

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 2.13.2022

## THE END-TIME HARVEST OF THE EARTH

### I. INTRODUCTION

**MAIN POINT:** The ungodly will be judged on the final Day when Christ, the Sovereign and Righteous Son of Man, comes to gather His elect.

#### **Revelation 14:14-20**

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. **15** And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." **16** So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

**17** Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. **18** And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." **19** So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. **20** And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

### II. THE HARVESTER

- Two scenes of the time of final judgment are presented.
- There are four characters in this vision.
- There is one like the Son of Man and there are three angels.
- Two involved in reaping, they each have a sickle.
- Two who give the command to begin reaping.

V14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.

- The first being presented to us Christ. And it is Christ coming to the earth for the final harvest that will result in the reaping of all that belong to Him, and the separation of those who will experience the unrestrained wrath of God.

#### **SON OF MAN**

- **Daniel 7:13-14** “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the **clouds** of heaven there came one like a **son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And **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 one that shall not be destroyed.”
- That language of the coming of the Son of Man in prophetic writing belongs to the end of the age and the final harvest of the earth.
- Jesus used that title for himself many times. (Matthew 24)
- John’s vision of Christ’s return at the end of the age shows him bearing the emblems of the glory and triumph of the Son of Man—his coming on a white cloud and wearing a golden crown.

## WHITE CLOUD

- There are a few references in the NT in which Jesus is associated with clouds.
- **Matthew 26:64** Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”
- Jesus told his disciples about his coming, **Matthew 24:30** "Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
- His ascension in Acts 1.
- There is no doubt that the one who returns on the cloud of glory in Rev. 14 is the same Son of Man who ascended into glory, now he is returning to consummate the salvation of his saints and judge the world.
- The Title Son of Man reminds us that Jesus Christ will forever be the incarnate Son of God.
- He the God-man, he took on to himself man’s nature, becoming acquainted with all of our weakness and frailty, he perfectly obeyed God’s commands as a man in order to attain perfect righteousness for us.
- It was in that earthly body that he was killed on the cross, and it was in that body that he was resurrected and ascended to heaven, as a first fruits of our future resurrection, when we will be reunited with our bodies.
- Christ, the Son of Man is reigning right now in his resurrected body!
- The color white is a symbol for righteousness, holiness, and purity. White garments of the saints represent the righteous deeds of the saints, the purity they have obtained by being made righteous by the blood of Christ. (Rev. 3:5,18; 6:11; 7:9; 19:8,14)
- The Righteous One is the one coming for the final redemption of his people and to render righteous judgment on the earth.
- Righteousness is essential to understanding this end-time judgment. The Son of Man is the only one who can render perfect justice and judgment.

## GOLDEN CROWN

- The golden crown calls us back to Daniel’s vision where the Son of Man is given dominion, glory and a kingdom.
- Psalm 2 the Lord sets his King on Zion and all of the kings of the earth are to “Kiss the Son” and worship him.
- Remember how John greets the seven churches in the opening of his letter, employing a three fold expression of Jesus as “the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” (Rev. 1:5)
- He is the sovereign ruler over all the earth. He is King!
- The golden crown is the victor’s laurel wreath (Greek, ‘stephanos’). The Messiah is the one who conquered and is victorious and has won the

right to sit and act in judgment over the whole world.

- The Sovereign and Righteous Son of Man is coming in the fullness of his glory and kingly authority to perform a role that is solely and uniquely his.
- That role is Harvester of the Earth as the Lord of the Harvest.
- The symbol of the sharp sickle in his hands is the symbol of how he will execute judgment.
- Jesus told his disciples that he would return as judge. That the earth would be harvested and the righteous and the ungodly would be separated.

### III. THE TWO HARVESTS

- The final judgment is pictured as a harvest. Agricultural imagery and symbols are used to show us what this will be like, It's figurative and symbolic, not literal.
- God is expecting to receive the good harvest from the investment Christ made in redeeming his elect, sowing himself to be the first fruits of what was to come, receiving his full reward as all those who would receive salvation and eternal life in him are now gathered.
- Those who have rejected Him will be burned up, like a farmer whose crop has failed, and has to destroy the bad planting and the weeds that grew in his field.
  
- There are two distinct harvests that are presented to us.
- Additionally, depending on how one interprets Revelation, the events described by John take place at different times in God's eschatological calendar.
- The Premillennial view teaches that Christ will return and then inaugurate a literal thousand year reign on earth, the righteous and unrighteous are together, and that at the end of that time there will be a final rebellion that ends in the final judgment.
- However, the picture John shows us is Christ returning as King with a sharp sickle already in his hand. There is no delay in judgment, at his glorious coming, it's harvest time and the earth is reaped.
- His sickle is sharp! That means he will harvest the earth with surgical precision, separating all of humanity into one of two categories.
- Jesus himself taught that at his return there would be a dual harvest. The sheep and the goats will be separated at the final judgment and that the wheat and the tares would be harvested and then separated. (Matt 25 and Matt 13)
- The Parable of the Talents, the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and his discourse on the final judgment in Matthew 25 all reflect that at his return the righteous will enter their reward of eternal life and the ungodly will enter into eternal punishment.

#### THE HARVEST OF THE RIGHTEOUS

15 And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." 16 So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- We have now the introduction of an angel, who comes out of the temple, and seemingly gives a command for the Son of Man to reap.
- Remember angel means messenger. Where is he coming from? The temple.

- What have we seen already that is in the heavenly temple? The Throne.
  - Who sits on the throne? The Father.
  - This angel, a messenger, is being sent from the throne to give the Son a message.
  - He is delivering a word from the throne room, NOT giving a command to Jesus.
  - And what is that message? “It’s harvest time!”
- **Mark 13:32** But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
  - Christ’s humanity and subordination to the Father is reflected in that the knowledge of the timing of the final harvest is known to the Father alone, and the Son will carry out the reaping of the harvest at the appointed time.
- The reason that the message is being delivered is that the time to reap has come, the harvest is fully ripe.
  - The word ripe in v15 is different from the word ripe in v18. Different Greek words are used.
  - In v15 the word used means “to be dried up, withered”, which indicates this about a wheat or grain planting that has now matured and is ready for harvesting.
  - In v18 the word used means, “to be in full bloom, at the prime.”
  - Two metaphors are used for two different yet simultaneous harvests.
  - Jesus is reaping a grain or wheat harvest.
  - The righteous are likened to wheat in Jesus’s parable of the Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13.
  - The disciples later ask Jesus to explain the parable.
  - **Matthew 13:37-43** He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.
  - This is an important distinction. There is a qualitative difference between the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one.
  - And the distinction between those who are saved by Christ and those who are condemned as law-breakers, is determined long before the final harvest.
  - The difference is in how one responds to the Word of God and the message of the gospel. Remember the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13)
  - The only way to know if you will be gathered into Christ’s barn is to receive God’s Word by faith now, trusting in Christ alone, and living in a way that bears fruit for the Lord.
- When will this harvest take place? When it is fully ripe.
  - When the full number of God’s elect who have been saved by grace, through faith in Christ alone is complete.
  - Rev. 8 - martyrs who are pleading to be avenged are told to rest a little longer until the number of their brothers and fellow servants was complete.
  - There is a direct relationship between the final harvest and ongoing harvest of those who belong to Christ now.
  - It is the mission of the Church to proclaim the good news. We spread gospel seeds through the preaching of the gospel, witnessing for Christ in the world.

- Ultimately, though we are co-laborers with Christ in the gospel mission, it is Christ who performs the harvesting. The sickle is in his hand, not ours.
- Jesus will gather his people on the last day.
- Unlike farmers, who have to hope and pray that they have a good crop-THIS HARVEST CANNOT FAIL!
- It's why we can pray with confidence for the salvation of God's elect, and why we can have boldness and confidence in our gospel proclamation, Christ will bring in all that are his.

## THE HARVEST OF THE WICKED

17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." 19 So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

- This is the final judgement of the wicked. What the previous event revealed in the third angel's message, that those who worship the beast and bear his mark, who imbibed on the wine of Babylon, will now be made to drink the cup of the wine of the full strength of God's wrath.
  - And just because it doesn't show Jesus as the one doing the reaping of the rebellious, in no way are to assume that he has just delegated the unpleasant part to his angels because he doesn't want to be part of that.
  - In Rev. 19 we'll see this same scenario of final judgment from a different vantage point as Christ is personally wielding the sword of judgment.
  - It's Christ's own work and his hands that saves his people and his command is sufficient for the judgment of rebels.
  - There is no way around it in Scripture, unredeemed, unrighteous, rebellious humanity will not escape this judgment.
  - No one who experiences the holy fury of God's judgment will be undeserving of it.
- The imagery used is graphic and disturbing. It paints a horrifying reality. We easily forget that it is because of God's love for righteousness and truth that he responds in wrath against all evil and wickedness.
  - The disturbing horror of final judgement corresponds to the dreadful horror that sin is.
  - Though it is symbolic and figurative, the reality it represents is far more terrifying than the imagery used to describe it.
  - **Isaiah 63:1-6** Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." 2 Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. 5 I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. 6 I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."
  - 1600 stadia, for almost 200 miles, the blood was as high as a horse's bridle, about four feet.

- It's a symbolic number, 40x40, a number of testing and tribulation (40 years in the wilderness, 40 days of temptation in the wilderness), and the number is also the squares of four and ten, numbers of fullness and completeness.
- It is a figure of complete, comprehensive, worldwide judgment. No one escapes it.

## **CONCLUSION**

- We must stay awake, be alert, and ready for his coming. (Matt. 25, 42,44)
- Pray earnestly for God to send out laborers into his harvest. Matt 9:38
- Be an answer to that prayer by going out into his harvest and compelling men to repent and believe the gospel concerning Jesus and to escape the wrath to come.
- Let this be a powerful motivator for living godly in an ungodly world and a catalyst to not lose hope through the trials and difficulties of life as we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-14)