, tried souls.

5th Short Vision: Three Angels Proclaiming the Gospel (Rev 14:6-7)

Rev 14:6 “I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach . . . to every nation”

I read this verse as prophesying of angels restoring God’s truths to the earth. The verse incidentally explains that the complete “everlasting gospel” was not on the earth at the time with any kindred nor in any nation. A restoration was needed before the Savior comes again.

If this angel assures in the Restoration as we know it, then this short vision is either a flashback to the sixth seal again, or each seal may represent a dispensation, then it coincides with opening the seventh seal. In either time table, John’s vision gives the needed background on Christ’s Restoration to understand the work of God in the latter days. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ often identify the angel flying through the midst of heaven as Moroni. However, many heavenly messengers brought forth the Restoration and priesthood keys (D&C 13; 27; 128; 133:36-39). These angels fulfilled biblical prophecies (Rev 14:6-7; Amos 3:7; etc.).

The use of: “everlasting gospel,” is unique to this verse. It has universal application for repentance available to all who will. Calling repentance to the world is our work today. Before the Second Coming John prophesied that “the gospel” would go to every nation.

As an aside, the Prophet Joseph referenced this verse twelve times in his sermons and editorials. Repeatedly he mentioned the angel bringing the priesthood:

John the Revelator saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth. The scripture is ready to be fulfilled when great wars, famines, pestilence, great distress, judgments, &c., are ready to be poured out on the inhabitants of the earth. John saw the angel having the holy Priesthood, who should preach the everlasting Gospel to all nations. God had an angel—a special messenger—ordained and prepared for that purpose in the last days (*TPJS*, 365).

Likewise, Russell M. Nelson has referenced this verse nine times in his General Conference talks.

Rev 14:7 “He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens . . .’” (NIV) The warning voice commands all to give glory to God and prepare for the judgment day. This is the first time the word “judgment” is mentioned in the text (it is repeated in Rev 16:7; 18:10; 19:2). Why do you think the Day of Judgment is not in the past or future, but the present?

Torment of the Wicked (Rev 14:8-11)

Rev 14:8 “A second angel followed saying: ‘She has fallen, Babylon . . . that provided all nations drink from the wine of her passionate lust . . .’” (NR) The fall of wickedness and worldliness is more than just the fall of a city (see D&C 133:14). It will include the fall of false theories, sinful secrets, and wicked selfish motivations. Satan’s kingdom will finally be destroyed.

Rev 14:9-11 “A third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and its image . . . he will be tortured by fire . . . there will be no rest day or night . . .’” (NR) We hear again about the third angel (as introduced in Rev 8:10) who warns that those who follow the beast will receive God’s full punishment (D&C 84:24; Alma 34:34). The punishments are described with the worst things known at the time—burning sulfur, constant smoke, no rest, and endless torment. Satan’s counterfeits will all be made known and God’s condemnation will fall on the wicked.

Blessings for the Saints (Rev 14:12-13)

Rev 14:12 “This will require the steadfast endurance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and who have faith in Jesus” (NR) To develop faith rather than lose it, the saints must steadfastly live and internalize God’s commandments as they patiently endure. In the words of Dieter Uchtdorf,

Patience means accepting that which cannot be changed and facing it with courage, grace, and faith . . . every hour of every day, even when it is hard to do so. In the words of John the Revelator, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and . . . faith [in] Jesus (*Conference Report*, April 2010).

Disciples who live at this time will require endurance of more than just passive patience, they need courageous steadfastness.

Rev 14:13 “I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them’” (NIV) John’s divine revelation offers another beatitude for the righteous, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” The Lord taught Prophet Joseph Smith that “the Lord’s rest is fullness of his glory” (D&C 84:24). A later section of the D&C also clarified this interpretation: “They shall rest from all their labors here, and shall *continue their works*” (124:86). Our “rest” is not from serving with our God, but resting from the labors of this life. All through the Book of Revelation, God actively participates in the affairs of men. He is not an absentee Lord.

6th Short Vision: Harvesting the Earth (Rev 14:14-20)

Rev 14:14 “I looked and there was a white cloud and on the cloud sat one like a Son of Man. He had a gold wreath . . . and a sharp sickle” (NR) When the Savior descends from heaven, His “crown” (KJV) is the victor’s “wreath / *stephanos*.” His sickle represents the need to harvest the wheat from the tares—the righteous from the wicked (Mt 13:30).

Rev 14:15-16 “Another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, ‘Wield your sickle and begin reaping . . .’ and it was harvested” (NR) The message coming from the heavenly temple represents God the Father directing the timing of the harvest or judgment. Harvesting requires speed; “Once the grain is ripe, the harvest must begin immediately” (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 566).

Rev 14:17-18 “Another angel came out of the temple . . . who also had a sharp sickle. And another angel . . . shouted . . . ‘Wield your sharp sickle . . . the grape-clusters from the grapevine of the earth’” (NR) God’s servants come and go with directions and assignments. The image of the grape harvest evokes wine, the symbol of Jesus’ sacrificial blood atonement. The angel from the temple’s altar had fire, but nothing is burned yet. Instead, the messenger encourages the reapers to harvest and gather the fruits of the vine.

Rev 14:19-20 “The angel wielded his sickle . . . and harvested . . . the great winepress of the wrath of God. The winepress was trampled outside of the city” (NR) Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would tread the winepress alone when He suffered in Gethsemane and on the cross. Jesus described it, “I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God” (D&C 76:107). As our Savior, He atoned for every human life and animal. Our live-blood was redeemed by Jesus, the ultimate Passover Lamb—outside Jerusalem’s city wall in Gethsemane and Golgatha.

“the blood came out of the winepress as high as a horse’s bridle. A thousand six hundred stadia” (NR) The amount of destruction is horrific. Blood and killing are rampant. The literal measurement stretches from the northern to the southern border of OT Israel (from Dan to Beersheba was 184 miles). It may also be figurative as the numbers are ten and four squared. Biblically, four often represents the complete earth (“the four corners of the earth,” Isaiah 11:12; Ezekiel 7:2; Rev 7:1). Both numbers represent “some form of completeness” which may mean that it “symbolizes the breadth of the judgment that will encompass the whole world” (*ibid.*, 569). Yet, we hope that the promise from Rev 9:4 applies here—that God will protect those with His seal on their foreheads in Zion, and remove them from this chaos and destruction.

Chapters 15

Chapter 15 begins with the seventh and last short vision in this cycle. Then John returns to the preparations for the Lord’s Second Coming (Rev 11:19). John sees a vision of the seven last angels who prepared vials or bowls of judgment to be poured out on the earth. Chapters 15 and 16 describe the seven last plagues poured out to cleanse the earth for the Millennium.

7th Short Vision: Saints’ Victory of Land and Sea Beasts (Rev 15:1-4)

Rev 15:1 “I saw another great and marvelous sign in the sky, even angels who had the seven final plagues, for with them the wrath of God was completed” (NR) The number seven is again significant, as it represents the whole heavens that are going to complete the last and final plagues. A perfect group will finalize God’s work. As the numbers are highly symbolic, there may be more or less than seven plagues. Before these angels open their plagues on the earth, we have a celebration of victory.

Rev 15:2 “I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, also those who had overcome the beast . . . were standing on the sea of glass holding lyres of God” (NR) Right before we learn what happens to the wicked, John’s seventh of seven short visions tells of the celestial state of the righteous, or all who “overcome the beast.” The musicians include vocalists and instrumentalists who praise God. The “sea of glass” is mentioned twice in the Bible and twice in the D&C (Rev 4:2; 15:2; D&C 77:1; 139:7). The Prophet Joseph Smith described a similar celestial sphere where angels “reside in the presence of God, on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord. The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim” (D&C 130:7-8). The Prophet Joseph also taught that “the Urim & Thummim is a small representation of this globe” (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph*, 169). When the celestialized earth is described as a “sea of glass,” it does not necessarily mean that it is a flat surface, but possibly that it will have the capacity to see the past, present and future. Those who are valiant in their testimonies of Christ will inherit the celestialized sphere.

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| D&C 77:1 |
| Q. What is the sea of glass? |
| A. “It is the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state” |

Rev 15:3-4 “They were singing . . . the song of Moses . . . and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations’” (NR) Moses sings a victory song after the plagues and destruction of the Egyptian army is complete, and at the end of his leadership (Ex 15:1-19; Deut 32:1-43). As in many things, this experience in Egypt is a type or shadow of future events as well—including the great destruction at the end of the terrestrial earth. Yet the words are not found in our OT, so it may be a uniting of voices in testimony, or perhaps a text is the poem in verses 3b and 4.

The opening stanza: “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty” may have been lost from an earlier text, though, because we read that same phrase in Lehi’s preaching in Jerusalem (1 Nephi 1:14), and a similar version in Jacob 4:8. The opening phrase, “great and marvelous,” became popular throughout the Book of Mormon. The twenty-four citations have a variety of meanings. Variations of “a great and marvelous work” are also used in five sections of the D&C—all referring to the Book of Mormon and the restoration (D&C 6:1; 11:1; 12:1; 14:1; 76:114). We also find reference to a general “song of the Lamb” in D&C 133:56.

Seven Angels with Seven Plagues (Rev 15:5-8)

Rev 15:5-6 “I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened. The seven angels . . . came out of the temple dressed in pure, bright linen with gold sashes around their chests” (NR) John describes the heavenly temple open clear through to the Holy of Holies where the ark of the testaments / covenant represented God’s throne. The focus is on the law or covenant that light up the upcoming judgments. The angelic dress speaks of their purity through receiving the Savior’s atoning gifts.

Rev 15:7 “One of the four animals gave the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the wrath of God” (NR) The “vials” (KJV) or “*phial* / shallow bowl,” held liquids. The similar dish was used to catch the blood of the sacrificial animal in the temple (Ex 37:16; Num 4:7). Priests sprinkled blood at the altar when making sacrifices (Lev 1:5; 3:8). Here the content of the bowls is not blood, but a plague that will shed blood. It represents the wrath of God poured out in its fullness against the wicked. In the following chapters the angels pour out the great plagues from the bowls.

Rev 15:8 “The temple was filled with the smoke of God’s glory and power so that no one could enter until the seven plagues . . . were finished” (NR) The OT also describes times when the glory of the Lord as manifested as a cloud or smoke filled the tabernacle and thus prohibited the priests from entering (Ex 40:34-38). The smoke from the temple incense also represent prayers ascending to God (Rev 5:8; 8:3-4). It again demonstrates the Father’s active presence in the history of the world.