

Fire from the Angel of Revelation 14

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | June 1, 2023



Recently, I read the following in a Bible study guide on Revelation 14:

“Another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire” (Rev. 14:18, NKJV). Here is the angel who commands the fires of God’s final judgment (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, 2nd Quarter, 2023, “Three Cosmic Messages,” [pg 23](#)).

I immediately paused, went to my Bible, and read the quoted text for myself. I was disappointed to discover that the study guide clipped Revelation 14:18 right in the middle of it—and then followed the truncated text with their own interpretation, making it appear that the fire mentioned is the fire of God’s judgment. But the text doesn’t actually say that! In fact, the meaning of the text is exactly the opposite of what the lesson alleges.

So let’s now examine this text in Revelation 14 and allow the Bible to lead us to a better understanding:

Still 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” (vv. 18, 19 NIV84).

Does the angel use the fire to inflict punishment? Is fire used at all? If you allow the text to influence your conclusion about this fire, what fire would you say it is? From where is the angel coming? The altar of God. And when it says that the angel is in charge of the fire, would the text be suggesting that the fire is the fire associated with the altar in God's temple?

And is it likely that this "fire" is literal, a fire of combustion, or is it symbolic of something else? Is it the same type of fire described in Daniel 7:9, 10, as coming out like a river from the throne of God with billions standing in it?

The fact is—we don't have to infer this conclusion; the Bible elsewhere explicitly describes the fire coming from the altar and what it does:

I saw the Lord. He was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple. [The scene is the heavenly temple, where the altar that the angel of Revelation 14 comes from is located.] Round him flaming creatures were standing, each of which had six wings. [What kind of fire is this? Is it combustion or something else?] Each creature covered its face with two wings, and its body with two, and used the other two for flying. They were calling out to each other:

"Holy, holy, holy! The LORD Almighty is holy! His glory fills the world."

The sound of their voices made the foundation of the Temple shake, and the Temple itself was filled with smoke.

I said, "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes, I have seen the King, the LORD Almighty!"

Then one of the creatures flew down to me, **carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar** with a pair of tongs. He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, "This has touched your lips, and **now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven**" (Isaiah 6:1-7 GNT, emphasis mine).

Wow! The fire from this altar cleansed Isaiah—burning away his guilt and bringing healing and forgiveness from sin. So, the angel in Revelation 14, who is God's agent, is in charge of this *cleansing* fire! He is the one who is represented in the prophecy as administering the purifying power of God to cleanse the saints from sin. (Do you think this is a symbolic representation of Jesus in His high priestly role of cleansing His people from sin?)

This angel then leaves his cleansing work and tells the other angel with a sharp sickle to harvest the wicked. Why? Because there are no more people who are willing to be cleansed by the fires of truth and love that flow from the temple of God. Every person has already either been cleansed by the fire from the altar and, therefore, are settled, sealed, solidified into loyal love to God—or they have hardened themselves into rebellion, sinfulness, and selfishness and destroyed within themselves the faculties that respond to truth and love so that they are beyond healing. Therefore, the angel from the altar, the one who is in charge of the cleansing fire, goes to the harvesting angel and says: *There is no one left for me to heal; the harvest is ripe; it is time to reap.*

God's fires are not the source of pain, suffering, and death—they are the cleansing fires of truth and love that originate in His infinite being. (If you would like to read more about this, see our blog [The Truth About Hell](#).) For all those who trust Him, God will burn away all their guilt, shame, sin, fear, and selfishness and they will become His representatives on this earth—His lights, burning brightly with the eternal fires of love and truth, to take to the world.

We must stop interpreting the Bible through the false human imposed-law lens, which makes God out to be the source of inflicted punishment for sin, and return to worshiping Him as our Creator, Savior, and Healer. Only then will we be empowered by the Latter Rain to finish the work God has called us to do.