

THE REDEEMING JUDGE SUPPLIES REST AND REWARD:  
A SERMON ON REVELATION 14:1–13  
Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD (7/23/23)

**Kids' Sermon**

Have any of you ever read or watched the Chronicles of Narnia? In those stories, there is a Lion. What is his name? “Aslan.” Is he a tame Lion, under someone else’s control? “No, he is not tame.” But is he good or bad? “Good.” In the Chronicles of Narnia, Aslan is a picture of someone we know. In one of the stories, Edmund turns away from Aslan and becomes a prisoner of the evil White Witch. But Aslan was willing to take Edmund’s place as a substitute. Aslan allowed himself to be captured and beaten and sacrificed on the witch’s altar—all to save Edmund. Whom does Aslan remind you of in the Bible? Jesus is the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah who sacrifices himself like a **Lamb** to save us from our sin. Jesus was not under anyone else’s control. But he is good and loving, and he willingly lays down his life so that we can live.

Much of the book of Revelation uses imagery like we find in the Narnia Chronicles. So, when we read in Revelation about the Lion King who is also a saving Lamb, we are supposed to think of Jesus. And when we read about the **Dragon**, the Lion-Lamb King’s enemy, whom are we to think of? “The devil!” That is right! The Dragon is “that ancient serpent [from the garden], who is called the devil and Satan” (12:9). John, who wrote Revelation, describes him as “a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns” (12:3). He looks scary, and he is very mean, always trying to hurt and mess up things. But he knows that “his time is short” because God promised that the true King—the Lion-Lamb—would come to judge and defeat the Dragon (12:9, 12; cf. Gen 3:15).

Now, I have one more character I want us to think about from Revelation; he’s an evil monster called the **Beast**. Lions, tigers, and bears are all beasts. And the serpent in the garden was “more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made” (Gen 3:1). The serpent was a beast, and everyone who follows him are considered his children, and they end up looking beastly like him. This is why we’re told that the Beast who rose out of the sea had “ten horns and seven heads” just like the Dragon (Rev 13:1). Whoever sees the Beast is to know that he is an offspring of the serpent and is a splitting image of his father the Devil.

God the Father made Adam and Eve in his image, and they were supposed to look like God, ruling in God’s stead as king and queen over God’s world. They were to reflect, resemble, and represent God on the earth. But Adam and Eve

turned away from God, and gave their rule to the Devil, who then became the ruler of this world. Everyone who follows the serpent ends up looking beastly like him, and in Revelation the Beast represents earthly kings and presidents who stand against Christ and his followers. Like Adam, Jesus is God's Son, but unlike Adam, Jesus perfectly images his Father. Jesus is better than Adam, and he is stronger than the Dragon-Serpent. Jesus willingly sacrifices himself to save those under the Dragon-Serpent's control, but because Jesus never sinned, the Dragon-Serpent could not hold him. What would have been eternal death gets reversed into eternal life, and Jesus rises from the grave in victory over the Dragon-Serpent and the Beast to save all who would believe in him.

Don't follow the Dragon-Serpent and let your life look like his, for Jesus, the Lion-Lamb King, will soon judge with fire the Dragon-Serpent, the Beastly Kings, and all who follow them. The Lion-Lamb King is greater than the Dragon-Serpent and the Beast. Jesus wins, and if you want to be on the winning team, you must believe and follow Jesus. I hope all of you will be on the winning team. Let me pray for you....

THE REDEEMING JUDGE SUPPLIES REST AND REWARD:  
A SERMON ON REVELATION 14:1–13  
Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD (7/23/23)

**Main Sermon**

The book of Revelation declares from numerous angles the single truth that “the Lamb will consummate his kingdom for God’s glory by saving his people and judging his enemies.”<sup>1</sup> As we journey through the book of Revelation, this story is progressively retold perhaps as many as seven times, moving from Christ’s first coming through his second coming with each cycle offering a different perspective on the Messiah’s tribulation, triumph, and exaltation, the evil one’s work against Christ’s church through persecution and false teaching, and the ultimate victory the redeeming Judge will bring to his people at the end of the age when he defeats all anti-Christian forces and rewards those who remained faithful to him unto death. May the Lord help each of us be among them!

Chapter 12 was the start of one of Revelation’s cycles, and the unit that stretches to the end of chapter 14 includes all the characters we just heard about in the children’s sermon—the Lamb, the Dragon, and the Beast. The main idea of Revelation 14:1–13 is this:

*Fear God and follow Christ by the Spirit as you join the redeemed in resting in the reigning Christ’s presence, singing a new song of salvation, and hoping in God judging his enemies and rewarding his own.*

The passage contains two vision accounts, each of which describe first what John saw and then what he heard. The arrangement will structure the rest of this sermon. Let me read the text, and then we will pray for God’s help....

**Vision 1: The Redeemed’s Rest and Song of Salvation (14:1–5)**

**A. What John Saw: The Reigning Christ with the Redeemed in His Presence (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. (14:1)*

---

<sup>1</sup> Andrew David Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017), 193.

In chapters 12–13 John saw depictions of the unholy trinity—the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, the latter of whom had an appearance “like a lamb” but “spoke like a dragon” (13:11). Now John sees the true Lamb standing on Mount Zion, God’s heavenly capital city (cf. Ps 2:6). Earlier in Revelation 5, John was moved to weep because “no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll” of God’s saving purposes. But then one of the heavenly elders declared, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals” (Rev 5:5). We then read, “And between the throne [of God] and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain” (5:6). Jesus is the Lion-Lamb who receives heaven’s praises.

What we are reading here in chapter 14 builds on those earlier visions. John sees the reigning Lamb standing (not sitting), ready for action, ready to judge. And John notes that with him were 144,000 (14:1). Chapter 7 introduced us to the 12,000 in each of the twelve tribes who make up the new Israel—the new people of God. Throughout Revelation the number twelve represents completeness, as when Mount Zion, the holy city Jerusalem is portrayed with twelve gates on which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, thus stressing how the new Israel are those who get to enter God’s presence. And these gates are part of the city wall that has twelve foundations on which are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (21:12–14). This Jerusalem is in the shape of a cube, noting that it is itself the holy of holies that has now filled all reality; it is God’s temple, the people in whom he dwells and who are built upon the foundation of the apostles with Christ as the cornerstone. The 144,000, therefore, represent the church, the multi-ethnic people of the Lamb who are together counted as the new Israel because they are identified with the chief Israelite King, the Lion of Judah and the Lamb that was slain.

Chapter 7 says of these 144,000 that God had “sealed the servants of God on their foreheads” (7:3), thus marking them between the eyes as his. God’s stamp was on their lives; they bore his mark, and wherever they went they were representing him. Now in 14:1, the seal is described as the Lamb’s “name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.” In old covenant Israel the charge “Yahweh is one, and you are to love him with all” (Deut 6:4–5) was to be bound “as a sign on your hand” and to be placed “as frontlets between your eyes” (6:8). Similarly, new covenant followers are to have the name of the Lamb and his Father influence all we do and think or perceive. However, in Revelation 13:16–17 we see that the Beast also has a mark: “[The second beast] causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or on the

forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.”

This summer our family spent a week camping in Colorado, and during this time we visited Breckenridge. It was during “pride month,” and the whole town had embraced the beastly agenda. Probably 2/3 of the stores flew the colorful pride flag. Would we buy from those stores when they so brazenly endorse a beastly agenda? The Beast seeks to control the economy—to make culture into Babylon, and this also includes entertainment. The Beast remains quiet, so long as you follow his lead, but if you run counter, you should expect to be struck. Consider, for example, how certain MLB teams have fired players who vocally stand against the LGBTQ+ agenda. Thus, to play ball you must not only have a certain skill set; you must affirm a certain worldview. If you have eyes to see and ears to hear, you will grow to recognize the working of the Beast and those who bear his mark.

Whose mark do you bear today? Those who bear the names of the Lamb and his Father are those who will increasingly be restricted from flourishing externally in a culture that follows the Beast. But those who bear the names of the Lamb and his Father also right now enjoy the reigning Lamb’s presence, having been seated “with him in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph 2:6). If you bear his name, take hope today. Let his seal on your forehead shape your perspective of reality, controlling everything that happens between your eyes. Let your commitment to the Lamb and his Father inform your witness in all spheres. In this way, you will not bear Yahweh’s name in vain (Deut 5:11).

John saw the reigning Christ with the redeemed in his presence. Now, in 14:2–5 we learn what he heard—the redeemed singing a new song of salvation.

### **B. What John Heard: The Redeemed Singing a New Song of Salvation (14:2–5)**

*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. (Rev 14:2–3)*

In vv. 2–3 John begins by describing the worship he heard. Adding to his vision of God’s people in Christ’s presence is a thunderous sound of song that rings forth like a giant waterfall cascading and crashing—“like the roar of many

waters and like the sound of loud thunder.” Yet the sound was also delicate and perceptible for it was “like the sound of harpists playing on their harps” (v. 2). John notes that the sound was indeed a song—a new song that the four living creatures and twenty-four elders were singing before the throne. All the imagery here takes us back to chapters 4–5, which along with Revelation 15 make clear that the lyrics of this new song of a new creational age and covenant are filled with praise for salvation from sin and from God’s enemies. You can go to the contexts to see the parallels with chapter 14, but I will read only the song lyrics:

*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 some 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.” (Rev 5:9–10)*

*And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (Rev 15:3–4)*

A new song of praise to the Lamb and to God—a new song of salvation from sin and from persecutors, and this is why the end of Revelation 14:3 declares, “No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” Only the true church can sing the saving praises of God and his Christ. Only for those in Christ is there “now no condemnation” (Rom 8:1). Only those born again enjoy a “living hope” that secures “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (1 Pet 1:3–4).

Having described the worship, John now depicts the worshipers in Revelation 14:4–5.

*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. (Rev 14:4–5)*

First, John describes the two-sided nature of the worshiper’s discipleship—turning and following: In portraying the church’s members as virgins, he is stressing how the Lamb’s bride, enjoying his saving work, is indeed untarnished

and pure, ready for the wedding and consummation of the marriage. As Revelation 19:6–8 testifies:

*“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.* (Rev 19:6–8)

Christ’s atoning work purifies his bride, making her holy and readying her to meet him when he appears.

Yet the 144,000 is also portrayed as celibate males because they are being readied to fight with Christ in his final war, and in the old covenant, only men not engaging in sex could fight Yahweh’s battles (cf. 1 Sam 21:5). Thus, we read, “And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following [Christ] on white horses” for the final battle of the ages (Rev 19:14).

Now, not only do these purified disciples flee from ungodliness; they also “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (14:4). Following Jesus includes pursuing right living. As John says elsewhere, “Whoever says he abides in [Jesus] ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” (1 John 2:6). Yet following him is also being willing to suffer with him, even under intense persecution. As Jesus says, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Have you followed Christ this past week, entrusting yourself to “him who judges justly” (1 Pet 2:22–23)? Can it be said of you what Jesus said of the true saints in Sardis: “[They are a] people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy” (Rev 3:4). Are you among the chosen and the faithful who will be with Jesus at the end? “The Lamb will conquer [his enemies], for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called chosen and faithful” (17:14). Oh, God, help us.

John also notes of the saints, “These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouths no lie was found, for they are blameless” (14:4). In the OT, the firstfruits of harvest were offered back to God as an expression of trust that he would indeed bring in the rest of the harvest. Here, the redeemed from mankind are the firstfruits of the new creation (Jas 1:18), supplying certainty that God will indeed make “*all things new*” (Rev 21:5). The suffering servant was like a Lamb led to the slaughter “although he had done no violence, and no deceit was in his mouth” (Isa 53:9; cf. Zeph 3:13). Similarly, the church is now an offering for God, and, in following the Lamb, no lie is found in

our mouths, for we are blameless, to the praise of his glorious grace. In Christ, new creation dawns, and we, first by declaration and then by a gradual but real process, become more like Christ, representing him in the world.

Brothers and sisters, we represent the name of Christ. We bear his mark, and we must live as those “chosen and faithful.” We bear his name, so may we not bear it in vain. Do not declare you follow Christ and yet choose to look at things he calls impure or to respond in ways that he calls sinful. Jesus died that you may have victory, that you may have self-control and walk with integrity, dignity, and sound speech. Pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt 6:13). I urge you: Flee from evil and follow the Lamb.

## **Vision 2: The Certainty that God Will Judge His Enemies and Reward His Own (14:6–13)**

### **A. What John Saw: Three Angels Declaring God’s Judgment and Urging Perseverance (14:6–12)**

#### 1. Angel 1 calls the redeemed to worship God the judge (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.” (Rev 14:6–7)*

John now sees another one of God’s messengers flying with an eternal gospel for all peoples. Gospel means good news, and it is eternal in that God had it in mind before the ages began. As we read in 13:8, the names of those God purposed to save were “written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” In the present context, this eternal good news comes to the redeemed as a message of both deliverance and destruction. Verses 6–12 place the message of destruction of God’s enemies at the fore, and that is good news for the redeemed.

John was convinced that the church was living in the last hour before judgment. Thus, he says, “[God’s] hour of judgment has come” (14:7; cf. 1 John 2:19). Justice is about giving others what they are due. As creator, God justly deserves the worship of every creature, and he justly punishes all who fail to give it. It is right and proper to fear, glorify, and worship God because he alone created and sustains the universe; he alone is God. Not only this: Heaven is the place in



chapter 12 where the red dragon originally appeared; then he was thrown to the earth, where he now torments the church. The sea is the sphere from which the beast rose in chapter 13, and the springs feed the sea. All that is evil and all that is good in the world is underneath the absolute sovereignty of this God. He controls every sphere of reality from galaxies to subatomic particles, and because of this, he deserves highest praise. “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever” (Rom 11:36). All hope for help, faith, provision, protection can be found in him alone, who controls the moon’s orbit, the rising and falling of nations, and the saving of individual souls not only from the penalty of sin but from its power. Do you have need today? Look to the one who alone can save. Judgment is at hand. So, “work out your salvation with fear and with trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil 2:12–13). We all have a choice to make—whom will we worship? Whom will we follow? Fear God today! You are small, and he is infinitely great. Glorify and worship him by surrendering to his sovereignty and receiving his salvation!

2. Angel 2 now declares the world’s immoral (political, economic, and social) system has fallen (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.” (Rev 14:8)*

For the first time John now introduces a new character—Babylon the great, which signifies the world’s antichristian system through which the devil works his evil ways (cf. Isa 13:1, 11; 1 Pet 5:13). Think about Babylon as the realm of the Dragon’s earthly kingdom and the context through which the Beast rules and Prophet teaches. Babylon is the polluted political, economic, and social air we breathe. Babylon is the place where the rainbow—a biblical sign of God’s common grace on the world—is inverted into an arrogant declaration of self-rule and sexual debauchery. Babylon is the context wherein child murder is celebrated as a woman’s reproductive health. Babylon is the sphere of drag queen story hours, mocking and taunting the living God by maligning the beauty of his image in maleness and femaleness.

John symbolically portrays Babylon as a prostitute “who makes all the nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality” (Rev 14:8). As in Hosea, the image of sexual immorality here appears to represent all sorts of idolatries and vile acts. And if you don’t simply align with the cultural flow, Babylon will persecute you, even unto death. In Revelation 17 John will give

further descriptions of the prostitute Babylon and her fall, yet in our passage, John foresees as if already accomplished that Babylon fell. The one who intoxicated nations at every level—political, economic, and social—will indeed be overcome, and this is good news for those surrendered to God. Remember, though you now live in Babylon, if you are in Jesus your citizenship is elsewhere—in Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem where Jesus reigns and from which he will come to save.

3. Angel 3 warns that all who identify with the world's evil kingdom will perish under God's wrath (14:9–11)

*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." (Rev 14:9–10)*

The last angel gives the greatest detail of God's coming judgment. Not only will the Lord overcome the antichristian system called Babylon, he will also humiliate and justly torment all who have followed the Beast by surrendering in thought and deed to his rule. In v. 10 John tells us that anyone aligning with the Beast and his image "will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger." Those who drink the wine of the passion of Babylon's sexual immorality (v. 8) will ultimately drink an even stronger cup—the wine of God's anger from the cup of his wrath. It is this cup of wrath that Jesus drinks on behalf of the elect, as symbolized in the Lord's supper (Luke 22:20). This is the cup that Jesus asks to be removed, but ultimately declares that He will drink (Mark 14:36, John 18:11). This cup that Jesus drinks is the cup of the wrath of God spoken of by the Old Testament prophets. As God said to Jeremiah, "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it" (Jer 25:15; cf. Isa 51:17, 22). Jesus drank this cup for you and for me, but for all who fail to surrender to King Jesus as Savior, he will come as Warrior, pouring out God's cup of wrath on his enemies. As David declared in Psalm 2:12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way." God is worthy of highest honor, and all who fail to give it he will justly destroy.

As we now read beginning in the middle of Revelation 14:10,

*[Such a one] 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. (Rev 14:10–11)*

How will the torment come? It says, “with fire and sulfur”—foul, intense burning. Those who fail to worship the living God will experience the same end as the devil and his beastly companions. As Revelation 20:10 says: “And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” How long will the torment be? Our text does not teach annihilationism; rather, it teaches a torment that is never ending (14:11). This is lasting, perpetual, unceasing, and conscious torment such that those receiving it will have “no rest, day or night” (14:11). And all this torment will take place in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb, as the righteous Judge carries out his verdict on the guilty (cf. Rev 6:15–16). Horrible will be the final judgment for all who have not found refuge in the presence of the Lamb.

4. The significance for the redeemed: Persevere in faith and following!  
(14:12)

So, what is the takeaway of such a message of judgment for those who are in Christ today? Consider verse 12:

*Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. (14:12)*

Brothers and sisters, “the devil has come to [the earth] in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!” (12:12). Yet “the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have [also] come” (12:10), and we are among those of whom John declares, “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death” (12:11). Death is not a pleasant thing to think about. Yet the sting of death is removed for those in Christ. Whether you die as a martyr or die of old age or sickness, if you are in Jesus you are secure. And as Paul says, for believers “to die is gain” (Phil 1:21; cf. Heb 2:14–15). May we honor Christ by recognizing that the temporary sufferings of this present life or only preparing us for eternal reward.

Paul notes, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). And Jesus says,

*You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will **gain** your lives. (Luke 21:16–19)*

I urge you, hold fast your commitment to Jesus through living a life that honors him. You bear his name; do not bear it in vain, lest when the judgment that is near comes, you find yourself as God's enemy rather than as his friend. In Jesus's words to the church in Philadelphia: "I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown" (Rev 3:11). Keep the commandments of God and your faith in Jesus (14:12).

### **B. What John Heard: The Spirit Declaring the Redeemed's Reward (14:13)**

Finally, in contrast to the unholy trinity, our passage declares all three persons of the true Trinity. We already noted in v. 1 how the 144,000 in the presence of Christ bear the mark of the name of the Lamb and his Father. Indeed, according to v. 4 this true church is the new creation's "firstfruits for God and the Lamb." Now we learn that the Spirit, as he has in all the Scriptures, is speaking, and here he declares blessing over the redeemed.

*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!"* (Rev 14:13)

Seven times in Revelation are blessings declared over the redeemed (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). In our passage, the blessing is specifically related to gaining lasting freedom from the persecution and false teaching that the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet have unleashed around us. Whereas those identifying with the Beast will "have no rest, day or night" (14:11), the dead who die in the Lord will enjoy "rest from their labors" (14:13). Why? The text says it is because "their deeds follow them!" Back in 2:23, Jesus declared, "I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works." And again in 22:12, he says, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done."

Future judgment will be in accordance with our works but not on the basis of them. God has and will justify us only because of Jesus's perfect blood and righteousness; but our works today will supply necessary evidence in the future courtroom of God that Jesus has indeed worked in our hearts. As the writer of Hebrews says, there is a "holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). How you live today matters for tomorrow. The time you spend on your phone matters. How you spend your allowance matters. The way you spend your retirement matters. And on that future day of judgment, our deeds will follow us,

and God will celebrate with rich blessing those who are his. You will be blessed indeed, says the Spirit, with the result that you will truly be at rest.

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.... It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. (Rev 21:3–4, 6–7)*

Friends, whether you are already a believer or are searching, today is the day of salvation. I urge you: Fear God and follow Christ by the Spirit as you join the redeemed in resting in the reigning Christ's presence, singing a new song of salvation, and hoping in God judging his enemies and rewarding his own. The redeeming judge is worthy of our worship, and he will supply both rest and reward.