

A New Song of the Redeemed

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[0 : 00] Take out your Bibles and turn with me please to the book of Revelation, chapter 14. Chapter 14. Moving right along.

We are in a series of visions. Jesus reveals to John things and sets of seven.

So we had the seven churches, we had the seven seals, we had the seven trumpets. And now we're in a series of seven visions from chapter 12 through 14.

It began in chapter 12 with a vision of the woman and the child and the dragon. So we had that vision of the dragon trying to kill the woman's child, but the child, who happens to be Jesus, was caught up to heaven and enthroned on his throne.

At which point then it turns into a war in heaven where the dragon is beaten and cast down to earth, kicked out of heaven.

[1 : 16] Because now the king is on his throne. And he has begun to reign in the first matter of businesses. The dragon is out.

No longer to accuse the brethren before God's face. But he's thrown to earth. He's not annihilated. He's thrown to earth where he now pursues that woman who is the church made up of Jews and Gentiles.

And the offspring of the woman. Those who keep the commands of God and those who hold to the testimony of Jesus. That summarizes the church age.

Chapter 12 began with the birth of Christ. The ascension of Christ. The war on earth between the saints and the dragon. And now we come to...

Then we came to chapter 13 and we see how the dragon fights. Chapter 13 shows us that he fights through two earthly servants. One called a beast from the sea, which at the time of Rome was the Caesars.

[2 : 24] It was the earthly rulers of earth. And at the time that was Caesar and Caesar and Caesar and Caesar and Caesar for almost 500 years.

Then he rules also not only through that first beast, but a second beast was called the land beast that had just two horns. It was like a lamb, kind of a fake Jesus.

An antichrist, a counter Christ, a false prophet. Worked through religion. Working to get people to worship the beast.

To make an idol of him. And so in the first century that was the imperial priesthood that tried to enforce throughout Asia Minor, where the seven churches were, enforce worship of Caesar.

And if you did not worship Caesar, you could not buy or sell in the marketplace. You lost your place in the marketplace.

[3 : 27] So however that transfers to today, Satan works through earthly servants, those on earth with authority and rule, who work through other earthly servants, probably more local organized places that deal in religion, politics, economics, etc.

Tag on the media with that as well. For how he communicates and spreads his message. So that brings us to chapter 14. So chapter 14 is, we've seen from the beginning of Christ's ministry all the way through the church age, now chapter 14, kind of gives us some different scenes, different visions.

We have three here, verses 1 through 5. We see the lamb on Mount Zion, standing with 144,000 redeemed people.

And then we'll see in verses 6 to 13, a series of messages, three different messages, by three different messengers. And then verses 14 to the end of chapter 14, show us two different harvests.

So chapter 14 ends with the end of time. It ends with the final judgment, the final harvest, the final resurrection and judgment. So we've kind of, again, in these seven visions, from 12 through 14, we go from Christ, the time of Christ, to the end.

[5 : 01] So today we're just going to take a look. I was studying this week. I was planning to do more than five verses. And after five verses, I was exhausted. And I asked the Lord, and He said, yeah, that's enough.

That's enough. So, with His permission, and yours, let us read from Revelation chapter 14. If you're able, please stand as I read just these opening verses.

Revelation 14.1, Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him, 144,000, who had His name, and His Father's name, written on their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven, like the roar of many waters, and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists, playing on their harps.

And they were singing a new song, before the throne, and before the living, for living creatures, and before the elders.

[6 : 16] No one could learn that song, except the 100 or 44,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these, who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins.

It is these, who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These, have been redeemed from mankind, as first fruits, for God and the Lamb.

And in their mouth, no lie is found, for they are blameless. So it reads. Let us pray. Father, we ask today that You would give us insight, that You would help us make connections, help us to understand what You're revealing to us.

And Father, we pray that as a means of this, we hear of a new song. We pray that You would stir up within our own soul, our new song.

our redemption song. Grant us, Father, to feel with these people You describe here, what they feel, and who they are.

[7 : 35] We pray that You would apply this, Lord, to us. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So, victory songs.

Victory songs. You ever heard of victory songs? Maybe you've been to a ball game, you've heard of victory songs? Marching band? maybe you've heard the worn out victory song after a world series or an NBA title or a, what do they have in hockey?

I don't know. Hockey cup thing. Or soccer something or other. Maybe you've heard the song, right?

We are the champions. That's been played 1,800,000 times. Or if a little rooter song, a victory song, another one bites the dust.

Is that what the Dodgers do? Is that what they do when they beat the Giants? Or maybe you're a Karate Kid fan. You know, what was the theme victory song for little Johnny or whatever his name was, Butterfly, what was his name?

- [8 : 50] The kid, you know, the Karate Kid, right? You're the best. Da-da-da. Right? That was a great song back when the movie first came out.
- Yeah. That was 80 years ago. What was that? A little Johnny. Now I'm going to wonder what his name is. Daniel.
- Daniel-san. Yes. Daniel-san. Yes. Yes. Like a middle of the road crush. Make a decision, Daniel. Okay. Or be patriotic.
- What's a victory song of America? Star-spangled banner. Star-spangled banner. There's more. Battle Hymn of the Republic. Marine Corps him.
- Marine Corps him. What's the Air Force got? Fortunate son. What? Right. Fortunate son. Fortunate son. Fortunate son.
- [9 : 47] Yeah. Gotcha. Victory song. Or Ray Charles' version of America the Beautiful.
- Onward Christian soldier. Onward Christian soldier. Okay. There we go. Battle songs. Or victory songs. Right? Where did they start? They started in the Bible. Way back in Exodus when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea.
- The first thing that they do on the other side. Right after Pharaoh and his army are drowned in the sea that they just walked through. Moses sings a song.
- The Israelites sing a song. They sing. I will sing unto the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and rider fell into the sea.
- Something like that. Right? Thrown into the sea. David had a victory song. He sang in 2 Samuel 22. After the Lord had delivered him from all his enemies including Saul.
- [10 : 51] David sang. The Lord is my rock. My fortress. My deliverer. My God in whom I take refuge. My shield. My stronghold.
- My God who saves me from violence and enemies. David sings a song. There are many victory songs. Now we come to one here in chapter 14 of Revelation.
- A new song. It's a song of victory. These are people standing on Mount Zion. It's a song of the redeemed. Isn't there a song called It's the Song of the Redeemed?
- Right? Right? I think it might come from here. It's a song of the redeemed. So, first thing I want you to notice before we jump into this.
- There's a contrast. There's a distinction between the way chapter 14 begins and the way chapter 13 ends. See, chapter 13 ends, verse 16 and 17.
- [11 : 50] Talk about this second beast, right? That causes all people, 13, 16. Causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, slave and free. In other words, causes worldwide everyone to be marked on the right hand or the forehead.
- So that they can buy, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark. That is, what's the mark? It's the name of the beast or the number of its name.
- Then we're told to be wise about that whole thing. And then notice how, so we have at the end of chapter 13, the people of the beast, the people of this world leader, this false prophet, who take a mark.
- It's either on their hand, which symbolizes work that they do, or it's on their forehead, symbolizing what they think and believe. That, remember, was copied from God who said to the Jews, right?
- You write these words and put them on your hand, put them on your forehead, put them on your gate, put them on your house, because they symbolize what you think and what you do, how you do business, how you conduct your family.
- [13 : 00] These laws conduct everything. So it's a symbol. So these here, the mark of the beast is on what you do or what you think, which identify you with that false lamb.

Remember that second beast, the sea beast, was like a lamb. Right? Like a lamb. Counterfeit lamb, an antichrist. But then notice how chapter 14 begins.

It kind of catches that contrast. He says, As I look to behold on Mount Zion stood the lamb, and with him 144,000 who have what? They have the lamb's name written on their what?

Foreheads. So there we go. So we have the false lamb with his followers who have a mark on their forehead, which is also its name, so that it can have earthly security.

But the cost of that name on their forehead is eternal destruction. Now, we have the true lamb.

[14:02] The true lamb has his people. And they also are marked. They also have a seal. They also have a name on their forehead. They identify with the true lamb.

And their identity gives them not earthly security, but eternal security. The cost of that eternal security is earthly insecurity. Suffering.

Now. Glory. Later. It's a bigger payoff for those who identify with the true lamb. So we see this contrast. Okay?

So the people of the beast and the people of the true lamb. So who are these 144,000? Now, we've seen this before. Back in chapter 7, we saw this list of 144,000 people, 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel.

So here, we just get the number of the people. We're told that they are redeemed people. And that they have a new song that they sing. So who are these 144 that sing a celebration of their deliverance?

[15:11] What is revealed to us here? What do we get? What are these five verses here for? What does the Lord want us to understand here in this vision of people and how they're described?

Well, I think two things. Two facts are revealed. One, who they are. We see in the first three verses who they are. And then secondly, we see how they're known, how they're distinguished.

What sets them apart? So we get their identity and then we get their distinctiveness in verses 4 and 5. So let's look at these in order. Verses 1 to 3, we see the revelation of their identity.

This is my understanding. I believe that these 144,000 are the redeemed of all God's people in heaven. Not just a select group.

I believe the 144,000 stands for the totality of all God's people. But let's break that down and show you. I want you to notice some things about these people.

[16:19] First of all, where they are. They're on Mount Zion, we're told. Behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb and with him 144,000. So what's significant about Mount Zion?

Have you ever heard of Mount Zion? Now, if you go with us to the Israel trip in a year or two or whenever we ever decide to do it, you'll see a physical Mount Zion.

You go to Jerusalem, into the town of Jerusalem. And remember, Jerusalem is on a hill. Now, don't think hill like Colorado hills or mountains. This is like Colorado that would be like a, you know, what would we call it?

A burp? A burp? So they're not impressive mountains compared to American mountains. But it is, there is a ravine.

You come down the Mount of Olives, right? And then you go through this ravine. And then you come up to the mountain where the temple is. And the city of David.

[17:22] And the highest point in the city of David is called Mount Zion. It is a physical location. Traditionally, it's where the disciples met in the upper room.

And when they were done with their meal, they came down into the valley, across to the Mount of Olives. So it has a physical location, but it's much more important in terms of spiritual.

So in Psalm 2, Zion is the place where God will set his king. I will set my king, my Messiah, my beloved son on Mount Zion.

And there he will rule. And there he will judge. So it's a place of Christ. Place of the Messiah. Isaiah 28 talks about Zion is where God lays his stone.

A precious cornerstone. A stone that was rejected. But those who believe in that stone in Zion will never be disappointed. So it's where Christ's ministry happens.

[18 : 29] Zion. And then in Hebrews 12, we're told that Zion is, in comparison to Mount Sinai. So the old covenant was Mount Sinai where people went.

And as you read about Mount Sinai, it was a scary place. It was a place of lightning and thunder and fire and a voice that they didn't want to listen to because it terrified them.

That's Mount Sinai. But now in the New Testament, we come to Mount Zion, which is a heavenly place. It's a city of God without the fire and the brimstone and the scariness.

It is the safe place. It is heaven or the city of God or the new Jerusalem or whatever you want to call it. The scriptures call it several things. That's Zion.

So this is where they are. They're on this place where God dwells, this place where the Messiah is, the place where salvation comes. They're in the heavenly city. So it's a picture of heaven.

[19 : 34] Here are these people. So now the question is, what's the identity of the 144,000? Well, as I said, I believe the number, numbers mean something. Numbers count in the book of Revelation.

Right? We got sevens. We got tens. We got twelves. We got 144. We got 24s.

We got all kinds of numbers. We just had 666, the end of chapter 13, which is short of 777, right? It's the number of imperfection.

So what's the number 144? Well, we know that it's a number from chapter 7, which is a multiply of 12,000 from each tribe of Israel times 12.

So 12,000 times 12 is apparently 144,000. So the number, 12 times 12.

[20 : 36] 12 is significant. We had 12 tribes. We have 12 apostles. In Revelation at the end, we'll see that the New Jerusalem has 12 gates, 12 foundation stones, 12, 12, 12.

In other words, kind of representing fullness. So 12 tribes was all of Israel. 12 apostles was all the apostles. The totality.

Okay? 12 times 12 is kind of a perfected, multiplied perfection. Totality. So I think the number represents the full number of the redeemed.

Remember in chapter 7 when we saw it. Back in chapter 7, it describes, he says, I heard their number. Their number was 144,000. And they were made up of 12,000 from every, remember the wording, every tribe of Israel.

And then it listed the 12 tribes. Anybody remember the problem with the 12 tribes there? Well, one's missing. If it's literally every tribe of Israel, Dan's gone.

[21 : 48] So it's not every tribe of Israel. And then the order's all messed up. You got Judah first instead of fourth. But wait, Judah, that's where Christ comes in.

Okay, should be first. Then the next lots are all the ones that were last. They were the tribes of the concubines. You know.

Jacob and Leah, those are the first ones. Jacob and Rachel, that's Joseph and Benjamin. And then you got the concubines. Remember who Leah gave Jacob her maid?

Rachel, who couldn't have children, gave her maid to Jacob to have children through her. All of a sudden, those are elevated to the top of this list. Which kind of makes you wonder, something going on here?

And then Joseph's mentioned instead of Joseph's two sons. Because they're usually Levites. So it's all different anyway. So it leads you to believe maybe it doesn't mean literal tribes of Israel.

[22 : 53] So he hears 144,000 in chapter 7. Remember, he hears and then he sees what? He has a hearing vision of the 144.

Then he has a seeing vision of, here's 144,000. And then he sees a multitude that cannot even be numbered. Of people from every tribe and nation and language and tongue.

In other words, everyone. Who's saved. So what I believe is you have two visions, two views of the same people.

One, they're counted as a number. God knows every one of his people. They're all secure. But if you really try to count them, they're innumerable. They're just, they're from everywhere. It reminds us of how chapter 5 was when it revealed Jesus, right?

Who's worthy to open the scroll? No one's worthy to open the scroll. And then the elder says, no, wait, there is somebody. It's the line of Judah. So he hears line of Judah. And when he turns to look, what does he see?

[24 : 05] A slain lamb. Two different ones? Line and lamb, are they different? No, the same person. Just two different views. So I think that's the same thing going on here. Even though it's 144,000, it's a representative of an innumerable multitude.

So it represents all the redeemed. That's not the only view. I think it's the most likely view. You can take it if you want as a literal 144,000. But there's going to be some problems if you do that.

And I'll show you in just a moment. Well, here's the thing. If you read verses 1 through 5 literally, that there are literally 144,000 people.

They are undefiled with women because they're virgins. So in other words, this has to be men. This has to be celibate men only.

And it says that they're undefiled with women because they're virgins. Well, if he meant they're virgins and just celibate, that's one thing.

[25 : 17] But why would he have to say undefiled with women? Because then it sounds like marriage defiles. Right? If you take it literally, you've got to go there.

And then these guys sound like super saints. They're a special elite group. I couldn't believe it. A number of commentaries I read, and I want to get different perspectives, and a couple of them said, yeah, this is a special elite group.

And I'm like, you're kidding me. Since when does God have a special elite group who are super saints? Where do those come from?

Not the earth. Well, let's see. You have the 12 tribes. How perfect were they? Okay. Nope, nope, nope. Okay. Peter, James, John. How about those guys? They had to be elite, right? I mean, Peter becomes pope, right?

I mean, he had to be a super saint, wasn't he? No, no, no. Got called out by Paul. Got called out by Jesus several times. That's why we love Peter. He's one of us. He's not a super saint.

[26 : 25] He's a super lover of Jesus, but not a super saint. You can't go there. This isn't a super elite group. So these sing a song, then, we're told.

In verse 2, notice this song. How does it sound? He says, I heard a voice from heaven. That's not just one voice. It's probably a voice of a choir.

Well, he gives three things that it's like. It's like the roar of many waters. So roaring waters. What's that sound like? You ever been next to a waterfall? You ever been next to multiple waterfalls?

What's it like? Can you talk? No. How about thunder? If there's thunder cracking outside the window, is that nice and quiet melodious?

No. It's like, first time I heard that in Illinois, it was like, California thunder is not like Illinois thunder. California thunder sounds like, you know, it's way away. Illinois sounded like it was right outside the window.

[27 : 30] I mean, I think I'd jump. How far can a white man jump? I don't know. That wasn't, sorry.

I didn't mean that anyway. I'm just talking about me. I can't jump. So it's thunderous. And then it's like, then the third description is like, wait a minute. That doesn't sound like the first two.

Many waters, roaring waters and rumbling thunder and then harps. Harps playing. What is that? I don't think I would describe harps like rushing water and rumbling thunder.

Would you? It sounds, harps are musical, melodious, pleasing. So it's, somehow it's a deafening loud noise, but also pleasing.

It's like, can you put those together? Well, apparently you can in heaven. Is music going to, is worship going to be loud in heaven? Sometimes. You all right with that?

[28 : 36] Some of you old rockers like, yeah, give it to me. Crank it. So what's the song? It doesn't tell us what the lyrics are. They were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

So in other words, in the throne room with, remember everything we heard about in chapter four? And then he says that no one could learn the song except the 144 who had been redeemed from the earth.

So what's the song? Well, it's the song of the redeemed. These are the redeemed. These are the only ones that could hear it, not hear it, but learn it. We talked about this before church in our class.

And it was mentioned that it doesn't mean that no one else could sing the song or that no one else could hear the song, but no one else could learn the song.

It's one thing to sing lyrics and not really know what they mean. Right? You could do that. You could read the words. It's like where John says, no one who's truly saved can say Jesus is Lord.

[29 : 44] Well, people can say literally Jesus is Lord, but they don't mean it. It's not real. That's what we're talking about here. These only ones who had experienced redemption can sing about redemption.

I don't know what the lyrics of this song is, but it's a song of redemption. It's a song of victory. What does it mean to be redeemed? Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed. Redeemed means you're, you go to the store, you redeem something, right?

What do you do? You pay for it. You're buying it. If you're redeemed, you're bought. You've been bought for the price.

You are not your own. You've been bought with the blood of Christ. These are redeemed, paid for. So our debt paid in full.

We've been bought. We've been released from the former owner. We've been set free from our shame and guilt. We don't always believe that, but that's what faith is, right?

[30 : 47] We still feel shame and guilt, but we're free from shame and guilt. Not because we did anything. Not because we lived perfect afterwards.

But because Christ took care of it. These are the redeemed. That's why they sing. That's why they sing. It's like, ooh. Ooh. So what is your song of deliverance?

Has God given you a song? Has God set you free? Anyone here? Anybody? Anybody free? Anybody? Yeah, okay. You got a song? Oh, you got songs.

Of course you got a song. You think of it as a victory song or a song of deliverance or a song of belonging to Jesus? Here's David's song. This is one of the great, great songs.

Psalm 40. I've seen it in Ann's office. Psalm 40. Psalm 40. David's song. He says, I waited patiently. Which, by the way, in Scripture means I waited to wait.

[31 : 47] And wait. And wait. And wait. That's what the Lord likes to have us do. He's the doctor. We wait. But he always answers.

I waited patiently for the Lord. And what? He inclined to me. I didn't deserve it, but he inclined to me and he heard my cry. And then what did he do? He drew me up from the pit of destruction.

Anybody been there? From the miry bog. You know where you're stuck. He drew me up. And he set my feet.

Not only got me out of there, but he set my feet on a rock. Making my steps secure. Then what did he do? He put a new song in my mouth.

A song of praise to our God. Many will see and hear and put their trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. Who does not turn to the proud.

[32 : 43] To those who go astray after a lie. You have multiplied. He goes on in singing. You have multiplied, O Lord my God. Your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us.

None can compare with you. I will proclaim and tell of them. Yet they are more than can be told. In sacrifice and offering, you have not delighted.

In other words, just doing the rules. Following the law. Sacrifice. That's not what you deserve. But what you want is. You've given me an open ear to really hear you.

Burn offering and sin offering are not what you have required. You want my heart. Then I said, behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book, it's written of me.

I've delighted to do your will. Oh my God, your law is within my heart. I have not hidden your deliverance in my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation.

[33 : 46] I've not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. In other words, I had to sing about it. I had to tell others about it. God's work in my heart is not a private issue.

It starts there. It's private. But after God has worked in me, I've got to get that out. So, when the Giants lost to the Dodgers.

I'm a Giants fan. It was baseball. I was heartbroken. If they'd have won, I would have texted Miss Faith here and said, I don't know what I said.

I would have been, yeah, got to say something, right? Got to say something. If that's the kind of thing you get excited about, just a ball game, which, nice entertainment.

You know, it's all right. It's good. It's good. What about deliverance from a real enemy? What about lifting up out of the bog?

[35 : 02] Ron was praising God today. What about that? What about when God works in our... Not just ultimately where He saves us. Absolutely. We've always got a song for that. But He keeps saving us, doesn't He?

He keeps showing His faithfulness. He keeps showing His love. He keeps working. He keeps faithful to me even when I'm not faithful to Him.

And man, I... Got to pray. Got to tell. Got to tell somebody. Somebody. So it's a song that shows God's mercy, His deliverance, His salvation, His love, His faithfulness.

Has God heard your cry? David said He heard my cry. I waited and waited and waited, and then He finally heard me. He heard me. He always hears me if I keep calling to Him.

Has He heard your cry? Has He lifted you from a pit of destruction? Has He lifted you from a path of misery? Has He saved you from yourself? I got the privilege to preach at a funeral last month.

[36 : 11] And a lot of people there were not believers. And I got to talk about who Jesus is. And I was told, don't preach this person into salvation.

He's a sinner. I said, oh, okay. But he knew Jesus, right? Yeah, he knew Jesus. Oh, let me just talk about who Jesus is. Let me tell you how Jesus is towards sinners.

Because a bunch of people had this kind of view of this guy who had died as, you know, he's just, yeah, he's, you know. I'm like, oh, but he knew Jesus.

So let me tell you how Jesus thinks about this young man. Jesus loves sinners. Jesus wants to spend time with sinners.

Talked about Matthew. He sought Matthew out. This bad reputation guy. Tax collector. And then he wants to spend time. Oh, I want to come and eat at your house.

[37 : 06] And Matthew brings all of his, you know, friends. Not righteous people. People with reps. And that's, that's the kind of song Matthew had a song to sing.

Matthew's friends had a song to sing. Save from a path of misery. Let's not hide it.

So these people are the redeemed. All of God's redeemed. But how are they known? So he talks about who they are now. In verses four and five, he talks about how they live. How they distinguish themselves.

Notice in verse four, it is these. He has three times he talks about these people. These have not defiled themselves.

Middle of verse four. These who follow the lamb. And again, these have been redeemed as first fruit. So three traits, three characteristics of these people.

[38 : 08] Who are they? They're the redeemed. And they're distinguished by Christlike character. That's what distinguishes them. They're Christlike. So three ways that they're Christlike.

One, it says they're virgins. Okay. What is that? What does that mean? So Christ didn't get married. So he's a virgin, right? So Christlike, to be really Christlike, you have to be a virgin.

You have to be celibate, right? Right? I mean, is that what this means? So as I said, the description here in these two verses, four and five, sounds like an elite number of super saints.

They don't get married. They don't get defiled. They never lie. They're blameless. Blah, blah, blah. I don't think so. So are they virgins literally?

Because as I said, that would imply that marriage is somehow defiling. But we know that's not true, don't we? I mean, God's the one who started marriage, first of all, in the garden.

[39 : 19] Even before Genesis 3, God said, let man leave his father and mother and join to his wife. And become one flesh.

That's a blessed thing. Scripture talks about marriage. In fact, the end of Revelation talks about marriage. It talks about the lamb having a supper.

That's a marriage feast. Huh. So marriage isn't bad. That's not. So it can't mean literal virgins who aren't defiled with women.

So if it had just simply said they were virgins, that's fine. Scripture acknowledges there are those who are celibate, and that's fine. Jesus talked about those.

That's fine. They have that gift. Others have another gift. Marriage is called a gift. Yeah. It's a gift. Most of us have that gift. But why would it say they didn't defile themselves with women?

[40 : 22] If it just said they were virgins, then fine. That's who they could be. But why bring women into it? Right? So what does he mean? Well, it's a metaphor of spiritual purity, I think.

They're not defiled by immoral behavior. It's not that they're physical virgins, that they're not somehow married.

You can be married and be a virgin to Christ. Because you're pure in your relationship. You're pure in what God has blessed. He's talking about...

Remember chapters 2 and 3 when he's writing to the seven churches? Remember the issues that they had? There's a lot of false teaching going on. There was teaching of Balaam. There was teaching of Jezebel. Remember what Jezebel was doing?

He was seducing the church. She was seducing the church to commit immorality. To join the feasts.

[41 : 26] And if you joined the feast in the first century, it meant you went to a meal. You honored the God Caesar. And there's an after party. Okay?

You joined that too. Because if you didn't, you weren't really on board. Okay? That's what it was in that first century. So to not do that, to not compromise, that made them spiritual virgins.

They sacrificed for that. They lose their place in the marketplace for that. You lose your place in society if you don't conform to what the world expects you to do.

Don't you? Don't you? You're not going to make it up the ladder if you're not going to the parties and you're not going to the other meets. How are you going to do it?

You're not networking in that way. You can still network. You can still... Anyway. Not compromising those ways. Here is a metaphor of virginity.

[42 : 28] We're told that at the end of chapter 19, or beginning of chapter 19, there's a marriage feast of the Lamb. Well, who is the Lamb marrying? The church is the bride.

We're the bride. Jesus is going to marry what kind of bride? A clean one. A pure one. A virgin one. Does that mean we're all literally virgin?

No, of course not. Of course not. But we have become clean. He cleanses us. He washes us. Makes us clean and blameless.

See the picture here? This isn't about some super elite group that somehow are repelled by marriage. These are just people loyal to the Lamb.

Secondly, it says not only are they the undefiled, but they're followers. They're followers of the Lamb. They follow Him wherever He goes. They're loyal to Jesus. When Jesus first called His disciples, well, let's say when He called the fishermen.

[43 : 34] Remember that? What did He, how did He call them? Remember Peter and his brother, Andrew, are out fishing? James and John are out fishing. Jesus comes up to them and says what?

Follow me, right? Follow me. And I will make you fishers of men. Listen, you follow me, I'll make you fishermen. I'll take care of who you become.

You just follow me. And then remember He said, if you want to follow me, Matthew 16, if you want to follow me, if you want to come after me, what must you do? What do you do to be a follower of Jesus?

Jesus said, well, if you want to come after me, you must deny yourself, take your cross, and follow me. Because that's where I'm going.

If you follow me, come with me. It's a life of self-denial. It's a life of sacrifice. Right? It's distinct.

[44 : 39] Not everybody does that. Not even those who say they believe in Jesus, not every one of them does that. Not every one of us does that all the time, do we?

Anybody have a day where you're not denying yourself? Yeah, a week, a month. Right? We have bad spells. That doesn't mean we stop being a follower of Jesus because, well, the Holy Spirit comes and says, okay, come on.

Come on. And we repent and we follow. It's not about a perfect life of following. It's about a lifestyle of coming back, coming back, coming back. Sometimes we have to fall, don't we, like Peter, to see I need Him, I need Him.

We lose our life in this world in order to save it. And then the third thing we see about these redeemed folks is they're redeemed.

Interesting. In verse 4, they're redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God. Redeemed as first fruits. First fruits.

[45 : 48] So what's a first fruit? First fruits. So in the Old Testament, when they had harvest, right, they'd bring the first to God. Right? So we bring, that's an act of offering, an act of giving. We give the first to God.

We give the best to God. Right? We give the first. So first fruits. But here it doesn't say what the first fruit is of what? It is. They're first fruits to God.

But of what? First fruit of what? What kind of first fruits were there? Well, Paul talked about he had converts in a certain area that were the first fruits for him.

They were his first converts. So is that what this means? Are they the first Christians? Could be. What else is it? Jesus is the first fruit of resurrection.

He's the first one to be raised from the dead. Right? Permanently. Not counting Lazarus. He's the first one to be. So he's a first root. Is that what these are? Are they the first ones resurrected?

[46 : 52] So are they the first installment of all Christians? The first installment is this 144,000. They're resurrected first. Is that what that means? I don't think so.

Scripture didn't talk that way. So how does Scripture talk? Well, it talks about a first resurrection and a later resurrection. First resurrection includes all saved.

All saved. Right? At the end. Right? He will first raise. He tells the Thessalonians, don't worry. Those of you who have fallen asleep. Your loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

They'll be raised first. Then you'll meet them in the air. Right? Right? We're all raised together. One time. Revelation 20 talks about blessed is the one who's in the first resurrection.

Because over them the second death has no power. So Christians are raised first. And then who is raised? See, isn't it just Christians who are raised?

[47 : 57] Who else is raised? The rest of the dead. Everyone gets raised, by the way. Right? Right? Everyone is raised to eternal life.

Well, some to eternal life. Some to eternal judgment. So the first resurrection is believers to life.

Second resurrection is the rest of the dead to judgment. Revelation bears that out. In fact, the end of our chapter talks about the two harvests. The harvest of the first ones and then a second harvest that goes to judgment.

Amen. So first fruits of resurrected ones. So how does their character show? We see in verse five. These are the ones, their first fruits.

And in their mouth was no lie. For they are blameless. Now, I don't think it means that they never tell a lie. Like Abe.

[48 : 56] I don't think it means that. I think they, generally speaking, are truthful people. Blameless. Blameless. They are blameless.

What does blameless mean? Well, we're told to, you know, if we're looking for, we are, by the way, looking for an elder. Another elder. What's the requirement of an elder?

We have to be able to preach and teach. All right. But I'm looking for one that a word's already been mentioned here. They're supposed to be blameless.

Right? They're supposed to be blameless. So, you think Rick's blameless? He'll tell you no. You think I'm blameless? I've told you just about every week I'm not.

So, what does it mean? It doesn't mean moral perfection. It doesn't mean not make mistakes. But it means, is there something hanging over them, accusable?

[49 : 59] Something scandalous? They're unaccusable. Not that, no, you look at my life, you'll find plenty of stuff, little stuff. But is there something hanging out that's like, uh-uh, uh-uh, uh-uh, something really wrong here?

Right? That's what it means. Besides, in Christ we have become blameless. Before God's eyes, we are blameless. In my eyes, no.

I know. But so does he. And he says, it's forgiven. It's cleansed. Nothing prevents you from coming to me at any time.

What does it mean to be an undefiled virgin? Virgin. Virgin. Virgin. A version of a virgin to Christ. Doesn't mean celibate. Doesn't mean, you know, unmarried.

Paul describes this very term to the Corinthians. By the way, the Corinthians were not virgins. But he calls them virgins. If any church was not real moral before they were converted, it's the Corinthian church, okay?

[51 : 18] He names the whole this. Some of you were this and this and this. You were all of it. But now. So here's what he says to the Corinthian church. And he's concerned about his converts there because they've been listening to other people.

He says, I feel a divine jealousy for you. This is 2 Corinthians 11. I feel the divine jealousy for you. Since, watch the language. Since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

The Corinthians. Presented as a pure virgin to Christ. But, I'm afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray.

From what? Watch this. From a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. See, that's what a pure virgin is. Is a pure and sincere devotion to Christ.

That's what it means. How would they be led astray? He says, for if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed.

[52 : 31] Or, if you receive a different spirit from the one you received. Or, if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted.

You put up with it readily enough. In other words, you seem to be okay with another Jesus. Another spirit. Another gospel. You seem to be okay.

Oh, it doesn't matter. It says Jesus. Only one Jesus, right? No, no, no, no, no, no. Another Jesus?

Another Jesus? Than the one you hurt? There's a lot of Jesus going around today. A lot of different gospels going around today.

Okay? Are they just the pure, sincere gospel? Or are they something with a little twist to it? A little bit of man desire in there.

[53 : 32] A little bit more palatable. Or do I have to deny myself? I mean, it's all about me? Okay. I want the gospel for self. Oh, no cross?

My best life now? That's great. I want that one. Nope. Different gospel. He says, indeed.

He says, you seem to put up with it readily enough. Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super apostles. They are listening to super apostles.

Ones who proclaim themselves. Yeah, did anybody do that to you, by the way? Oh, I am a prophet of God. Oh, I am an apostle. I got a letter recently from somebody that was either an apostle or a prophet.

I am like, yeah. Thank you very much. They don't have to self-proclaim. Okay? They don't have to self-proclaim. I got to self-proclaim. I got a problem.

[54 : 39] Even if I'm unskilled in speaking. These super apostles, man, they're on TV. They got the broadcast. They got the huge church. They got the way of saying things. They look good.

They got the right suit. They got the right smile all the time. They never stop smiling. They got all this stuff going on. Paul says, man, I don't compare to that. Even if I'm unskilled, I'm not so skilled in speaking as they are.

Imagine that. Paul, Paul, not skilled. I don't know. His opinion, he says, I'm not a gifted speaker. Good grief, he preaches everywhere. He's not a gifted speaker. He says, even if I'm unskilled in speaking, I'm not unskilled in knowledge.

Indeed, in every way, we have made this plain to you in all things. I may not be gifted in speaking, but I've told you the truth.

And I've made it plain. Jesus died for sins once for all. To all who believe have eternal life.

[55 : 49] Simple. What's our gospel? God, man, Christ, faith. Who is God?

Clear. Scripture is clear. Who's man? Clear about who we are. Especially if we compare ourselves to God. Okay. What's our solution? Christ.

How do we enter into that? Faith. It's very simple. Doesn't mean it's easy. Simple. Truth is simple and sincere.

How can guilty sinners be found pure and blameless? Well, Paul says it in Ephesians 5. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Why? That he might sanctify her, make her holy.

Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. It's how he spoke to them that made them clean. He did that so that he might present the church to himself. Isn't that interesting?

[56 : 51] He wants to present the church back to himself. He died for the church to cleanse her and make her holy so that he can present her back to himself.

That's his bride. That's his bride. Present her back to himself in splendor.

Did you know you're splendidous? You look good, Ron. Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

And there's our word, without blemish. Have you been cleansed by Christ? Christ died for his bride. She wasn't splendidous.

Is that a word? She wasn't splendidous to begin with. But she became splendidous. She needed cleansing. She needed washing. She needed purifying.

[57 : 47] Purifying. Like me. Like you. He did that. He did.

You didn't do it. He did that for you. Oh. How can we know?

So here's the. How can we know? How do I know if I'm one of the redeemed? How do I know if I will stand on Mount Zion? How do I know that I can sing that song that no one else can learn?

How do I know? I want to know if I'm there. How do I know? Is it because I prayed a prayer? No. Because I walked an aisle? No. I can tell you no, by the way, because I've done it hundreds and hundreds of times.

I grew up in a church where I walked just about every week. Because I was convicted. I went to Billy Graham. And I said, maybe Billy's got the magic. I'm going to go with Billy.

[58 : 52] Bless his heart. Billy preached the gospel. But when I came and crossed that line like he told me, nothing changed. Nothing changed.

I still wanted to do what I always wanted to do. I hated God. I knew he was right. I hated him.

Because he asked me to do what I couldn't do, what I didn't want to do. So how do you know? If I can't do anything to make myself born again, how do I know?

How do you know if you're born again? Now Jesus does say you have to be born again, right? You can't enter the kingdom unless you're born again. Born again from above. Remember Nick at night.

No, not entering into your mother again. No, not physical birth. No, spiritual birth. Right? Born from above. A whole new life. A whole new spirit.

[59 : 50] A whole new heart. So how do I know if I've been born again? New desires. What else? What changes? Spirit of God.

What else? How do I know? How do you know? You get rich? No? No? No? No? All your diseases are healed?

Spiritual ones, but not the physical ones. I got a new heart. I got a new desire. I got a new will. I actually want to obey God's commands. That's how I knew I got saved.

Because I never wanted to before. I knew I had to, but I never wanted to. And all of a sudden I noticed, oh, I want to please him. I want to do. Now, not every 24-7.

You understand. I wake up in the morning. I'm not, oh, I want to go obey the commandments today. But overall, at the end of the day, what do I want?

[60 : 51] I want to please him. That's how I know. I got a new heart. I got new desires. I got new values. Okay? And it's going to show up in how I live.

I'm going to stop telling lies. I'm going to start speaking the truth. Right? I'm going to curb my anger. I'm still going to get angry because there's things that are wrong.

But I'm not going to sin with that anger. At least, I'm going to try to curb that. I'm going to try to bridle my tongue a little bit more. Stop. What's your, what's your?

Watch your mouth. Watch your mouth. I'm going to try to do that a little better. With the help of the Spirit. Because I'm going to, I know I can't do that on my own. So I'm going to say, oh, Lord, please help me bridle.

I think I told you, I pray that for when I preach, that I would, that God would restrain unnecessary words. Thank you.

[61 : 51] That means I have a lot of unnecessary words. Thank you. Me too. So, let me end with this. I want to end with a victory song.

Comes from Isaiah. Isaiah. Isaiah 35. It ends with, the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing and desire.

But here, I want you to hear how it starts. How does this song of the redeemed start? It's a song of salvation. It describes, I think, if you listen to the pictures, it describes our conversion.

It describes us coming out of the desert into life. Here's this song. Isaiah 35. The wilderness and the dry land will be glad.

The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

[62 : 55] The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it. In other words, forest. The majesty of Carmel and Sharon, they will see the glory of God, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, be strong, fear not. Behold your God.

He will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

The burning sand shall become a pool. The thirsty ground springs of water. In the haunt of jackals where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

[64 : 09] And a highway shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way.

Even if they are fools. That's interesting. Even if they are not the smartest one in the pack. They shall not go astray.

No lion shall be there. Nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it. They shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return. And come to Zion with singing. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. And they shall obtain gladness and joy.

And sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Amen. Father, thank you for your word. Stir up that song in our hearts, we pray in Christ's name.

[65 : 13] Amen. Amen.