

Revelation 14

Mapping the terrain

- the book of Revelation as like a map

What's going on here?

- we are coming in part way through one of Revelation's series of sevens
 - seven letters to churches in 2–3
 - seven seals that are opened 6:1–8:5
 - seven trumpets that are blown 8:6–11:19
- here seven visions, each introduced by 'and I saw'
(TNIV varies in way it translates, but always uses verbs of seeing or looking)

<i>Vision</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Content</i>
1	13:1	the beast
2	13:11	the second beast
3	14:1	the lamb and the 144,000 people on Mount Zion
4	14:6	the three angels and their messages
5	14:14	the son of man figure and the reaping of the earth
6	15:1	seven angels with the seven last plagues
7	15:2	the sea of glass and the church triumphant celebrating God's victory

- 'Revelation' means 'unveiling'

History is a battlefield

- a walk through the series of visions
 - the two beasts and their allies Revelation 13
 - the Lamb and his army 14:1-5
- what's at stake here? the messages of the three angels in 14:6-13
 - the first angel, vv 6-7 whether people fear and worship God
 - the second angel, v 8 God defeating the world system opposing him
 - the third angel, vv 9-11 defeat of the world system opposing God carried through into the lives of those belonging to that system
 - for John's readers, vv 12-13 calls them to faithfulness
- vv 14-20 portray the final judgement as a harvest, in two ways
 - vv 14-16 son of man figure, echoing Daniel 7:13 and Jesus' words Mark 13:26-27
 - vv 17-20 another angel who harvests a grape harvest
- 15:1 the final judgement scene and preview of seven plagues in 15:5–16:21

To reflect on

- what encourages you in the picture we're seeing here?
- what challenges you to action in the picture we're seeing here?
- how will you pray in the light of the picture we're seeing here?

What are the central themes of this section?

- the universe is divided into two by the battle that's happening
 - this battle in its heavenly form in Revelation 12—the battle between Michael and the angels and the dragon
 - 13:1–15:4 the earthly form of this battle worked out to its final end
- those on the side of God and the Lamb
 - the 144,000 in 14:1 (we met them in 7:3-8) stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion; note Psalm 2:6
 - the 144,000 take their stand for battle with the Lamb; contrast the mark of the beast vv 9, 11 (and note 13:16-17)
 - what about v 4? Holy war (1 Samuel 21:5), and faithfulness
 - those who respond to the gospel proclamation of v 7
 - those who persist amidst suffering vv 12-13; compare the seven messages in Revelation 2–3
 - losing your first love, your utter devotion to Christ 2:4—Ephesus
 - physical or economic suffering 2:10 —Smyrna
 - giving in to sexual temptation, even in the name of religion 2:14—Pergamum
 - accepting false teaching which dilutes the truth of Christ 2:20—Thyatira
 - maintaining the appearance of faith when the reality is missing 3:1—Sardis
 - trial and testing 3:10—Philadelphia
 - self-reliance, failure to recognise that all we have comes from God and we depend on him 3:17—Laodicea
- those opposing God and the Lamb
 - the beasts of Revelation 13, representing the imperial power of Rome
 - the city of Babylon 14:8—the city which oppresses God and his people
- the end of the battle: the Lamb and his army will be victorious
 - the city of Babylon will fall 14:8
 - those who stand with the beasts will suffer for opposing God and his people 14:9-11

Where are we in all this?

- called to be worshipping people who regularly give time to praise of God 14:2-3 leading to 15:3-4
 - the eternal good news calls people to worship God 14:7
- called to be faithful in following Jesus, even when it's hard 14:12-13
- called to be gospel people who speak the truth to others 14:7