

A Word of Encouragement (v.12)

VERSE 12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus

(Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ [*adv hode here, in this place + art.w/noun nom.f.s. hupomone endurance, perseverance + art.w/adj.gen.m.p. hagios holy; saint + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi “is” + art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.p. tereo keep + art.w/noun acc.f.p. entole commandment + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.f.s. pistis faith (active) + noun gen.[objective]m.s. Iesous Jesus; Joshua*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 12

1. John adds this word of encouragement for believers living in those difficult times.
2. John knows what it will take for men to overcome the great deception with its attendant pressure to conform to even stay alive.
3. This word of encouragement is added to the announcement of the third angel.
4. It is not a part of the warning he issues to humankind.
5. It is rather something that is left in the Scripture so that when the third angel makes his announcement believers can turn to the Bible and find encouragement to stay faithful in the face of intense persecution.
6. This statement is parallel to other such insertions in the prophetic narrative such as we find at 13:10, 18 and 17:9.
7. In effect this is an admonition to Ph 2 steadfastness/endurance.
8. The struggle with the beast provides believers (trib saints) an opportunity to work out their own salvation.
9. Endurance (here “perseverance”) is the key to sustaining Ph 2 momentum under all forms of suffering including persecution (cf. 1:9; 2:2,9; 3:10).
10. Refusal to give in to the demands of the beast ensures victory over the forces of darkness.
11. The adverb “here” means in this place and time.
12. It is the place where positive volition will find itself after the rapture.
13. It applies to all believers during those days.
14. Saints is a synonym for believers and their endurance is demonstrated by their willingness to do two things.
15. First, is the keeping of God’s commandments starting with the call to eternal salvation (cf. 1Jn. 3:23 “This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”; cp. Jn. 12:50).
16. Then there is a host of Ph2 related commandments that these saints will have to learn and apply.
17. This all constitutes the directive will of God.
18. Believers will certainly know that it is not God’s will for anyone to engage in idolatry of any kind but especially that which involves the worship of Satan and his pseudo-christ.
19. The second item essential to being an overcomer is seen in the words “the faith of Jesus.”
20. The genitive here is an objective genitive.
21. As such it refers to their abiding faith in who and what Jesus Christ is.
22. He becomes their hope.

23. Their occupation with Christ includes their faith in the promise of His coming and the resultant defeat of the beast and his machine.
24. Believers will be supplied with adequate doctrinal information, with special emphasis on an understanding of the book of Revelation.
25. These believers must maintain an abiding faith in who and what Christ is to sustain them under the brutal pressures of persecution.
26. Their initial faith in Christ delivers them from eternal condemnation once-for-all.
27. However, it is important that they continue to believe in who and what Christ is to counter the blasphemy associated with the beast and his false claims.
28. As to the question of whether believers can fail the grace of God in Ph2 and be taken in by the pressure and propaganda see Matt. 24:24 for an affirmative answer.
29. Those who persevere will like their counterparts from previous eras enjoy maximum reward in the kingdom age.
30. Can a believer in reversionism take the mark?
31. We know that there is nothing evil a believer can do to undo Ph1 salvation.
32. We know that believers are capable of all manner of evil.
33. The warning of the third angel is directed towards the unsaved and not the saved.
34. We know that no one will be physically forced to take the mark.
35. The worship and the taking of the mark must be strictly voluntary.
36. Those who refuse will be targeted for extermination.
37. There is no salvation for anyone who takes the mark while in an unregenerate state.
38. Someone who believes in Jesus for salvation and due to fear takes the mark has to be exempt from the consequences of the apodosis clause of the first class condition seen in v.10.
39. Otherwise, we would have an exception to the doctrine of eternal security and we know that there is absolutely nothing that can separate a child of God from God's love (Rom. 8:38-39).
40. The warning of this angel is designed to eliminate any excuse for taking the mark of the beast.
41. Humanity will have before them unimpeachable evidence of where the truth resides.
42. There will be signs and miracles, the best of communicators, angelic witness, and the biblical record.
43. Those who harden their hearts will as always be without excuse.
44. Negative volition will be as it was with the Pharaoh of the Exodus who refused to believe or even relent in his hatred of the Jews costing him his life and soul at the Red Sea.

Heavenly Beatitude for Martyrs (v.13)

VERSE 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying (Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + noun gen.f.s. phone voice + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.s. ouranos heaven + pres.act.part.abl.f.s. lego say*]), **"Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on** [ράψον· Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι [*aor.act.imper.2s. grapho write + adj.nom.m.p. markarios blessed, happy; without spiritual connotation = fortunate + art.w/adj.nom.m.p. nekros dead + art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.p. apothnesko die + prep en + noun loc.m.s. kurios lord + prep apo from + adv arti now, up to now, at the present time; ap' arti = "hereafter"*)]!"

"Yes," says the Spirit (ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα [*part nai yes + pres.act.ind.3s. lego say + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. pneuma spirit*], **"so that they may rest from their labors** [ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν [*conj hina that + fut.pass.ind.3p. anapauo rest + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.p. kopos labor, toil + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their"*], **for their deeds follow with them** [τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν [*art.w/noun nom.nt.p. ergon work, deed + conj gar for + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + pres.act.ind.3p. akoloutheo follow + prep meta after, with + pro.gen.m.p. autos "them"*]]."

ANALYSIS: VERSE 13

1. Loyalty to the Lamb under the beast's tyrannical rule will mean inevitable death for many (cf. Rev. 13:15 cp. 7:9-17).
2. In verse 12 John supplies a word of encouragement to believers living at that future time, so they can read it and be strengthened in their resolve not to compromise with the gross evil of the beast.
3. Here John is commissioned to write down a further incentive to fidelity for those saints living under extreme duress.
4. A voice from heaven heard four times earlier (10:4, 8; 11:12; 14:2) and to be heard twice later (18:4; 21:3) constitutes a divine pronouncement here as at 10:4, 8; 11:2, not a message from an intermediate agent.
5. John's first two commands to write (1:11, 19) came from the lips of Jesus to pen the book of Revelation.
6. John is told to write this down for posterity and in particular for those called upon to face and suffer the persecution of the beast.
7. Here he is to write the second of seven beatitudes (or "macarsisms") in Revelation (cf. 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).
8. The adjective "blessed" here as often assures future reward for present obedience to God.
9. Sometimes the blessedness is a present thing (1Pet. 3:14; 4:14) and sometimes is a future or Ph 3 result of acclimation to the directive will of God (Jam. 1:12).
10. The familiar beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount fall into this later category where the actual blessing is reserved for Ph 3 (Matt. 5:3-11).
11. In other words, there are beatitudes for Ph2 and for Ph3 but both require application of doctrine in Ph2.
12. The proclamation of blessedness in the future regularly comes in contrast to a painful present reality.
13. Far from being at a disadvantage to the living, the righteous dead receive special blessing.
14. This adds a further motive for endurance to that of the judgment of the wicked (vv. 10-11).
15. The episodes of 14:1-5 and 15:1-4 picture the upside of this blessing for faithful endurance.
16. "The dead" here refers to victims of the genocidal regime of the beast (cf. 13:15).
17. They follow the example of the faithful martyr Antipas (2:13).
18. Some have equated the "in the Lord" with Paul's "in Christ" formula (e.g., 1Cor. 15:18; 1Thess. 4:16), but a slightly different word order here makes this more of an expression of a union-in-death with the Lord than positional sanctification expression used to depict the dispensational distinctive of being a believer in the church age.
19. These Gentile believers will die in faith, their loyalty to the Lord being the cause of death.

20. Like Christ they die under unjust repressive governmental abuse of authority.
21. These believers will not love their lives even to the point of death (12:11).
22. With their promotion (via state sponsored murder) into heaven, the number of martyrs alluded to in 6:11 attains completion.
23. The temporal phrase “from now on” (*ap’ arti* from now) connects “who die in the Lord” in sense rather than with “blessed” or with the Spirit’s promise that immediately follows it.
24. Relating the words to those facing persecution and death does not deny blessedness to all other saints when they die.
25. It simply means that death for those who remain faithful in the face of more active persecution is a greater relief.
26. When violent treatment and cruelty issuing in execution are the consequences of living for the truth, the sooner one dies, the better off he is.
27. The identification of the time period implies by the prepositional phrase “from now on” must be limited to the tribulation and the persecution of the Antichrist and his agent.
28. The earliest stages of this persecution is seen under the fifth seal judgment (6:9) which takes place toward the end of the first half of the tribulation.
29. This early group of martyrs probably was not killed for refusing to take the 666 mark, particularly if it is not implemented until the midpoint (?).
30. Toward the end of the second half of the tribulation the number of preordained martyrs will reach completion (cf. 6:11).
31. This beatitude comforts those who will face the coming persecution.
32. God the Holy Spirit adds His affirmation in response to the blessing John hears uttered from heaven to which he is to include it in the text of Revelation.
33. “Yes,” says the Spirit, so that they may rest from their labors; for their deeds follow after them.”
34. This is the only direct utterance of God the Holy Spirit in the Apocalypse except for 22:17.
35. As with the invitation in the seven messages (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), the Spirit identifies with the speaker of the preceding words, whether God or Christ.
36. The “so that” clause says that dying in the Lord consists of resting from one’s labors.
37. Herein lies the rationale behind the blessedness.
38. Rev. 22:14 tells the substance of and the reason for a blessing just pronounced.
39. The future indicative of “they shall rest” lends itself to the fact that their rest is assured and is the providential design of their dying.
40. This is the state enjoyed by martyrs under the fifth seal (6:11) and alludes to God’s rest after His labors (Gen. 2:2; cf. Heb. 4:4, 9).
41. Here is the complete opposite of the beast’s worshippers who will have no rest night or day.
42. Beyond the grave all believers will rest from their troubles and harsh treatment, but for the unbeliever their troubles will never end.
43. In the explanation of the future-life (Ph3) prosperity of those “who die in the Lord”, the Spirit adds an word about the continuance of their deeds.
44. Before actual death, these believers were engaged in a variety of things that could be qualified as divine good production.
45. All these things the individual could perform while engaged in passive resistance to the false Christ.
46. Their works will not go unrewarded, even after death.

47. Their works will be judged and eternal rewards will be attached to them (1Tim. 5:24-25; Heb. 6:10; 1Cor. 3:10-15; 15:58; 2Cor. 5:10).
48. Great reward is attached to the suffering connected with persecution (Matt. 5:10-11; Heb. 10:32-36; 11:26).
49. While the promise of future blessedness in this verse is directed toward tribulational saints who come under martyrdom at the hands of the beast and false prophet (cf. Rev. 13:15), it clearly is a promise for all believers for all time.
50. All believers who die will enter into eternal rest from their earthly labors where there is no more pain and no more sorrow (Rev. 21:4).
51. And at the appropriate time each believers works will follow in the sense that God keeps a perfect record of all deeds done in Ph2 whether good or worthless.
52. The procedure is to reward believers in connection with the resurrection of the body.

Harvest of Negative Volition Enacted

(vv. 14-16)

VERSE 14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud (Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ νεφέλη λευκή [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + conj kai + interj idou behold + noun nom.f.s. nephele cloud + adj.nom.f.s. leukos white*]), **and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man** [καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου [*conj kai + prep epi on + art.w/noun acc.f.s. nephele cloud + pres.dep.part.acc.m.s. kathemai sit + adj.acc.m.s. homoiōs resembling, like + noun acc.m.s. huīos son + noun gen.m.s. anthropos man*]], **having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand** [ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον χρυσοῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ δρέπανον ὀξύ [*pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + prep epi upon, on + art.w/noun gen.f.s. kephale head + pro.gen.m.s. autos “His” + noun acc.m.s. stephanos wreath; “crown” + adj.acc.m.s. chrusous gold + conj kai + prep en + art.w/noun loc.f.s. cheir hand + pro.gen.m.s. autos “His” + noun acc.nt.s. drepanon sickle; instrument with a curved blade for reaping + adj.acc.nt.s. ozus sharp (of things; swift (of time)*].

ANALYSIS: VERSE 14

1. One more scene remains in the section furnishing information as a background for the seven bowls.
2. This chapter (and the next) sets the stage for the final wrath (as seen in the seven bowls of wrath) leading up to the 2nd Advent.
3. The introductory formula, “Then I looked and behold,” is seen at 6:2, 5, 8; 14:1, 14 in Revelation.
4. It constitutes a scene within the visionary experience of John the seer.
5. The scene enacted before John’s vision and hearing has to do with divine judgment upon the unbelieving within the context of the tribulation.
6. The scene, unlike other depictions in the book is strictly figurative, meaning that the actual elements in the vision are representative of judgments taking place in the tribulation.

7. Or stated another way the imagery of harvesting is representative of what takes place over the course of the tribulation concluding with the battle of Armageddon.
8. One must distinguish between what is pure imagery in Revelation and what is to be taken literally.
9. The imagery always points to something that is actual or prophetic.
10. This scene will not be enacted in heaven in connection with the tribulation unlike other scenes in the prophecy.
11. In other words, we will not see this scene in heaven, unlike other things we have studied in this book such as the breaking of the seven sealed book, and so forth.
12. This scene is strictly for instructional purposes and is confined to the experience of the prophet.
13. We will not see Jesus Christ (e.g., “Son of Man”) sitting on a cloud with a sharp sickle in His hand.
14. What John sees is fulfilled in what Christ does in connection with the wrath that comes upon unbelieving humanity.
15. The sickle is representative of that wrath against those that remain in a state of unbelief.
16. The background passage in Daniel 7 has the Messiah in view (cf. v.13).
17. There as here the title “Son of Man” places emphasis on Messiah’s humanity.
18. Within this context it refers to His glorified humanity.
19. This title is used 83x in 79 verse in the four Gospels.
20. Outside the Gospels it is used only four times in the NT (cf. Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; 14:14).
21. The designation is used 93x by God to address the prophet Ezekiel in the book that bears his name (out of the 194x in the OT).
22. One time it is used of Daniel (Dan. 8:17).
23. Twice it is used of Messiah (Ps. 80:17; Dan. 7:13).
24. The remaining usages is generic for all humanity (Num. 23:19; Job 25:6; 35:8; Pss. 8:4; 144:3; Isa. 51:12; 56:2; Jer. 49:18, 33; 50:40, 43).
25. Our verse is the final reference in the Bible.
26. John sees a white cloud which is symbolic of purity, transcendence and transport.
27. On the cloud he sees a man sitting as in a relaxed posture.
28. This symbolized Christ’s position of repose in heaven at the right hand of God the Father.
29. Again, we will not see Christ sitting on a cloud.
30. The next detail mentioned is the golden wreath on the head of this “Son of Man.”
31. Only here is this particular noun (*stephanos*) used in connection with Jesus Christ.
32. It is representative of the fact that He overcame during the days of His earthly sojourn.
33. This is the same “crown” awarded to believers who faithfully endure to the end of Ph2.
34. The ultimate award given to believers in connection with Ph2 excellence goes by several titles in the NT including “crown of exultation” (1Thess. 2:19; cp. Phil. 4:1), “crown of righteousness” (2Tim. 4:8), “crown of life” (Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10), and “crown of glory” (1Pet.5:4).
35. The crown can be forfeited (cf. Rev. 3:11).
36. This reward is also designated “the prize” in Phil. 3:14 and Col. 2:18.
37. The NT background to this category of SG3 is the athletic games of Greece (1Cor. 9:24; 2Tim. 2:15).
38. Whether or not Christ will wear such a crown remains to be seen.

39. It signifies victory in the Angelic Conflict (cf. Rev. 12:1).
40. The golden crown is a symbol of Christ's victory over the cosmos during the days of His incarnation.
41. He will wear a "diadem" as a symbol of His royalty at His coming (Rev. 19:12).
42. The "sharp sickle" in the hand of the one sitting of the cloud represents an instrument of judgment.
43. The harvest background of this verse and what follows in verses 17ff. is also seen in Joel 3:13 in connection with the last battle.
44. From Christ's place in heaven He will bring judgment upon the world of unbelievers during the seven years of wrath.
45. Obviously people will not be literally done in with a sickle.
46. This is strictly imagery designed to underscore the fact that all that happens to those who are disobedient to the three angelic announcements will be cut off from the living.
47. This imagery excludes the violent death of believers who die "in the Lord."

Harvest Time (vv. 15-16)

VERSE 15 And another angel came out of the temple (καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ [*conj kai + adj.nom.m.s. allos another + noun nom.m.s. angelos angel + aor.act.ind.3s. exercomai come out + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.s. naos temple (inner sanctum), crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud* [κράζων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης [*pres.act.part.nom.m.s. krazo cry out + prep en + noun loc.f.s. phone voice + adj.loc.f.s. megas great + art.w/pres.dep.part.dat.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi on + art.w/noun gen.f.s. nephele cloud*], **"Put in your sickle and reap** [Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου καὶ θέρισον [*aor.act.imper.2s. pempo send, dispatch; "Put in" + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. drepanon sickle + pro.gen.s. su "Your" + conj kai + aor.act.imper.2s. therizo reap*], **for the hour to reap has come** [ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι [*conj hoti for (this reason) + aor.act.ind.3s. erchomai come + art.w/noun nom.f.s. hora hour + aor.act.infin. therizo reap*], **because the harvest of the earth is ripe** [ὅτι ἐξηράνθη ὁ θερισμὸς τῆς γῆς [*conj hoti for (this reason) + aor.pass.ind.3s. zeraino dry out; of a crop that is ready; "is ripe" + noun nom.m.s. therismos harvest; cognate noun is theros = summer + noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]])."

Execution of Directive (v.16)

VERSE 16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth (καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. ballo cast; "swung" + art.w/pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi on + art.w/noun gen.f.s. nephele cloud + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. drepanon sickle + pro.gen.m.s. autos "His" +*

art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth)), **and the earth was reaped** [καὶ ἐθερίσθη ἡ γῆ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. therizo reap + art.w/noun nom.f.s. ge earth*]]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 15-16

1. At this juncture in the vision John sees another angel coming from the inner sanctum of the temple in heaven.
2. This marks the 4th angel in a series of six in this chapter.
3. This angel conveys the directive for the One sitting on the cloud to “Put in Your sickle and reap.”
4. The imagery is that of someone about to utilize a sickle in a most unprecedented fashion.
5. He will sit on a cloud and move around the harvest area and cut off the bunches of grapes in this case.
6. Coming out from the inner sanctum of the temple of which the earthly Most Holy Place symbolized heaven with special emphasis on the actual throne of God, this must imply that the angel is directed by God the Father to authorize God the Son to begin the process of executing judgment upon mankind.
7. The imagery of judgment is that of harvest and in particular that of a grape harvest in which the one doing the harvesting wielded a compact sharp sickle.
8. This is a similar but much smaller sickle than the one used to harvest wheat.
9. The angel tells the Son of Man to begin the process “because the hour to reap has come.”
10. In other words the timing is right on.
11. The reason the timing is right on is stated as “because the harvest of the earth is ripe.”
12. Ripeness here is not a good thing as it signifies maturation of evil.
13. The grapes of wrath in this case are those who reside on the earth in the tribulation and who refuse to repent and be saved.
14. We know this is a grape harvest based on verses 18 and following wherein the supreme illustration associated with this harvest is enacted (e.g., Armageddon).
15. The tribulation awaits ripeness, and in the case of grape harvest this comes down to a very precise time which varies from season to season based on environmental factors (weather basically).
16. God is the expert on the timing.
17. Mankind will not be deserving of this wrath until that factor that is known by God alone is in place, namely, the accumulated evil that renders the tribulational judgments taken individually and collectively just and righteous.
18. To bring on the tribulation before this precise time is like harvesting grapes before reaching full maturation.
19. Each grape symbolizes a living negative person residing in “the hour” as the angel refers to it.
20. Each grape of wrath harvested by God the Son flunked the test of Rev. 3:10: “...I will also keep you (Philadelphian saints extrapolated to all CA bels) from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”
21. When the harvest reaches maturation the Rapture will take place.
22. Then the process of harvesting will begin formally with the Lamb breaking the seven seals with their seven trumpets and seven bowls.

23. So verse 15 sees the Son of Man functioning with respect to His divine nature in heaven and bringing to pass on earth all the increments of wrath spoken of by the prophets and the apostles.
24. The words “and the earth was reaped” refers to the process up to but not including the final phase of reaping presented in verses 18-20.
25. It is very important to the proper understanding of this section, as it relates to what follows in this chapter, to differentiate between all the judgments, from the opening of the first seal until the pouring out of the 7th bowl, and the final act of reaping which is Armageddon itself.
26. Armageddon is the subject of verses 18 through 20.
27. All this judgment is under the direction of the One who sits on the cloud wearing a victor’s wreath and wielding a sharp sickle.