

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

## God's Vinepress of Wrath

### Revelation 14:14-20

#### INTRODUCTION:

Over the past few weeks we have been introduced to the primary figures of this conflict that we as Christians have in this world. The figure at the forefront is the dragon who represents Satan. He was cast down to earth having been defeated by Christ's death on the cross. Ever since then he has been in hot pursuit of the church in an attempt to devour and persecute her.

We discovered that the dragon does not engage in this work by himself. We also saw a second figure, a beast that came up out of the sea, that represents the Satanically inspired regimes that Satan will inspire and give power to wage war against the saints. This beast, was even given the power to overcome the saints physically on this earth. So throughout the church age we see Christians that are persecuted and even killed by ungodly governments that are bent on trying to eradicate any worship of God.

Then we were introduced to another beast coming up out of the earth who is also inspired by Satan to oppose the church. But instead of physical persecution, this beast is bent on trying to drown the church in a sea of lies and deception. He attempts to confuse the church on the true beliefs and practices that Christ laid out for us while He was on this earth. This conflict is something that we are all engaged in. It is spiritual in nature, but it manifests itself in the very physical world in which we live. We see the impact of this spiritual war every day in our personal lives and in the news and it can be discouraging to us.

These visions were recorded for us in order that we could understand what is going on behind the scenes and at the same time encourage us to remain steadfast in our walk with the Lord. They tell us that Christ will have the ultimate victory and that there is an enormous contrast between the future destiny of those who have the seal of God and the future destiny of those who have the mark of the beast. Let us begin.

#### All Stand and Read Scripture

##### Revelation 14:14-20 (NASB)

<sup>14</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud *was* one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. <sup>15</sup> And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." <sup>16</sup> Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

<sup>17</sup> And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." <sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from* the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

## Prayer

### BODY:

#### I. THE TIME FOR HARVEST.

##### Revelation 14:14-16 (NASB)

Notice that this passage starts with the phrase "And I looked". This is telling us that we are about to enter into a new vision. This vision is going to throw us into the second coming of Christ once again, but this time it is going to recapitulate the second coming from the perspective of the **events** that will occur at Christ's second coming.

In verse 14 we see "one like the son of man" seated on a white cloud with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. The golden crown indicates that he is a king and the sharp sickle indicates that he is a harvester or a judge.

Christ was called "one like the son of man coming in the clouds" in Revelation 1:7,13.

Daniel 7:13 talks of "One like the Son of Man" coming before God "with the clouds of heaven". This was referring to Christ's ascension into heaven where He was "given dominion, glory, and a kingdom".

##### Matthew 24:29-30 (NASB)

<sup>29</sup> "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

These are certainly all pointing to the "Son of Man" as being Christ.

Jesus explained that the judgment would be a dual harvest.

##### Matthew 25:31-33 (NASB)

<sup>31</sup> "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

It appears that verses 14-16 is referring to the redemption of the saints as described in...

##### 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NASB)

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

## II. THE GATHERING OF THE HARVEST.

Revelation 14:17-18 (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

This harvest of grapes is a harvest of judgment against the unbelievers. We saw this same angel who has power over fire back in chapter 8 when the seventh seal was broken. This is God finally avenging the blood of all the saints who have suffered persecution.

Revelation 8:3-5a (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. <sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth;...

We have a very good explanation of this event in Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares.

Matthew 13:24-30 (NASB)

<sup>24</sup> Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. <sup>27</sup> The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' <sup>28</sup> And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves \*said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> But he \*said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

Here we see the same dual harvest. The believers were gathered into God's "barn" or into safety. That is because Jesus took the curse of their sin upon Himself so that we would be secure during this time of judgment. However, the unbelievers are delivered into the winepress of God and sent to their eternal "furnace of fire".

Later the disciples ask Jesus to interpret the parable. In Jesus' explanation, we get the identity of each of the figures in the parable.

Matthew 13:36b-42 (NASB)

<sup>36</sup> ... His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." <sup>37</sup> And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, <sup>38</sup> and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; (These are the ones that Revelation refers to as having the seal of God on their foreheads) **and the tares are the sons of the evil one**; (These would be the ones with the mark of the beast) <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; **and the reapers are angels**. <sup>40</sup> So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The judgment will be so grave that it is paralleled to the judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah. They were tormented with fire and sulfur. However, this vision is not a picture of physical destruction. Notice that the angel pictures eternal punishment for those who worship the beast. Those who are giving their allegiance to the world and worshiping its pleasures will be tormented forever and ever and have no rest day or night.

### **III. THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS IS AVENGED.**

Revelation 14:19-20 (NASB)

<sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from* the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

The image comes from Is. 63:3.

Isaiah 63:3 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment.

As the reaping of the faithful will be a reaping of **redemption**, the reaping of the nonbelievers will be a reaping of **judgment**.

That is what is meant by the phrase "Outside the city". It is referring to the outer court.

Revelation 11:1-2 (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. <sup>2</sup> Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

What does it mean to measure the temple? Our bodies are the temple of God. The measuring rod represents the gospel. It is the way to measure those who are Christians and those who are not. The outer court that is outside the temple refers to everyone who does not measure up to the gospel and thus does not belong to God.

Remember the proclamation that third angel made back in verses 9 -10?

Revelation 14:9b-10 (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> ... “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, **which is mixed in full strength** in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

People typically drank their wine mixed with water. Drinking water was a problem then because the water was not clean and would cause illnesses. So the people would drink wine and the wine would be diluted with water. Notice that this angel says that they are going to drink the wine of God's wrath at “**full strength.**” God’s judgment is not going to be watered down. They will receive the full brunt of God’s anger for their sins.

Then we see the amount of blood that comes from the winepress. Again, remember that we are seeing a vision. We know that we are not being told of actual blood flowing out of a winepress. And we also know that the numbers in Revelation are not random or literal. Rather they are symbolic. Remember the number 144,000? It is a derivative of 12. It is 12 x 12 x 1000. The 144,000 represent the complete people of God.

We see another number, "two hundred miles", in verse 20. Unfortunately the NASB, as well as many other translations have arrived at this number by converting it from 1600 stadia. A stadia is equal to about 607 feet. Thus 1600 stadia is just short of 184 miles and a horse’s bridle is a few feet high. Can you imagine how much blood would have to be shed and how many people would have to die to create a flow of blood that would pour out for 184 miles a few feet high? This is a graphic symbol to the world. Stop worshiping the beast. Those who worship the beast are going to suffer the wrath of God in eternal punishment. The emperors and the empire that you are worshiping as divine is going to fall and its fall will be so great that the blood will flow for miles. As we know this is not a literal image, but a symbolic image of God's judgment.

The problem is that you lose the symbolic meaning of the number when it is converted to about 200 miles. 1600 is a derivative of 4. The number 4 emphasizes **totality** and generally refers to the earth. It possibly derives from the image of the four points of a compass. 100 is a derivative of 10 which is a symbol of completion.

To arrive at 1600, you square the number 4 and multiply by 100.  $4 \times 4 \times 100 = 1600$ . It symbolizes the fact that the judgment upon those with the mark of the beast will be a **judgment that will reach throughout all creation!** It will be a **complete worldwide judgment.** Those who have not been washed in Jesus’ blood will have their own blood spilt out! There will be a blood bath from one end of the earth to the other! No one will escape it!

The wine presses in John's day had an upper level where the grapes were placed. People stomped on them to squeeze out the juice. The juice then went down through a chute into a lower level where it was collected. John sees the unrepentant trampled upon and their blood coming out of the press.

The picture of reaping is too often a sweet one – when in reality it’s tragic. It’s a gruesome picture! And it’s meant to be. God will trample the masses. And it will be forever! Millions of people will be dealt with in wrath, when they could have had grace!

## **CONCLUSION:**

So what are we to take home from this text?

First, we should thank God that he allowed each of us to be born in a land where we were exposed to the Gospel. Thank Him that He allowed us time to respond to that Gospel. Think about how many hours of exposure you had with the Gospel before you responded to it? There are people in this world who are not as fortunate. Many are born in a country where the Gospel is rarely preached. They may have had less time to respond to the Gospel than you actually heard just this morning. Jesus told His followers...

**John 6:37-40 (NASB)**

**<sup>37</sup>All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. <sup>38</sup>For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup>This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup>For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."**

The message is not so much the exact details of what is going to happen when Christ comes again. It is a message that tells us that Christ IS coming again having already won the victory over Satan and death.

The admonition to those of us who have responded to God's calling is to remain steadfast and **BE PREPARED!** It is the preparedness that is critical.

That is because the eternal destiny of each group is drastically different. Those who have the seal of God will be separated from those who have the mark of the beast. God's people will spend eternity with God in His presence. Satan's followers will be cast into eternal torment. No amount of service to God can be too much for the eternal reward that follows. We **MUST** understand the disparity between the two destinies and understand the importance of our service to God. **Continuously remain PREPARED!**

We can be encouraged that the separation will be exact. Our salvation is secure. No one will fall through the cracks. In Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares, the slaves found weeds growing among the wheat. And they ask the landowner if He wanted to have the weeds gathered up out of the wheat?

**Matthew 13:29b-30 (NASB)**

**The slaves \*said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'**

**<sup>29</sup>But he \*said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup>Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"**

Our emphasis should not be on the when and where. The main emphasis for this vision is to **BE READY** because you do not know the day or the hour that the Lord will return.

The saints who persevere are those who keep the commandments of God and remain steadfast in their faith in Jesus. They will follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

**God Bless America!**