

**When God Judges The Earth**  
**(The Final Harvest of God)**  
 Revelation 14:14-20

**Introduction**

\* The great British Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834 – 1892) preached a sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London in 1876. The title of his message was “The Harvest and the Vintage.” The text was Revelation 14:14-20. In that sermon Spurgeon affirmed his belief that, “the Jews, as a people, will yet own Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, as their King, and that they will return to their own land.” He also went on to say, “It is certain also that our Lord Jesus Christ shall come again to this earth, and that He shall reign amongst His ancients gloriously, and that there will be a thousand years of joy and peace such as were never known on this earth before.” To these affirmations he added, “[It] seems to me to be clearly revealed in the Scripture, that there is to come, some when – we know not when – a solemn winding up of all events of this world’s history.”

\* Spurgeon was right on target at all points in his assessment. Spurgeon also was right on target in building his argument from the book of Revelation in general and 14:14-20 in particular. It is here in this text that the final harvest of God is depicted both in its rightness, but also in its horror. It is here that we gain a glimpse of the bowl judgements. It is here that we gain a glimpse of Armageddon (cf. 16:12-16).

\* The second coming of Jesus will be nothing like his first coming. The contrast can scarcely be grasped:

<u>1<sup>st</sup> Coming</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Coming</u>
Humiliation	Exaltation
Suffering Servant	Sovereign King
In Poverty	In Majesty
To A Cross	On A Cloud
To <u>Save</u> Sinners	To <u>Judge</u> Sinners
As a <u>Sower</u>	As a <u>Reaper</u>
In <u>Grace</u>	In <u>Wrath</u>

**Transition**

This is indeed where our text begins.

**I. God’s wrath is coming. 14:14-16**

\* 2 visions of judgement comprise vs. 14-20: 1) grain harvest (vs. 14-16) and 2) grape harvest (vs. 17-20). Both harvests involve a sickle and a reaping. John MacArthur believes the grain harvest symbolizes the coming bowl judgements (Ch. 16) and the grape harvest symbolizes the coming battle of Armageddon (16:12-16; 19:17-21).

\* Background is Joel 3:12-13 – “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow – for their wickedness is great.”

### 1. **It comes from Jesus. 14:14**

- \* I looked and behold (cf. 14:1, also 4:1; 6:2, 5, 8: 7:9)
  - \* White cloud...Son of Man – background is Daniel 7:13 – 14 – “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. Which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”
  - \* White cloud – glory, majesty, dazzling brilliance, heavenly splendor and unearthly purity. On a cloud for all to see. – cf. Rev. 1:7 – “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”
  - \* Son of Man – cf. 1:13. This is Jesus’ favorite title for himself during His incarnate state.
  - \* Golden crown – stephanos crown, that of a victor/conqueror – not a diadema crown, that of a ruler.
  - \* Sharp sickle – long curved razor-sharp blade attached to a long broomstick-like wooden handle. Word occurs 7 times in vs. 14-20. It is an instrument symbolic of divine judgement.
  - \* Some see the 1<sup>st</sup> harvest as that of the elect (believers).
  - \* Some see the 1<sup>st</sup> harvest as general in nature.
  - \* Some see the 1<sup>st</sup> harvest and the 2<sup>nd</sup> as that of judgement.
- This last view is better given the context and parallelism. Jesus comes to judge the earth.

### 2. **It comes on time. 14:15-16**

Another angel – (*allos aggelos*) – 4<sup>th</sup> in the chapter  
Temple – (*naos*) – sanctuary  
Loud voice – all will see Christ. All will hear the angel.  
Thrust – (aor. imp.) send, put in  
Reap – (aor. imp.) begin harvesting  
The time (lit. the hour, the appointed time)  
Ripe – dried up, fully or over ripe, withered. The grain (meaning of “the earth”) is past usefulness and value. The day of grace is past. Now only judgement will be exercised. Verse 16 is brief and simple in its truth. The tragic details are left, as it were, to our imagination.

### **Transition**

God’s wrath comes from Jesus. God’s wrath comes on time. The ministry of mercy is over. Sowing has ceased. The time for “judgement reaping” has come. There will be no more tomorrows!

### II. **God’s wrath is certain. 14:17-19**

The vision John sees now moves from the “grain harvest” to the grape harvest. This is also our first look at the battle or campaign of Armageddon (cf. 16:12-16; 19:17-21).

Divine judgement has come upon the world and there is no holding back. Of the 3 pictures of judgement in this chapter: 1) the unmixed wine cup, 2) the grain harvest, and now 3) the grape harvest, this is the most dramatic and striking. Verse 20 will bear this out.

**1. God's servants act with divine authority. 14:17-18**

- \* 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> angels in chapter 14 appear in vs. 17-18.
- \* 5<sup>th</sup> angel, like the 4<sup>th</sup>, comes from the temple (*naos*); like the Lord he has a charge sickle.
- \* 6<sup>th</sup> angel comes from the altar (cf. 6:9-11; 8:3-5), the altar of incense. This connects the judgement with the prayers of the saints and finally answers the question of 6:10, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"
- \* Fire would symbolize holiness, purity and judgement
- \* Thrust – (aor. imp.) – send, put in
- \* Fully ripe – prime, at its peak, really for harvesting. The earth in its wickedness, evil and rebellion is ripe for the picking, ready for the "judgement harvest."

**Transition**

God's servant act, on His time and with His authority.

**2. God's servants act with decisive urgency. 14:19**

- \* The angel responds immediately and decisively. There is no delay, no hesitation.
- \* In the Ancient Near East, in the time of John, grapes were trampled or stomped by foot in a trough that had a duct leading to a lower trough or basin where the juice was collected. Treading grapes in a winepress was a familiar figure of divine wrath and judgement. "The splattering of the juice as the grapes are stomped vividly pictures the splattered blood of those who will be destroyed" (MacArthur, p. 117).
- \* Isaiah 63:3-4 – "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come."
- \* Lamentations 1:15 – "The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me to crush my young men; the Lord trampled as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah."
- \* Joel 3:13 – "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow – for their wickedness is great."
- \* Revelation 19:15 – "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

**Transition**

God's servant acts with decisive urgency.

### III. **God's wrath is complete. 14:20**

\* Jerusalem will be spared the terrible judgement at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ. She will be damaged but not destroyed. This is in keeping with God's prediction and promise in Zechariah 14:1-5. "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city, then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle, and in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come and all the saints with You."

\* The war that will truly end all wars will no doubt be worldwide, yet its focal point will be on the Plain of Esdraelon near Mt. Megiddo (c. 60 miles north of Jerusalem). This we know as Armageddon. Here will take place the most horrific and destructive battle the world will ever know.

\* Armageddon is also noted in 16:12-16 and 19:17-21. Armageddon is more a slaughter than a battle.

#### 1. **Judgment runs deep.**

\* Up to a horses bridle – about 4 feet

#### 2. **Judgment runs wide.**

\* 1600 furlongs or stadia – 184 miles

\* This is a hyperbole suggesting massive, unimaginable slaughter and destruction.

\* Josephus tells us that when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 by the Roman general Titus, he killed so many Jews that the whole city ran with blood so much that the fire of many houses were quenched with their blood.

\* The blood will fill the troughs and streambeds throughout the valley of Megiddo and beyond. It will truly be a just and terrible day of vengeance and judgement.

### **Conclusion**

\* *Newsweek* reported November 1, 1999 that "40% of U.S. adults believe the world will end as foretold: in a Battle of Armageddon between Jesus and Antichrist." Well 40% have it right. However, the great issue is this: what are they, what are we doing about it?

\* Today God speaks in grace. Soon He will speak in wrath. Today God speaks in mercy. Soon He will speak in judgement. The harvest is near. The reaping is about to begin. God help you if you are not ready. God help you if you are not prepared.