

The Lord's Harvest (Message # 35)

Revelation 14: 14-20

Tonight we have been given a glimpse of the time when Jesus returns to judge the world. We need to remember that Revelation isn't written entirely in chronological order. Chapters 4-11 cover the Tribulation from the rapture through the end of tribulation. Chapters 12-14 go back and cover the same period in more detail. These verses reveal the judgment that will come at the end of Tribulation as the Lord returns in power.

Jesus came the 1st time as a Lamb of sacrifice; He will return as the Lion of Judah. He came as Savior of men; He will return as the righteous Judge. There won't be a crown of thorns, but a crown of glory. There will be no cross to bear or tomb in which to be laid, just a throne to rule and reign in power! We will deal with this hour later in more detail as we move further through Revelation. Tonight let's see what these verses reveal concerning: [The Lord's Harvest](#).

I. The Return of the Lord (14) – [And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.](#) Jesus came some 2,000 years ago with a promise to come again. There are those who doubt and even deny His return, but Jesus will come as He said. What can we discover about His 2nd coming?

A. He will Return in Clarity (14a) – [John saw a white cloud with the Son of Man upon it.](#) This is one of the titles often used referring to Christ. Jesus used this title 84 times in the gospels referring to Himself. In fact it was the title that He used more than any of the others. John is clearly referring to the coming of the Lord.

- Jesus came the first time with little fan fare. Most of the world was unaware that the promised Messiah had come with the exception of a few to whom the Lord revealed His birth. As He walked and lived upon the earth He was overlooked, despised, and rejected. The world did not accept Christ as the Son of God, Savior of the world.
- He may have been overlooked and rejected during His 1st coming, but the world will see Him as He is when He comes again. There will be no doubt that the Lord has returned. Jesus spoke of His return in [Lu.21:27](#). [And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.](#)

B. He will Return in Victory (14b) – John speaks of a [golden crown](#) upon His head. This is significant to the Lord's return. The gold reveals the deity of the coming King. He alone is

worthy to wear this crown. The crown that He wears is identified as a victor's crown, a *stephanos*. The word comes from the crown given to those victorious in the ancient Olympic Games.

- He came as a humble Babe, born in a lowly manger; lived the life of a carpenter; living among the poor and lowly without a place to lay His head. The Son of God had come to earth and men rejected Him. He was abused and beaten, crucified of sinful men. John does not see one defeated, but One who wears a crown of victory. He bore the sins of mankind, conquered death, hell, and the grave. This is not one who is weak and desperate, but the King of glory in all His power and might. We are victorious in Him!

C. His will Return with Authority (14c) – [Jesus is seen with a sharp sickle in His hand](#). A sickle is used to harvest wheat from the fields. We will deal with this in the next few verses, but there is significance in this verse. Jesus stands with the authority to divide the wicked from the redeemed. He has returned to judge the sinner and gather the saved. There will be no mock trials, no Sanhedrin or false witnesses; Jesus will pass judgment and His judgment will be final and absolute!

- This world likes to portray the Lord as only a God of love and mercy, and I praise Him for His longsuffering, but He is also a holy God who will judge sin! [II Tim.4:1 – I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom](#); Anyone who denies the judgment of God upon sin is teaching false doctrine. Jesus paid the debt for the sins of all who believe, but those who deny Him will stand accountable to God for their sin and they will be judged according to His Word.

I. The Return of the Lord (14)

II. The Reaping of the Lord (15-19) – These verses reveal a two-fold harvest; one of grain and one of grapes. Keep in mind that Jesus came to earth to sow the gospel seed of salvation. He will return to reap the harvest that was sown. The saved will be gathered into heaven and sinners separated as chaff and thrown into the lake of fire. Let's consider His reaping.

A. The Harvest of Grain (15-16) – [And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. \[16\] And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped](#). These verses paint a picture of the earth as a field ready for harvest, the grain of the earth. The fullness of time has come and Jesus begins to reap the harvest.

- He spoke of this often in the gospels. There will come a day when He will thrust His sickle into the fields of the earth and separate the wheat from the tares. [Mat.13:30](#) – **Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.** While growing together there is little difference, but when they are ripe the difference is clear. The tare is filled with little black seeds, that cause nausea and even death, and stands upright. The wheat bows toward the ground under the load of its bounty. What a picture of the world and the redeemed. Many appear to be Christians, but are filled with deadly sin, standing proudly in defiance to God.
- The true Christian bows in humbleness, offering thanksgiving for the bounty of their salvation. There is coming a day when Jesus will separate the wheat from the tares! [Matt.13:49](#) – **So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.** [Matt.25:32](#) – **And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:** The Lord's harvest will one day be a reality. For those who are saved they will be gathered into the Lord's barn to enjoy the blessings of God. For the lost there will be swift judgment, cast into eternal fire and damnation, separated from the presence and mercies of God. Are you wheat or a tare?
- Before we leave this thought, we must consider the phrase in [V.15](#), **for the harvest of the earth is ripe.** This is a different word from the one used in [V.18](#). There it has the idea of "*being mature, ready to harvest.*" Here it means "*to be dry, having become withered.*" The idea is "*a harvest that is over-ripe.*" This reveals the longsuffering, mercy and grace of God. The fields have been ripe, ready for harvest, but the Lord has delayed His judgment. It is His desire that men would come unto Him in repentance. [II Pet.3:9](#) – **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

B. The Harvest of Grapes (17-19) – **And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. [18] And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. [19] And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**

Here we find a picture of a vineyard that is filled with ripe grapes, ready to be harvested. The **angel came out from the altar**. Remember this is where the prayers of the martyrs are kept. Countless millions have suffered the persecution of this sinful world and now the time of judgment before God has come. The Lord will gather those who have lived in rebellion and sin, placing them in the winepress of His wrath.

- Satan and Antichrist have dominated the world, but their reign is about to end as the Lord crushes the world system and the wickedness that it promotes. These are sobering

verses as we think about those who will face the undiluted wrath of God as He pours it out upon the earth. Jonathan Edwards said: “The wrath of God is like great waters that are damned for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the higher the stream stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when it is let loose. If God should only withdraw His hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power.”

I. The Return of the Lord (14)

II. The Reaping of the Lord (15-19)

III. The Retribution of the Lord (20) – *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.* This chapter closes with a vivid description of the Lord’s wrath being poured out.

A. The Description of His Judgment – We find that the wicked will be *trodden* in the winepress. This literally means “*to trample upon; to crush with the feet.*” Those precious feet that Mary held as a child, those feet that walked the dusty shores of Galilee, those feet that were anointed by Mary as she wept before Him, those precious feet that were nailed to a cross by sinful men will one day return in judgment as He tramples upon those who have rejected Him and denied His offer of salvation! We serve a merciful Lord, but His mercy will end as He brings judgment upon the earth!

B. The Location of His Judgment – The *winepress was trodden without the city.* The city refers to the city of Jerusalem. The Day of Judgment will take place outside of Jerusalem. This is speaking of the Battle of Armageddon. It will take place in the valley of Esdraelon, called Megiddo.

- This was the site of significant battles in the past. It was here that Gideon defeated the host of Midian. This is where King Saul and Jonathan were slain, where King Josiah died in battle. Napoleon declared Megiddo the greatest natural battlefield on the earth.
- Armageddon has been a topic of discussion and debate for centuries. It has been the topic of movies and fantasy, but this will be no Hollywood script; it will be a final reality. It is here that the armies of the world will assemble themselves for the final battle on earth, with Christ standing as the Victor!

C. The Devastation of His Judgment (20b) – This is hard to imagine, but it reveals the enormity of what God will do as He judges this world. As He begins to trample the armies of the world, their blood will run for a span of approximately 200 miles with a depth of four to five feet.

- This world has never seen this scale of death and devastation. Men have chosen to fill themselves with the wine of Satan and his Antichrist, denying the true Vine and Jesus will destroy them here at Armageddon. Those who have rejected the cleansing blood of Jesus our Lord will die amidst their own blood and the blood of millions of others, lost for eternity and destined for hell.

We now live in the day of grace. The Lord is calling men unto Him through the drawing of the Holy Spirit. **Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.** As horrifying as these events are, they will come to pass. The Lord stands right now as the Savior of men's souls. You have a choice to make. It will either be to accept Jesus and feel His loving embrace or reject Him and face the wrath of His judgment. The choice is yours. Your decision will determine your eternal destiny.