

# Praise or Punishment

## How Will YOU Spend Eternity?

Thursday, 9/7 at 7 + Sunday, 9/11 at 8:00 & 10:45  
13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2011

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. **The Final Reaping**: These events describe the final Judgment (Joel 3:13; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43):

- a. **Believers** – <sup>14</sup> [And] I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man [Jesus], having a golden crown on His head and a

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

<sup>16</sup> [And the one sitting] on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped [*thus God will finally gather His children and bless them forevermore*].

- b. **Unbelievers** – <sup>17</sup> And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> [And] another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar [*again, speaking on God's behalf*]; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather [*not the chaff, which we might expect, but*] the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe [*the time for repentance is over*]."

<sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from* the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God [*imagine people being squeezed like grapes*]. <sup>20</sup> And the wine press was trodden outside the city [*where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth."* (Mt. 25:30 NAU)], and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles [*4-5 feet deep*], for a distance of '1,600 stadia <sup>?</sup> [*about 200 miles*]. // That is a lot of blood; we can also think of 4 x 4 x 10 x 10, the complete judgment of the whole earth!

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