14:1 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on **Mount Zion**, and with him **144,000** who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. 2And I heard a **sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters**and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. 3And they sang **a new song** before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except **the 144,000** who had been redeemed from the earth. 4These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. 5No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

*V. 1 –* ***Mount Zion*** *– Another “service plaza” of refreshment! Mount Zion “represents every place on earth where God’s Word is proclaimed & Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are administered.” – Brighton, p. 365*

*Eugene Peterson notes in this chapter that the “politics of the (sea) Beast calls for our responses of worship, listening, and holy living”*

***144,000*** *– in 7:1-8 they are the Church Militant; here, they have completed their mission, stand with the Lamb, are victorious, and have His seal.*

*v.2 -* ***sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters –*** *“Hark! the songs of peaceful Zion / Thunder like a mighty flood! / Jesus out of every nation / Hath redeemed us by His blood!”*

*v.3 -* ***a new song*** *– it’s new to them as they arrive in heaven.*

***the 144,000****– They are: (1) “Virgins” (undistracted from their Cause and their Shepherd; (2) Followers of the Lamb; (3) Purchased by Him; (4) “Firstfruit” offerings (the promise that there will be more like them); (5) Blameless and truthful.*

*v.6-* ***the eternal gospel*** *- the goal of the Gospel is to lead people THROUGH repentance INTO saving faith – the Gospel in its broader sense.*

 6Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had **the eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. 7He said in a loud voice, “**Fear God and give him glory**, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

*v. 7 -* ***Fear God and give him glory –*** *people have a tendency to fear the “Unholy Trinity” (the dragon and his two pet beasts – Brighton, page 382), but they fear the wrong things. We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things (First Commandment)! Anything else is idolatry.*

 8A second angel followed and said, “‘Fallen! Fallen is **Babylon the Great**,’[Isaiah 21:9] which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

*v.8 -* ***Babylon the Great –*** *Babylon was the ultimate enemy of God’s people in the Old Testament because it was the Babylonians that finally destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Jews into captivity; “Babylon” became the symbol and model for all future enemies of the Jews. In John’s day, Rome destroyed Jerusalem again in 70 AD and so earned the title “Babylon” in Revelation and for God’s people in the New Testament.*

*John describes “Babylon” in stages in several chapters: Chapter 13 presented the Dragon (Satan) and his beast from the sea (the political beast) and his beast from the land (the religious beast). In Chapter 14 the religious beast appears as an adulteress named “Babylon”; in Chapter 16 she is called “the false prophet”; in Chapter 17 she is not merely an adulteress but a harlot who is riding on the other beast; Chapters 18 and 19 describe Babylon’s destruction and damnation.*

*v.11 -* ***There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image-*** *There is no rest for the wicked, but there is a Sabbath-rest for the people of God! See Hebrews 4 and Rev. 14:13*

*v. 13 -* ***who die in the Lord –*** *or perhaps* ***“because*** *they have died in the Lord”*

 9A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, 10they, too, will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. **There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image**, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.” 12**This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God** who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

 13Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead **who die in the Lord** from now on.”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”

*v.12 -* ***This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God****- perhaps as opposed to political action, since the beast from the sea is the “political” beast. At least, let us be wary of certain pitfalls of “social justice,” “liberation theology,” or “being so heavenly minded we’re no earthly good.”*

14I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was **one like a son of man**[Daniel 7:13] with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, “**Take your sickle and reap**, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” 16So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and **the earth was harvested**.

*v.14 -* ***one like a son of man*** *– this “one” is Jesus, as in Chapter 1. Here he is in the third person, but still initiates the judgement by reaping the harvest of believers with His sharp sickle (see Matthew 13:24-40). The Judgment of God comes at the End, both for Good and for Evil, for Wheat and for Weeds.*

*v. 15 -* ***Take your sickle and reap*** *– a sickle is sharpened on the inner edge, so that it can harvest everything it gathers.*

*v.16 -* ***the earth was harvested –*** *“We shall come rejoicing / bringing in the sheaves!”*

*v. 17 –* ***another angel came*** *– not Jesus! Apparently Jesus gathers the righteous into the harvest, while this angel gathers the “grapes of wrath” into the winepress.*

*v. 18 -* ***who had charge of the fire*** *– to burn up the tares? the grapevines? the fire in the temple in heaven? who knows?*

*v. 20 -* ***outside the city –*** *trash was burned outside the city; Jesus was crucified outside the city; Stephen was stoned outside the city; wild animals, thieves and robbers were “outside the city” – of the earthly Jerusalem. Is this “city” the earthly or the heavenly Jerusalem? See Revelation 21-22*

 17**Another angel came** out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18Still another angel, **who had charge of the fire**, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth’s vine, because its grapes are ripe.” 19The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath. 20They were **trampled in the winepress outside the city**, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 180 miles.

*v.20 -* ***trampled in the winepress –*** *Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;****He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;****He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on. – Julia Ward Howe, 1861*

**Time for some “Parking Lot Questions” from Chapter 12**

**(1) Do the 1260 days refer to Christ’s ministry on earth or something else?**

1260 days = 42 months = 3 ½ years might refer to

* the period during which the saints of God will be dominated by “the fourth beast” (Daniel 7:25)
* the period during which the saints will have to endure the “abomination of desolation” (Daniel 12:11)
* the period during which the beast from the sea will persecute the woman (Revelation 13:1-10)
* Daniel sees this period as in his future; John sees this period as in his present, but a present that will continue until Christ’s return
	+ the entire church age, from Christ’s first advent to His second advent
	+ from His birth until His return in judgment
	+ to be concluded when the new heaven and new earth come down
	+ the entire church age is a time of tribulation and persecution
* the duration of the famine of Elijah (I Kings 17)
* the reign of terror of Antiochus Epiphanes (168-165 BC)
* the Jewish-Roman War of 67-70 AD
* the total time Israel spent in the desert, from crossing the Red Sea to crossing the Jordan River

In other words, the number “1260” is a representative/symbolic number and might stand for a number of different things, or all of the above, or something I haven’t mentioned or thought of. In any case, it’s probably not to be taken literally.

**(2) Is Chapter 12 talking about the first or the Second Advent of Christ?**

*Chapter 12* is about the confrontation between Satan and Christ and Christ’s people beginning with *Christ’s first Advent* as Jesus, the Son of Mary. Revelation describes the confrontation between Satan and Christ at *Christ’s second Advent in Chapters 19 and 20*.

**(3) Are there wars in heaven still going on? Or was it done when Jesus was resurrected and ascended?**

The wars in heaven were finished when Michael drove out Satan and his minions as Jesus assumed His place at the right hand of God and became our Advocate. From that time on there has been no place for Satan in heaven, so his activity has been limited to the creation that is not heaven (mostly, earth, where there are God’s people for him to torment).