



The Hour Of His Judgement Has Come

Revelation 14

- 1. The Firstfruits (verses 1-5)**
- 2. The Angelic Warnings (verses 6-13)**
- 3. The Final Harvest (verses 14-20)**

This morning we will be looking at Revelation 14. In studying this passage, I learned a new word. It's a word that I have heard before, but have passed by. I should have known this word, especially preaching through Revelation. But it's a word that I didn't know until this week, until I took the time to look it up.

The word is "proleptic" (prō-'lep-tik). It means "coming before." The word, "pro" means "before." The word, "lepsis" means "grasping." Thus, "proleptic" literally means "grasping before." Using synonyms, proleptic means "antecedent" or "previous." But the idea of the word is that it comes with a level of "anticipation" of something coming in the future. So, more properly, proleptic means "anticipative." In a phrase, proleptic means, "The representation of a future act as if presently accomplished."

This is really the entire book of Revelation. It is proleptic. John sees the future as if it was all accomplished. The visions that John sees and explains are all in the past, he sees that they have happened. But in reality, they haven't happened yet. They are proleptic.

However, in a more particular sense, Revelation 14 is proleptic. Because it anticipates a future event within the flow of Revelation. More particularly, Revelation 14 speaks about the final hour of judgment, which doesn't take place until the end of Revelation. Yet here in Revelation 14, the end is anticipated. You can see that best in chapter 14, when the angels give their pronouncements. Look at verses 6 and 7.

Revelation 14:6-7

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 sets the time-frame of chapter 14. It is "the hour of his judgment." It is that time in human history when everyone will stand before the Lord and give account for their life.

The message given here is an eternal gospel! That which has always been true. That which always will be true: "Fear God and give him glory!" In other words, throw yourself at the mercy of God! It's your only hope to escape the judgment that is coming your way! The good news is that there is hope in God, who will receive you into his care, if you, but seek to give him glory. Notice that this announcement comes at the hour of the judgment of God, which only comes later in the book of Revelation.

The next angel also sets the time-frame for chapter 14. "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'" (Revelation 14:8). This is anticipating the end of chapters 17 and 18, where Babylon actually falls. This is proleptic.

Again, at the end of chapter 14, we see the reaping of the earth, some to life, and some to destruction. Yet, we see, in Revelation 15, that there are some events that must take place before Revelation 14. We read in Revelation 15:1, "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished." In other words, for the wrath of God to finish, the bowl judgments need to come. But in chapter 14, we see the end, the final judgment. This chapter is proleptic.

If you think about it a bit, this has been true of other places in Revelation. Do you remember chapter 11? It speaks of the end, when "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15). Also, the seals and the trumpets seem to take the judgment of God beyond a mere chronological reading of the text.

With the number of passages anticipating future events in Revelation, putting forth futuristic timelines in Revelation is difficult. The book pictures the end from so many different angles. It is difficult to put them all together, because the time-frame of Revelation is not straightforward.

Anyway, the title of my message this morning is "The Hour of His Judgment Has Come." It comes straight from verse 7. Let's read the text to put it in our minds. As I read, listen for the three scenes.

Revelation 14:1-20

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. 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. 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.

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."

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."

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."

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!"

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. 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.

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.

Let's look at the first scene, which is my first point:

1. The Firstfruits (verses 1-5)

We see this term being used in verse 4. Look at the last phrase of verse 4,

Revelation 14:4

These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb.

The sense here of "redemption" is that they have been finally purchased, that they will be with God forever singing his praises. That's where verse 3 places them, in heaven, before the throne of God

Revelation 14:3

and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

This is similar to the scene that we see in chapter 5, but we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let's go back to verse 1 to set the scene.

Revelation 14:1

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.

We have seen the "144,000" mentioned before. It was back in chapter 7 where we saw this multitude being sealed on their foreheads (Revelation 7:3). In Revelation 7, we weren't told much about this seal. But here in chapter 14, we see that the name of the Lamb and of the Father are written on their foreheads.

This comes in direct contrast to chapter 13, in which people were marked on their right hands or on their foreheads with the mark of the beast. But here in Revelation 14 is the real mark! It's a mark of God and of the Lamb! It shows true ownership of the true God.

Like in much of Revelation, this is what John saw! He saw people with names on foreheads. Now, like much of Revelation, I don't think that this is literal! I don't think that in heaven, we will go around with this mark on our forehead of God and of the Lamb. But it does mean something! It means that these 144,000 are sealed and protected by the Lord! These 144,000 are identified as standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. This is the picture of victory!

If you trace through Biblical history, you will discover Jesus seated at the throne of God on Mount Zion, waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.

Psalms 110:1

The LORD says to my Lord:

Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.

But here we see the Lord Jesus standing! He is ready to fight his war and to claim his victory, as his enemies are placed at his footstool! Psalm 110 continues with the following:

Psalm 110:2

The LORD sends for the from Zion your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your enemies!

Zion is the city of God! It is the place of victory. Again, I don't think that this is earthly Zion, because we see these 144,000 redeemed and singing praises to God before the heavenly throne! We see this in verse 2 and 3.

Revelation 14:2-3

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.

Verse 2 tells of a loud, heavenly voice in heaven. Verse 3 tells of the singing voices of these 144,000. They were singing this "new song" before the throne of God! This is in heaven! This is the heavenly Zion! Where all of the redeemed will be before the Lord, singing his praise.

This brings us back to Revelation 5, where we see these same living creatures and these same elders before the same throne of God.

Revelation 5:9-10

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Likewise here in Revelation 14, we see the redeemed singing a new song. I don't think that this song is the same song as in Revelation 5. That's why it's called a "new song." But I do think that the subject of the song is the same. I believe that this new song is a song of redemption, a song of Jesus redeeming his people by his blood! bringing them before God, to magnify him before his throne in all of his glory. I say this because of how John describes the song itself.

Revelation 14:3

No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

The picture that John sees is of those who get the song, and those who don't. It's a bit like Jazz music, with its improvisation and feeling and style. I have heard it said about Jazz music "If you have to ask what Jazz is, you'll never know [what Jazz is]." That's a bit like what this is talking about. The only ones who could learn this song were "the redeemed from the earth."

The picture isn't of one's musical abilities. The picture is of what's in the soul. Only the redeemed get the songs of the redeemed! That's why what we do here at Rock Valley Bible Church every Sunday is seen as foolishness from the world!

I was recently speaking with someone reaching out to her neighbor, who is not a Christian. Her neighbor said, "Why do you have to go to church?" She replied to her, "It's not that we have to go to church. It's that we get to go to church!"

This is the reality of those who are redeemed. We get to gather to sing the songs of redemption! And if you have to ask what songs of redemption are, you can't learn the songs of redemption.

Look at the how these redeemed are described in verses 4-5.

Revelation 15:4-5

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.

This is a picture of purity. It's not a literal picture, that these 144,000 are only celibate men, who have never married. Rather, the usage of sexual purity signifies purity in general.

In the Old Testament, God often described Israel as his unfaithful people, who have gone after prostitutes. (In fact, this will be the picture in chapter 17 of Revelation, the picture of Babylon, the great prostitute to which the nations flee.) But here in Revelation 14, the contrast is that the redeemed don't go after the harlotry of Babylon! They are virgins! They are the bride of Christ. This is how the New Testament describes the church, as the spotless bride, that will be married to Jesus one day. This picture will come to us in Revelation 19, when we see the marriage supper of the Lamb!

The redeemed are the pure ones! Made pure, by the blood of Christ, made blameless through him!

The redeemed ones are the faithful ones, I love the phrase in verse 4, "It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes." These are these ones who have God's mark on their foreheads. These are the ones who will be redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who will be found to be blameless. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes! What a great picture of salvation!

Great point of application here: Do you follow the Lamb wherever he goes? Is your life characterized by obedience to Christ? Obedience to Christ is the great characteristic of the redeemed! Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). It's really as simple as this. Love for Christ is demonstrated by following in obedience to Christ. Ultimately, those who will be redeemed by Christ, are the pure ones who are following him.

2. The Angelic Warnings (verses 6-13)

There are three warnings in these verses. The first warning comes in verses 6 and 7.

Revelation 14:6

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.

This angel is literally flying in "mid-heaven." The ESV gets it exactly right! This angel is flying in a place where all can hear his voice! This angel proclaims "an eternal gospel." That is, the gospel that has always been proclaimed. That is, the gospel that always will be proclaimed! Here's the content of that gospel:

Revelation 14:7

"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."

Isn't it interesting here that Jesus isn't mentioned in this "eternal gospel." Certainly, the redemption applied by Jesus is assumed, especially as you read the entirety of the book of Revelation. This eternal gospel is true in Old Testament times and New Testament times.

At this point in Revelation, it is obvious who will win the battle. It is the Lamb who is on the winning side! He is standing on Mount Zion, ready to take his kingdom. He will defeat the beast of Revelation 13. He will defeat the dragon of Revelation 12. He will judge the peoples. So fear God! Give glory to him! Bow to the creator! Bow to him who made the heavens and the earth!

Notice here the urgency of the message:

Revelation 14:7

the hour of his judgment has come!

Do you remember when Jesus said, "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" (Matthew 24:14)? We are seeing the fulfillment right here in Revelation 14:6-7. This angel is flying "directly overhead." No one from all of creation will miss this message. It will be heard by all who dwell on the earth, "every nation and tribe and language and people." Jesus said, "When this gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, then the end will come." That's what we see here, the end has come. The hour of his judgment has come.

Now, that's not to say that we don't need to make any efforts to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth, because this angel will do it in the future. Understanding apocalyptic literature, it may well be that this angel flying in mid-heaven, is symbolic of the believers spreading the gospel to all of creation! It may be! I don't know.

At any point, the good news is this: there is still opportunity of all to repent, even until the day of judgment. Though the angel doesn't explicitly say it, the implication is clear. If you repent of your sin. If you fear the Lord and give him glory, you will not face the devastating effects of the judgment, whether the bowls that are poured out in Revelation 16. whether it is judgment against Babylon in Revelation 17-18, symbolic of all of the world systems.

That means that there is an opportunity for you today as well. You can repent and trust in Christ! And you will not face the judgment, but will be spared!

Let's move on to the next angelic warning. It comes in verse 8.

Revelation 14:8

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."

I trust that you see that this verse is prophetic. It anticipates the ultimate fall of Babylon in chapters 17 and 18. I trust that you see also of the metaphor being used here. It is the metaphor of a drunken prostitute! It is the metaphor of those who live for their own pleasures. What symbolizes the sin of the world, but pursuit of their own pleasures? The world pursues the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17).

All of this is what God will condemn. We will see more of this when we get to chapters 17 and 18. OK, the third angelic warning begins in verse 9.

Revelation 14:9-10

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,

The image here is not of Babylon to be explained later (as verse 8 was). The image here goes back to chapter 13, and to the beast.

Worshiping the beast and his image will bring the wrath of God upon you. Notice here how worship of the beast here is practically synonymous with receiving the mark of the beast. If you are worshiping the beast and his image, you will have his mark upon you. Your mark will be the target of the wrath of God.

Revelation 14:10

he also will drink the wine of God's wrath,

And note how bad this wrath is. Verse 10 continues,

Revelation 14:10-11

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."

This is the end of those who rebel against the Lord. it is the "full strength" of the cup of the wrath of God. We have various degrees of drinks in our society. We can have weak tea or strong tea. We can have weak coffee or strong coffee. We can have weak lemonade or strong lemonade. But when it comes to the final wrath of God, it is full strength. This is 200 proof!

John describes the torment as awful and forever! It's fire and sulfur. It's reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah, which was destroyed by "fire and sulfur" from heaven (Genesis 19:24). This torment is "forever and ever" with "no rest, day or night" upon those who worship the beast.

There are many who are offended by this. There are many who turn away from the gospel because of this, because, they can't reconcile how a God of love could do such things to people. And I admit, it is difficult to comprehend, how human sin can receive such awful torment, forever and ever.

I would have you consider several things:

1. Sins are measured in accordance with the one sinned against. A sin against an innocent, defenseless child is worse than against a consenting adult. Sin against an infinitely holy God deserves infinite punishment. Since all sin is ultimately sin against the Lord, all sin deserves infinite punishment.
2. Without judgment, there is no salvation. If God did not punish sin, then why did Christ die? If God did not judge the wicked, then what are you saved from? Salvation always comes through judgment. When the people of Israel were saved from Egypt, it came because the Egyptians were judged by the plague.
3. You can embrace the Scriptures, or your own ideas. If your idea of the love of God is such that it can't account for such punishment, then you have a different God than the God of the Bible. Yes, God is love, but he also brings his wrath upon those who rebel against him. The Bible is clear about this doctrine of retribution. Jesus taught it. Paul taught it. I would encourage you to bow to the clear teaching of Scripture, not your own ideas.
4. You can escape such torment. Remember the eternal gospel (verses 6-7)? Fear God and give him glory! and none of this wrath will come upon you. This is true, even until the day of judgment! God holds out opportunity for salvation.

Now, the sad thing is this: many are so hardened that they will not repent, even in the day of judgment.

Revelation 16:8-11

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

God's wrath will come upon those who are so hard, that they will not repent, even experiencing the wrath of God. Such is the hardness of the human heart. If you are planning to wait until the day of judgment to repent, you will probably not repent on that day.

One last phrase from this angelic warning deserves some comment:

Revelation 16:10

he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

We often think of hell as separation from God. And indeed it is. Paul wrote, "[God will inflict] vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Yet here, we see those being punished forever and ever will suffer "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb" (verse 10).

How to reconcile these things? The angels and the Lamb aren't going to be observing the punishment forever. They will be in glory, on the throne, giving and receiving worship. Yet, there is a sense that Jesus and the angels will be fully aware of the suffering of sinners in hell. I think it's because the world mocks Jesus in their sin, and the angels see it more clearly than we do. And Jesus will mock the world in their punishment, and the angels will see it as well.

But there is no mention of the redeemed seeing the torment. Indeed, the redeemed will experience no more sadness or tears or griefs or sorrow (Revelation 21:4).

So, what should we do with all of this? Keep the faith.

Revelation 14:12

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

This is a call for all of the book of Revelation. Keep trusting the Lord! Keep following Jesus! Keep obeying his commandments. It's worth it! This is the message of Revelation, to those who are struggling through persecution! "It will be worth it!"

I picture the day some 500 years from now in eternity when we are all in heaven. You and I will have this discussion about this sermon. You will say to me, "Pastor Steve, do you remember when you told us that serving Jesus would be worth it? You were right! It was worth it!" This is the main point of application of the text.

Revelation 14:13

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!"

Again, the book of Revelation is intended to be a blessing. It begins with these words, "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3). The blessing here comes to those who are dying in the Lord.

It's because Revelation 14 is set at the hour of the judgment of God. Judgment is at hand. Many will die on the final day in the final hour. And if you are in the Lord, it will be a blessing to die, because you can rest from your labors. All the good that you have done on the earth will simply follow you into heaven.

Now, there are two reasons the Spirit gives for the blessing that comes at death. First of all is rest from your labors. We understand that, as death brings an end to all striving and toil. You enter that blessed state, with the Lord forever. But the second reason for the blessing is a bit more difficult. The Spirit says that "their deeds follow them." What does this mean?

The meaning could be what Jesus will say at the final judgment. When speaking to the sheep, Jesus says, "I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Matthew 25:36). These deeds are following after them, demonstrating that these people love Jesus by obeying his commandments. Your deeds will follow you into heaven, particularly your good deeds.

We come now to our third scene. We have seen three angels. We will see three more in what I'm calling,

1. The Firstfruits (verses 1-5)

Actually, we see two harvest. The first harvest comes in verses 14-16. The second comes in verses 17-20. Consider the first harvest:

Revelation 14:14

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 an echo of Daniel 7:13, "and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man." This is Jesus coming in his glory.

Revelation 14:15-16

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.

Is this angel commanding Jesus, as if Jesus is in some way below the angel in authority? I don't think so. Do you remember when Jesus said, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36). In this case, the angel came from the temple, with the Father who alone knows the day and hour. The angel, then, is simply the messenger from the throne room of God that the time has come to reap the earth.

There is no mention here of who exactly are being harvested here. But I do believe that this is the reaping of the righteous, when Jesus brings the sheep into the fold. He is taking all the believers from the earth. All who are alive, he's simply taking them up. Maybe this is the rapture.

Beginning in verse 17, we see the other harvest, which is clearly the harvest of the unrighteous unto death.

Revelation 14:17-20

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.

The picture here is one that all of us have seen, of people stomping on the grapes to extract the juice from the grapes. In this case, however, the grapes are like people. They are stomped upon and their blood comes out.

I picture the scene from Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, when the naughty little girl, violet eats one of Wonka's three-course dinner sticks of gum. Because the gum was in development stage, there was a problem with the dessert. And violet blows up into a giant blueberry. She is carried away to be squeezed to get the juice out of her.^[1]

In this case, we see the angel reaping people into the winepress of the wrath of God. Then like grapes are squeezed out at the time of harvest, so also is the blood flowing out of people. The blood is so much that it comes as high as a horse's bridle. That's five, six, seven feet high! Deep enough for a horse to swim in the blood.

This blood river flows for 1,600 stadia. When trying to figure out the symbolism of this, people see four times four and ten times ten. I have no idea of the symbolism of this. Perhaps best is to understand how long this is. It's about 184 miles, which is the length of Israel. It may also simply mean that the blood-shed is great!

Have you ever seen pictures of a murder-scene? There is often blood everywhere! Such is the case here. There is blood everywhere! But so much blood that this river is formed.

This is the two harvests. Jesus told of these two harvests in Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 and in Matthew 13:47-50. The first passage describes the harvest of the wheat and the tares. It is the angels who come and gather the wheat into the barn and the tares into the furnace. In the second passage, it is the angels who come and separate the good fish from the bad fish. The good were sorted into containers. The bad were thrown away.

In Matthew 13, it is the angels who are involved in this activity. Here in Revelation, we see the involvement of Jesus as well. There is a bit of mystery here as to how exactly this works out. But in one thing there is no mystery: at the end of time, people will be divided into two groups. Either you come into his presence, or you are wiped away and your blood will flow in this giant river someplace, mixed and mingled with the blood of all who refuse to bow down to Jesus.

Let me remind you once again, that you can escape this doom. "Fear God and give him glory" is the eternal gospel proclaimed in this passage (verses 6-7). "Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Let us be found fearing God and worshiping him.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 26, 2023 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] You can view the scene here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Yqw_f26SvM.