

# They Were Trampled in the Winepress and Blood Flowed as High as the Horses Bridles

## 14: 14-20

**DIG:** Who might the first figure be (Daniel 7:13)? Identify the three angels in this vision? What is the role of each? What are the differences between the two parts of the vision (verses 14-16 and 17-20)? What is the nature of the judgment that will occur (see Matthew 13:30 and 39)?

**REFLECT:** How ripe do you think the earth is now for harvest? Do you feel that the end is close at hand? Why or why not? How does this affect your lifestyle? God's grace gives us the choice to choose righteousness or rebel against Him. What have you chosen? His justice holds every person accountable. How does that make you feel?

Blessing the dead formed a brief reprieve to the wrath of **the Lord** by presenting the comforting truth of the perseverance of the holy ones. But the theme of divine judgment resumes here. It will take place at the worst possible time in human history. After years of enduring the antichrist's oppressive rule and **the Lord's** judgments, the world is barely hanging on. It will seem like things couldn't possibly get any worse. But they will. The Day of **ADONAI** is about to fall on Satan, his antichrist, the false prophet and all who follow the unholy trinity. It will be the final treading of **the great winepress of God's wrath**.

John looked, and there before him was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a Son of Man" (14:14a). This is **Messiah** coming back to establish His Kingdom in fulfillment of **Daniel's** prophecy (Daniel 7:13). The title **Son of Man** was **Jesus'** favorite to describe **Himself** during His incarnation (Matthew 8:20, 9:6, 24:27 and 30; Mark 2:10 and 28, 8:31, 9:9; Luke 6:22, 7:34, 9:22, 12:8; John 5:27, 6:27 and 62, 8:28). This is the last instance where the Bible refers to **Him** by this title, and it presents a stark contrast with the first time it is mentioned in the B'rit Chadashah. There, **the Son of Man** had **no place to lay His head** (Matthew 8:20); here, **He** is about to take control of the entire earth.

The reaper is further described as having a crown of gold on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand (14:14b). The crown is not the *diadem* worn by a king (19:12), but the *stephanos* worn by victors in war or athletic contest. It is the crown of glory (First Peter 5:1-4), and pictures **the Son of Man** as the triumphant conqueror over all His enemies (Matthew 13:39). The sharp sickle is a long, curved, razor-sharp iron blade attached to a long broomstick like wooden handle used to harvest grain.<sup>335</sup>

Then the fourth **angel** in this chapter **came out of the Tribulation Temple**. Perhaps seeing the image of the beast (14:9 and 11) in the Most Holy Place of the Tribulation Temple made him cry out in anguish to **Messiah who was sitting on the cloud**, pleading: **Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come for the harvest of the earth is ripe (14:15)**. A created **angel** cannot command the son of man to judge anyone and this should be viewed as an appeal rather than an order. Even so, the **angels** will be appalled at the **wickedness they** will be witnessing and will yearn for a time when the **head of the serpent** will be crushed (**Genesis 3:15b**).<sup>336</sup>

So **Christ**, who was seated on the cloud, swung His sickle over the earth and harvested souls for heaven (14:16). It will be **God's** last altar call. The grain harvest is a common symbol for salvation. So although the vast majority of people on the earth will accept the mark of the beast, **there will be a harvest of people who will believe in Christ**.

**While harvesting is a common symbol for salvation, treading is a common symbol of judgment**. But another angel, the fifth one, came out of the Temple in heaven. And like **Messiah**, he too had a sharp sickle in his hand (14:17). A sixth angel, who had charge of the fire in the golden altar of the heavenly Tabernacle (8:3-5), came out and called to his fellow angel in a loud voice saying: **Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe (14:18)**. The earth's vine contrasts dramatically with **the true vine** of **Jesus Christ** (John 15:1). The word ripe here means *fully ripe or in its prime*. The bloodshed will be so massive and so quick that the only comparison is the spurting of the juice from the tremendous clusters of ripe grapes beneath the feet of those who tread the winepress. The grapes that are gathered will suffer the treading of **God's** coming bowl judgments. The prophet **Joel** proclaimed **the Lord** would judge the nations like those reaping grapes with a sharp sickle. He prophesied: **Swing the sickle, for the grapes are ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow with their wickedness (Joel 3:13)**.

**Angels** have played a prominent role in the book of **Revelation** up to this point, sending the four horsemen forward, sounding the seven trumpets, and defeating of Satan and his demons. **Angels** will also pour out seven bowls of judgment in **Chapter 16**, announce the Campaign of Armageddon (19:17), and seize Satan to throw him into the Abyss (20:1-3). Not only that, but the **Son of Man** will be assisted by holy **angels** in His final judgment (**Matthew 13:39 and 49; Second Thessalonians 1:7-8**).<sup>337</sup>

Therefore, **the Lord** and His angels swung their sickles on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of His **bowl judgments** (14:19). As the blood of the Lamb was once shed by His enemies, so will He tread the winepress with their

**blood.** When **His blood** was shed it gave eternal life, but when their **blood** will be shed it will merely provide food **for the great feast of God (19:17-18)**. This is one of the most tragic and sobering statements in the entire Bible. Simply, and without much fanfare, it records the execution of divine judgment.

The terrifying details of that judgment are brought to light in **Chapter 16**: Ugly and painful sores on the worshipers of the antichrist (**16:1-2**), all of the sea turning to blood and every living thing in it will die (**16:3**), all of the world's rivers and springs turning to blood (**16:4-7**), the sun scorching people with fire (**16:8-9**), a painful blackout over the antichrist's kingdom (**16:10-11**), the drying up of the Euphrates River in preparation for the massive invasion of the kings of the east (**16:12-16**), and the most devastating earthquake in history as **Yeshua** finishes the Campaign of Armageddon when **His** feet stand on the Mount of Olives (**16:17-21**).

**They were trampled in the winepress and blood flowed out, rising as high as the horses' bridles** (about four-and-a-half feet) **for a distance of 1,600 stadia** or about 180 miles long (**14:20**). This treading takes place **outside the city** of Jerusalem, where the Valley of Kidron, also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, is located (**Joel 3:2, 12**). The prophet **Isaiah** also spoke of **Christ with His garments stained crimson** from treading the **winepress of His wrath and anger (Is 63:1-6)**. The Campaign of Armageddon will conclude with the seventh Bowl Judgment (see **Ex - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon**).

The **harvest** represents the culmination of a long, well-ordered progression. First, the soil has to be tilled, then seeds need to be planted, and then the fields watered and carefully tended. Only when the crop was fully mature was everything ready for the reaper. In this sequence, the inspired authors detected a ready-made symbol for **ADONAI's** hand guiding history. Just as a farmer prepares for the faraway - but eventual - harvest, so **the Lord** was constantly preparing people for the end of history.

Only by faith can we believe that the world will end, not through some meaningless catastrophe, but through the full establishment of the Kingdom of **God**. The process has already begun. Though we struggle with evil, every day we draw closer to **Messiah's** triumphant return. **Revelation** reminds us that we are to be every bit as sure of **God's** eventual victory as the farmer is sure of his coming **harvest**. **Jesus** invited us to participate actively in the **harvest** when **He** said: **Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field (Matthew 9:38)**. Let us ask **Christ** to give us the grace to work with **Him** as **He harvests the crop of life eternal (John 4:36)**.

*Father, we pray for all of those you would gather into your Church. By **Your Spirit**, help us to be faithful servants who prepare the way for the return of **Your Son, Jesus Christ**.<sup>338</sup>*