

Fire and Brimstone for the Beast's Worshipers

Revelation 14:9-12

The End Times

In my last post, we examined a **Revelation 14:8** to consider **Babylon Is Fallen**. In this post, we move on the **Revelation 14:9-12** to explore **Fire and Brimstone for the Beast's Worshipers**.

"Another angel, a third one, followed them and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he will indeed drink the wine of God's fury poured undiluted into the cup of His rage. He will be tormented by fire and sulfur before the holy angels and before the Lamb, ¹¹ and the smoke from their tormenting goes up forever and ever. They have no rest, day or night, those who worship the beast and its image and those who receive the mark of its name.'¹² This is when perseverance is needed on the part of God's people, those who observe His commands and exercise Yeshua's faithfulness." ~

Revelation 14:9-12 (CJB)

The Doom of the Beast's Followers

The book of **Revelation** recognizes only two classes of people: those who belong to God, and those who belong to **the beast**. Here an unhappy lot of those who have the **mark of the beast** is in sad contrast to the unspeakable joy of those who have the mark of the Lamb (v. 3). Their doom is described in chapters 19-20.

The contrasting of the fate of the redeemed and the lost, which is so prominent in this book, was also a characteristic of **Yeshua's** teaching in the **Besorah**. It is interesting to note that the **smoke from their tormenting goes up forever and ever** (v. 11). This is a confirmation of the comparison made between the **eternal life** for God's people and **everlasting punishment** for the doomed in Matthew 25:46 (see also Revelation 19:20 and 20:10).

This third angel couldn't be clearer, as he issues a message of warning, mixed with a message of eternal damnation. Those who worship **the beast** and take the mark of **the beast** are doomed. Keep in mind (Revelation 13:17) that those who don't accept **the mark**, can't buy, sell, work or function in any way in **this beast-led** society. The angel makes it very clear that those who wear the mark of **the beast** will spend eternity in hell. This may be the most breathtaking message found anywhere in the Bible. Clarence Larkin shares these thoughts: ¹

If "Eternal Punishment" is taught nowhere else in the Bible it is taught here, and if here, why is it not true as to other classes of sinners? Just think of the horror of remorse in the "Lake of Fire," as these worshippers of the Beast shall recall the "Mark of the Beast" as it was imprinted on their forehead or right hand with their own consent, because of their desire to enrich themselves in the markets of their day.

As an aside for my Jewish readers, David Stern explains the phrase **fire and sulfur (brimstone)**:

*Because this expression is used to describe Christian preachers who vividly portray the tortures of hell, it is sometimes thought foreign to Judaism. Actually the destiny of evildoers is described in this way throughout the **Tanakh**. Four examples: Genesis 19:24 (God's destruction of Sodom), Isaiah 34:8-10 (the coming **day of vengeance** against Edom), Ezekiel 38:22 (prophecy against Gog) and Psalm 11:6 (the fate of the wicked). The phrase is found in Revelation also at 9:17-18, 19:20, 20:10, 21:8. ²*

¹ Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

² Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.

Before the holy angels...forever. The idea that the judgment of the wicked is eternally on display before the righteous is found in a Pseudepigraphic ³Jewish work:

"This cursed valley [Gey-Hinnom (Gehenna, hell; see Matthew 5:22)] is for those who are cursed forever... Here they will be gathered together and here will be their place of judgment. In the last days, there will be upon them the spectacle of righteous judgment in the presence of the righteous forever." (1 Enoch 27:1-3) ⁴

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 14:9-12 ⁵

Historicist Approach:

Recall that **Historicists** see **the mark** as having to recite the liturgy in Latin rather than the worshippers own language. The **cup of His rage** is symbolic of the poisoned cup certain criminals were obliged to drink to hasten their death.

Preterist Approach:

Preterists believe this passage may be a reference to hell OR the destruction of **Babylon** (whether Jerusalem or Rome). They agree with the **Historicists** regarding the **cup of His rage**.

Futurist Approach:

Futurists take the literal view of this passage as they do most of the **Revelation**. This is a passage of ultimate damnation.

Idealist Approach:

Idealists agree with the Historicists on this passage.

In my next post, we will explore a **Revelation 14:13** to examine **Blessed Are the Dead**.

³ "Spurious or pseudonymous writings, especially Jewish writings ascribed to various biblical patriarchs and prophets but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Jesus Christ." ~ Oxford Dictionary

⁴ Op.Cit.

⁵ Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.