

The Book Of Revelation Study 76

Revelation 14:17-20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *Then 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, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."*

¹⁹ *So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

²⁰ *And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

In our last study we began our study of the final reaping of the earth.,
We saw that John divulged what he saw of the divine wrath in two agricultural motifs.

A grain harvest in *verses 14 to 16* and then the grape harvest in *verses 17-20*.

It is the last one that we will take on this evening.

The first one involves the seven bowl judgments which unfold in Chapter 16

1. **Loathsome and malignant sores on the worshipers of Antichrist (v-2)**
2. **The death of all life in the world's oceans (v-3)**
3. **The turning of the world's rivers and springs of water into blood (v-4)**
4. **The intensifying of the sun's heat until it scorches people (v-8)**
5. **Painful darkness over all of Antichrist's kingdom (v-10)**
6. **The drying up of the Euphrates River in preparation for a massive invasion by the kings of the east (v-12)**
7. **The most powerful and destructive earthquake in history (v-18)**

The grape harvest does not speak of the bowl judgments, but of the judgment that takes place at the Battle of Armageddon.

The vintage judgment is more dramatic because of the imagery of the winepress.

Like the vision of the grain harvest, the grape harvest can be described in three points:

**The Reaper,
The Ripeness,
And the Reaping.**

THE REAPER

Revelation 14:17-20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

The **reaper** in this vision is not the Son of Man, as in the grain harvest, but an **angel**, the fifth one mentioned in *chapter 14*.

Like the fourth angel (*v-15*), he **came out of the temple which is in heaven**.

Like Christ in the previous vision, **he also had a sharp sickle**.

Now we have seen that angels have played a prominent role in Revelation up to this point, summoning the four horsemen, sounding the seven trumpets, and defeating Satan and his demon hosts.

The angels will also pour out the seven bowl judgments in *chapter 16*, announce the Battle of Armageddon (*19:17*), and bind Satan (*20:1-3*)

That an angel is pictured in this vision as the reaper, then, is not surprising.

The Son of Man will be assisted by holy angels in His final judgment

Matthew 13:38-39 (NKJV)

³⁸ *The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.*

³⁹ *The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

Matthew 13:49-50 (NKJV)

⁴⁹ *So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,*
⁵⁰ *and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ *since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,*

⁷ *and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,*

THE RIPENESS

Revelation 14:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ *And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."*

As John watched, **another angel** appeared, the sixth one in the vision. He is given the interesting designation of the **one who has power over fire**.

That title is closely connected with the fact that he **came out from the altar**.

This heavenly **altar** has already been mentioned in:

Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

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?"*

¹¹ *Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

The altar here is most likely emblematic of the Old Testament brass incense altar (*Ex 40:5*), where twice daily priests burned incense to be offered in the Holy Place as a picture of the people's prayers, **since the martyrs underneath it are viewed praying and prayer is associated with incense**

Revelation 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

David prayed:

Psalms 141:2 (NKJV)

² *Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*

When Zacharias the priest served in the temple in his rotation, (the husband of Elizabeth mother of John the Baptist);

Luke 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.*

This altar is spoken of again in;

Revelation 8:3-5 (NKJV)

³ *Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

⁴ *And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.*

⁵ *Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.*

This is the altar from which this angel came.

The description being that this angel had **power over** the altar's **fire**, (the definite article is present in the Greek text, which literally reads "the fire") indicates that he had been ministering at the heavenly counterpart to the early incense altar.

Unlike the angel in *verse 17*, this angel does not come from the throne of God, but from the **altar** associated with the prayers of the saints.

His appearance means that the time had come for those prayers to be answered.

The time had come for God to take fire associated with intercession and use it for the destruction of His enemies and the enemies of His people.

Leaving the altar, **he called with a loud, urgent, commanding 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."**

In answer to the Saints' prayers, the time for the reaping of judgment comes.

Unrepentant sinners are depicted as **clusters of grapes**, to be cut off by the reaper's **sharp sickle** from **the vine of the earth**; that is from earthly existence.

The word **ripe** is not the same Greek word used in *verse 15*.

This word refers to something fully ripe and in its prime.

It pictures earth's wicked, unregenerate people as bursting with the juice of wickedness and ready for the harvest of righteousness

THE REAPING

Revelation 14:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ *So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

²⁰ *And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

What resulted when **the angel swing his sickle to the earth** was catastrophic.

All the enemies of God who survive the seven bowl judgments will be **gathered** like grape **clusters from the vine of the earth** and flung **into the great wine press of the wrath of God**.

A **wine press** consisted of two stone basins connected by a trough.

Grapes would be trampled in the upper basin, and the juice would collect in the lower one.

The splattering of the juice as the grapes are stomped vividly pictures the splattered blood of those who will be destroyed

Isaiah 63:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ *Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?-- "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."*

² *Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?*

³ *"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.*

Lamentations 1:15 (NKJV)

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 (NKJV)

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."*

Now also the **wine press** will be **trodden outside the city**, as the Lord protects Jerusalem from the carnage of the Battle of Armageddon

The battle will take place in the north of Israel on the Plain of Esdraelon near Mount Megiddo (about sixty miles north of Jerusalem).

It will rage the entire length of Israel as far south as Bozrah in Edom. Jerusalem will be spared to become the capital of Christ's kingdom.

The staggering, horrifying bloodbath of the Battle of Armageddon will be so widespread that **blood** will come out **from the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles. (lit, "1600 stadia")**

There will be millions of people engaged in the Battle of Armageddon, as all the nations gather together to fight against the Lord Jesus Christ.

Still, it is difficult to imagine that they could produce a flow of blood **up to the horses' bridles** (about four feet deep) **for a distance of two hundred miles.**

A better interpretation, whether there are actual horses involved or not, sees this as a picture to suggest the slaughter in which blood will splatter into the air profusely along the whole length of the battle.

When the slaughter reaches its peak, blood could flow deeply in troughs and streambeds.

Armageddon, as this passage indicates, will actually be a slaughter rather than a battle.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, Antichrist, the false prophet, and all their human and demonic forces will be immediately destroyed.

The description;

Revelation 19:11-21 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

¹² *His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.*

¹³ *He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*

¹⁴ *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.*

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.*

¹⁶ *And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

¹⁷ *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,*

¹⁸ *that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."*

¹⁹ *And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

²⁰ *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

²¹ *And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Putting the scene in this chapter together with that of chapter 19, while the angel cuts the grapes, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who crushes out their lives.

Unregenerate humanity faces a frightening future, as this incredible scene indicates.

Those who refuse to repent, even after repeated warnings, will learn firsthand the sobering truth that

Hebrews 10:31 (NKJV)

³¹ *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

They would do well to heed the psalmist's admonition:

Psalms 2:12 (NKJV)

¹² *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

Revelation 15:1-8 (NKJV)

¹ *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

² *And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.*

³ *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"*

⁴ *Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."*

⁵ *After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*

⁶ *And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.*

⁷ *Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.*

⁸ *The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.*

When they think about the future, people worry about any things, The destruction of the environment, global warming, political unrest and instability, terrorism, crime, economic and financial collapse, and the continual decline in moral values that destroy all relationships are all causes for concern.

A further cause for anxiety is the sense of forlorn emptiness fostered by the anti-God philosophy of humanism. For those who believe there is no personal God, there is no one home in the universe, they have nowhere to turn for ultimate answers, help, or meaning.

But what is truly frightening about the future is not any of those things; What should stop the heart of sinners is what God will do.

God's judgmental anger and fury is a terrifying reality that looms just over the horizon of human history

Psalm 96:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.*

Psalm 98:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, And the peoples with equity.*

Psalm 110:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.*

Because the willfully ignore that reality, people do not fear what they should fear.

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

They need to know that:

Psalm 7:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.

Throughout human history God has poured out His wrath in judgment on sinners.

Adam's sin in Eden brought the entire human race under judgment

Romans 5:12 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--

By Noah's day, people had become so wicked that God sent the cataclysmic judgment of the flood to destroy the world

Genesis 6:5-8 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Centuries of disobedience by the Jewish people ultimately led to their judgment, as first the northern kingdom of Israel and then the southern kingdom of Judah went into captivity.

God's wrath and judgment were the constant themes of the Old Testament prophets.

We will study more of this when we get together the next time.