

Glorious Rest

Revelation 14:9-16

10/14/07

Intro

Are you tired? Does it seem like the difficulties you face will never end? Most people would say ‘yes,’ they’re tired and they face difficulty almost without a break. There is a lot of spiritual application to this question and interestingly it comes into our study of Revelation.

At this point in our study, we recently have seen the Antichrist, also known as the beast, the serpent of old, Satan, and the false prophet who will become the head of a false world religion. These are the ones who declare that there will be ‘the mark of the beast’ which is to be placed on the back of the hand or on the forehead. Without it, no one will be able to buy or sell.

Then, after describing this false trinity that deceives and controls the world, we are told of those who will be victorious in the face of such terrible enemies. There are the 144,000 Jewish believers in Christ of whom we studied last week, but there will be other overcomers as well who, though they will be living in the most difficult time of all human history, will persevere in victory.

These are the ones who are promised to receive rest. There is an application here for us as well in all this. We are called to persevere in all faith – and rest becomes an important part of the victory.

I. Without Rest We are Wore Down

- Everyone will face difficulties in life, “In this world you will have many troubles,” the Lord said. ...

A. A lack of rest is a torment

- Those who receive the mark of the beast will find it much more convenient in many ways.
- They can buy or sell, so they will be able to get the things they need to enjoy life, but they will drink of the wrath of God.
- (Vs 11) They will find that they have no rest and therefore they will be in torment.

Illus – Prisoners of war are worn down when rest is withheld from them. They are forced to stand for long hours and are worn down.

Illus – What happens when we don’t rest? I remember going three days with nothing more than a 45 min nap each morning. I became irritable, cranky, error prone and most unhappy.

Deuteronomy 28:65-67 trouble without rest

- There is difficulty that comes from a lack of physical rest, but there is a much heavier burden when the soul has no rest.

Illus – I remember when I was going through college and joined the fraternity and had to go through initiation. The physical wearing down was difficult but bearable; it was the stuff that messed with my mind and heart that was much more difficult.

B. The soul with no rest is in great anguish

- Those who receive the mark of the beast will at first think they made the right decision because their living conditions are better for them.
- Many people live only in the moment and do not consider the more important long term aspects like, *‘What does God think of what I’m doing?’* or *‘Will this cause my soul to be disturbed?’*
- When those who reject God and live for themselves discover that they were wrong and that there really is a God who created them, there will be anguish of the soul.

App – we would be wise to consider how important the soul is in our lives. The soul that is not at rest causes everything else to lack rest as well.

Psalm 31:6-16 a soul in sorrow turns to the Lord

II. Rest is Both a Promise and a Reward

- There is such a contrast between those who trust in the Lord in times of struggle and those who reject the Lord as we see here.
- There are many things for us to apply to our lives from these verses.

A. Blessed are those who persevere

- John pointed out the faithfulness of the 144,000 earlier, but here he is writing about the faithfulness of those who are coming to faith in the Tribulation.

- They are remarkable because they persevere; they keep the commandments of God and keep their faith in Christ Jesus.
- They are blessed because God is very pleased when there is faith and trust in Him.

Hebrews 11:6, And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

- These believers in the Tribulation show faith in extreme trial and God is exceptionally pleased. When we persevere in difficulty and trust God with all faith, we are also the ones who are pleased by the hand of God with us.

Illus – The story is told of a captain of a ship on which George Mueller was traveling. Mueller was famous for trusting in God completely.

The ship had been wrapped in fog and could not move on and Mueller came to the captain and said, “I must make this appointment in Quebec.” “Impossible,” replied the captain, “have you seen how thick this fog is?” He prayed a simple prayer and when the unbelieving captain started to pray Mueller stopped him, “As you do not believe, God will not answer. There is no need for you to pray.”

Indeed the fog lifted immediately.

- God is giving this to us to strengthen us in our faith just as the Christians in the first century were to be encouraged in their faith.

- We are encouraged when we see others who believe even in the face of trouble.

B. Blessed are those who die in the Lord

- It's interesting to see in verse 13 that John wrote, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from now on*." Why add those words *from now on*?
- Hasn't it always been true that those who die in the Lord are blessed?

App – I have stood at many graveside services and reminded everyone of that great truth that John wrote here in Rev 14.

Psalm 116:15, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.

- But John says *from now on* because these are people who become believers in Jesus in the Tribulation and will wonder if they have missed the resurrection.
- The church will at this point already have been resurrected and raptured so they will wonder if it's too late for them. John is giving them the answer that all who die in the Lord are blessed.
- The key is in understanding that we are blessed because we die in the Lord!

Romans 14:8-9, for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died

and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

- He is the blessing of Heaven!!

Illus – Many people look forward to heaven thinking that it will be glorious because of what they might get to do there.

Will it be a place where there are fishing lakes like nothing in earth? Or where every golf course is better than Bandon Dunes?

- The glory of heaven will be found in God Himself. He is the glory of heaven!!

Revelation 21:22-23, I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

C. Jesus is our glorious rest right now

- The question of rest had been around since the earliest days of creation. God "rested" on the seventh day and so gave Israel a command to rest on the seventh day.
- The seventh day being the last day of the week, it was for many a picture of heaven because after living our days in struggle, we rest from our labors in heaven.
- But there was something greater that God was trying to give us.

- Jesus is the fulfillment of all that God means by the word “rest.”

Illus – When Israel had left Egypt and was nearing the Promised Land, they were told to enter their “rest.” But waiting for them was many battles and struggles.

It had everything to do with faith. They were to ‘rest’ by completely trusting in the Lord!

Hebrews 4:8-18 Finding grace in time of need – ‘resting’ in faith. Jesus is our Sabbath rest.

- Here is rest....

Psalm 46:9-11, He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. *Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.