

DECISIONS AND DESTINY

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for his lesson. First, let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

INTROCUCTION:

Some people have difficulty making a decision but there are some decisions that must be made. One decision that cannot be avoided is the choice of your spiritual master. Will you follow God or Satan? That decision will determine your destiny for eternity.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

Challenge the students to follow God and do those things that please Him.

Jesus said that no man can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other (Mt 6:24).

OUTLINE OF THE LESSON (use the Study Notes to add to this lesson plan as the Spirit leads you):

I. The Virtue of the 144,000 (14:1-5)

The 144,000 Israelite men that are sealed before the trumpet judgments are the first Israelites to choose to follow Jesus Christ after the Rapture of the Church, the first fruits to God and the Lamb (14:4). The seal of God protected them from being killed by Antichrist as they witnessed for Jesus Christ during the difficult and dangerous times of the great Tribulation. They are redeemed from the wickedness and sexual immorality that will be rampant on the earth during Antichrist's rule. They will remain pure and faithful to Jesus Christ and speak the truth about Him (14:3-5). For their faithful witness of Him during the Tribulation, they will be privileged to follow Him wherever He goes, when He returns to Mt Zion in Jerusalem (14:4). Their decision to follow Jesus Christ and be faithful to Him will bless them for all eternity. How disastrous it would be for them if they would choose to follow Satan and Antichrist. Decisions determine our destinies.

APPLICATION: Have you decided to follow Jesus Christ as your Master? Be faithful to Him and He will bless you for all eternity for that decision.

II. The Voice of the Angels (14:6-11)

Three angels will come and present their messages to people on earth.

A. The First Angel (14:6-7)

The first angel will preach the everlasting Gospel. This refers to the first words of good news from God, after Satan had wrested the Kingdom of God from Adam. God promised that He would send the seed of a woman to crush his head, indicating that He would take the earth from Satan's control and restore the Kingdom to Himself (Gen 3:15). Jesus Christ would crush Satan's head as later prophecies would make clear. Satan suffered a severe blow when Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of the world by dying on the cross and rising from the grave. Jesus Christ did the work for saving sinners, but they must make the decision to apply His work to their account and become citizens in His Kingdom (Col 1:13-14). That is the sovereign plan of God. The everlasting Gospel is not complete, however, until Jesus Christ removes Satan as ruler of the earth. That is what this angel is telling the world. Satan and his followers are about to be defeated and removed from the earth. This will make it possible for Christ to establish His Kingdom on earth. Then the earth will once more bring glory to God as it was created to do in the beginning.

APPLICATION: A proper response to the angel's Gospel message is threefold. (1) "Fear God," which means you should turn from your sin and submit to God as your Master. (2) "Give glory to Him," which means you live to bring glory and honor to God. (3) "Worship Him," which means you will humbly

acknowledge that He is our Creator and the Creator of all things. If your conversion to God is genuine, it will be natural for you to express yourself in these three areas.

B. The Second Angel (14:8)

The second angel will announce the fall of Babylon which will come as a direct result of her spiritual fornication. She chooses to follow Satan and to reject the Lord God. This announcement will be a warning to any person who may think that he can make a wrong decision and still get away with it.

C. The Third Angel (14:9-11)

The third angel will warn the world not to worship the beast (Antichrist) and his image or to receive his mark on their foreheads or on their hands (cf. 13:14-17). If they make the fatal decision to do any of these things, they will have to drink of the wine of the wrath of God and their punishment will be eternal. The judgment declared in these verses could not be more graphic and certain.

The decisions of those who hear these angels will be permanent. Their eternal destiny will be determined by their decisions.

APPLICATION: Your decision to accept or reject Jesus Christ carries a consequence that is just as serious. The decision that you make is for eternity. It cannot be made after you die. It must be made during your lifetime.

III. The Victory of the Saints (14:12-13)

There will be many believers who will keep God's commandments and will keep their faith in Jesus Christ in spite of the persecution they will receive during the Tribulation. Many of them will die for their decision to remain true to Christ, but they will be blessed with rest and rewards.

APPLICATION: Your decision to believe in Jesus Christ and keep God's commandments is the best decision you can make, even if you have to suffer a few years for that decision. It is better to suffer for Christ for a few years and enjoy His reward for eternity than to enjoy the pleasures of the world that Satan offers for a few years and suffer with him forever (1Jn 2:15-17).

IV. The Vision of God's Wrath (14:14-20)

The vision begins with Jesus Christ (Son of man) coming in regal authority (golden crown) to execute careful judgment (sharp sickle). He is followed by three angels. One angel tells Christ to reap the grain harvest because it is ripe; that is, the time for judgment has come. He is carrying his message from God to His Son. Another angel comes out of the temple in heaven carrying a sharp sickle and a third angel comes from the altar (where the martyred saints were praying for their blood to be avenged - Rev 6:9-10). The third angel tells the second angel with the sickle to cut the grapes from the vine of the earth because they are fully ripe. Thus, the judgment of God begins, and those who choose to worship Satan and the Antichrist are pressed like grapes in the great winepress of the wrath of God. The harvest is one; it is the harvest of lost sinners. The harvest is repeated to emphasize its severity and certainty (see Gen 41:14-32; Dan 2:31-45 with 7:2-8 and 7:15-27).

APPLICATION: It is a fearful thing to fall under the wrath of God, if you have not received Jesus Christ as your Savior. Do not let delay in making this decision (John 3:36).

CHOOSE CHRIST AND LIVE FOREVER.