

The Redeemed from the Earth

Revelation 14:1-5

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the slave's staying with the man who redeemed him, 6,600 Classic Sermon Illustrations, #11,347, p. 659.
 - 1. That is a beautiful example of what we are to do with Jesus.
 - a. He came, paid the price, and redeemed us to God.
 - 1) In Christ, "we have redemption through His blood" (Col. 1:14).
 - 2) "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9: 12).
 - b. Because Jesus gave his blood and redeemed us, we need to stay with him, to follow him.
 - 2. Tonight's text speaks of those who were redeemed by the blood of Jesus and stayed with him and served him.
- B. This evening, we want to examine their state after their life here on this earth.

THEIR MARK, v. 1

- A. John looked and saw a Lamb standing on Mount Zion.
 - 1. This contrasts to the two beasts in chapter 13 who were arising - one arose from the sea and the other from the land.
 - a. That the Lamb's standing signifies being established, standing firm, holding one's ground.
 - b. The arising from the sea and the land could indicate that these two individuals rose to power, but the Lamb possesses power by virtue of his deity, not through political means.
 - 2. The Lamb stood on Mount Zion.
 - a. Mount Zion was the Temple Mount, the location of the temple.
 - b. This description comes to apply in Revelation to the heavenly city (Rev. 11:19; 21:2).
- B. We have already seen the Lamb with his 144,000.
 - 1. As we have earlier stated, these 144,000 stand for the redeemed of all the ages.
 - 2. That these redeemed are pictured with the Lamb on Mount Zion shows that they were rewarded for their service; we will be rewarded for our service if we remain faithful.
 - a. Scripture speaks of the reward that will one day be ours.
 - 1) "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).
 - 2) The Lord has given us "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. 1:4).
 - b. Illustration about Howard A. Kelly's paying a hospital bill, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10593.
- C. These 144,000 had the Father's name written on their foreheads.
 - 1. Their having the Father's name on their foreheads obviously contrasts with those who had the mark of the beast.
 - 2. This mark shows ownership, just as the mark of the beast showed allegiance, ownership, by him.
 - a. Slaves were often branded in the first century to show to whom they belonged.
 - b. We belong to God.
 - 1) "If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8).
 - 2) "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom

you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

THEIR MUSIC, vv. 2-3

- A. John heard a voice from heaven, v. 2 — Without any doubt, the voice John heard was the song of the 144,000.
1. The voice was like the voice of many waters and like the voice of loud thunder — the idea is that this was a loud voice. 144,000 people singing would create quite a loud sound.
 2. John heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.
 - a. This causes a problem for some who advocate a capella music in worship; many claim we should read this text like this: “John heard a sound like the sound of harpists playing their harps.” But, that’s not what John wrote.
 - b. This causes many who advocate instrumental music in worship to say, “Look, there are harps in heaven, so they must be acceptable on earth.”
 - 1) If one wanted to make that argument, he would have to use a harp in worship; he couldn’t use another instrument.
 - 2) Also, there are many things in heaven that are not on earth.
 - a) “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (Mt. 22:30). Are we not to marry on earth?
 - b) There is a great throne in heaven with four living creatures and 24 elders around it. Do we need to set this up to worship properly?
- B. These 144,000 sang a new song before the throne, and no one could learn that song except the 144,000 who were redeemed from the earth, v. 3.
1. They sang the song before the throne; they were finally in the presence of the One who had redeemed them.
 2. John did not provide the words of the song, for no one except the 144,000 could learn it. This was a special song that could only be sung in heaven and only learned by the redeemed.

THEIR MORALITY, vv. 4-5

- A. These 144,000 had not defiled themselves with women, for they were virgins, v. 4.
1. There are some who point to this text and say that sex is dirty, and that those who engage in sex give into their baser instincts.
 - a. This text has nothing to do with whether or not sex is appropriate or inappropriate.
 - b. We need to remember a couple of things:
 - 1) God created man “male and female” (Gen. 1:27), and thus he created sexuality.
 - a) “A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).
 - b) How can something God created be dirty or inappropriate?
 - 2) Paul told husbands and wives not to deprive one another of sexual relations (1 Cor. 7:3-5).
 2. Their purity -- their virginity -- is best seen figuratively; they had not bowed down to idols.
 - a. Idolatry is often described as sexual immorality.
 - 1) “They would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods” (Jud. 2:17).
 - 2) “My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, and their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, and they have played the harlot against their God” (Hos. 4: 12).
 - b. But, these men were pure, they had not given themselves to idolatry.
 - c. We need to give ourselves to nothing but the service of the true God.
 - 1) We do not struggle with idols in this culture, but we may have a tendency to give

something other than God our full devotion.

- 2) We need to put God first in our lives — above our families, above our work, above ourselves.
- 3) Are you giving undivided loyalty to the Lord?

C. These follow the Lamb wherever he goes, v. 4.

1. Following the Lamb wherever he went implies shepherding: these 144,000 were being shepherded by Christ.
2. These 144,000 were able to follow Christ wherever he went in Mt. Zion because they had done so on earth.

D. These 144,000 were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb, v. 4.

1. These men had been redeemed from the earth; as we mentioned earlier, Jesus stepped forward and gave his blood to redeem humanity.
2. These were firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.
 - a. Under the Old Testament, the firstfruits of the harvest were given to God to acknowledge that all the land and all the increase came from him — “You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me” (Ex. 22:29).
 - b. But, in the LXX, the Greek term used here simply came to mean “sacrifice”; the idea is probably that these redeemed have been set apart for God; they serve him.

E. In their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God, v. 5.

1. This identifies them as Christ-like.
 - a. “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth” (1 Pet. 2:22).
 - b. We need to be Christ-like in every aspect of our lives; we need to pattern our lives after his. We need to be careful that we have no deceit found in our mouth.
2. It is Jesus who is able to present us faultless before God’s throne (Jude 24).
 - a. If we are in Christ, we will stand sinless before the throne of God at the Judgment, not because of our sinlessness, but because of his sinlessness.
 - b. Are you in Christ? Will you stand faultless before God’s throne?