

The Hour to Reap Has Come

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- [0 : 00] And Joseph and Rudolph. Sorry. It's a dad joke and just makes daughters groan. Sons laugh though sometimes. Oh. Take out your Bibles with me please and turn to the book of Revelation chapter 14.
- Revelation chapter 14. We began looking at this series of visions back in chapter 12 where the vision started back with the birth of Christ, the time of the first century. Showed us the war of the dragon, in other words the serpent, Satan, trying to kill the Christ in the first century. Well, killed him but did not conquer him.
- And Christ being raised up and seated at the right hand of the Father. Which then led to the dragon's expulsion from heaven. Which led to his war on the church and the saints on earth throughout time.
- [1 : 18] We came to chapter 13 and we see how the dragon fights his war by employing two servants. two servants. One called the beast from the sea that is a symbol of earthly rulers at the first century.
- That was Rome. That was the Caesars of Rome. And then a second beast that he works through. The first beast works through the second beast. Which is a land beast.
- Not as intimidating. Only two horns. Looks like a lamb. So looks innocent. Yet speaks like a dragon. And that is the false prophet. And in the first century that was the imperial priesthood.
- So the Caesars of Rome working through the priests from Rome to force people to worship Caesar as God. So we see a very clear application of this in the first century.
- What that looks like today? Well that first beast is still worldly authorities. Satan still works through earthly authorities in this world.
- [2 : 27] And those work through whatever their priests are. Whatever their false prophets are. Which have a religious, an economic, and a political impact in our world.
- just as they did in the first century. So, here we are. So we come to chapter 14 and so chapters 12 and 13 kind of give us a view from the time of Christ to throughout church history.
- We come to chapter 14 and now we see the view of the end. In fact, three glimpses of the end. Three different portraits of the end. So verses 1 through 5 we see the lamb on Mount Zion standing with the 144,000 redeemed.
- 144,000 being a symbol of the fullness of the church of the righteous of all time. Then we see last week we looked at the three messages in chapter 14, 6 through 13.
- Three different angels bring three different messages. We see the message of the gospel. The call to repent. Then we see the message in verse 8 of fallen is Babylon.
- [3 : 37] We have the announcement of her fall. She will be judged for her immorality. And then a third angel who warns all who have worshipped the beast, all who have followed the earthly rulers and the earthly priests or prophets or the promise of the world, all who have followed the promises of the world will suffer for that.

They will, if they drink the wine of the beast, they'll drink the wine of God's wrath. And then we have a description that is a terrifying description of eternal suffering.

So, that brings us to where we are. So, today we look at verses 14 through 20, the end of chapter 14, the third portrait, third glimpse of the future.

Okay, so we're seeing pictures here of the future. And in this one, verses 14 through 20, we see two pictures of harvest. Harvest.

A reaping. Okay? So, let's read it first, then we'll ask the Lord to teach us, and then we'll dig in. So, if you're able, please stand as I read from chapter 14 of Revelation, beginning of verse 14.

[4 : 58] John says, 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.

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.

So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.

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.

So the angel swung his sickle across the earth, and gathered the ripe harvest of the earth, and, excuse me, gathered the grape harvest of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

[6 : 28] 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, or to Americans, 184 miles.

Let's pray. Father, grant us your eyes to see, to understand, to get the significance of what, why are you telling us these things?

Why are you showing John so that he might tell us these things? So Father, we pray that you would cause your name to be set apart, cause your name to come upon, cause your kingdom to come to us, cause your will to be done today, here in this house.

And give to us, Lord, our bread. Give us bread from heaven, bread that will feed our soul. Forgive us, O God, for our debts, and lead, and, and, grant us courage to forgive those who have hurt us.

And finally, Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

[7 : 59] Amen. So, so, so, so, so, so, problem in a relationship? You ever had an argument and then you, you know, you get in an argument with someone and you want to punish them, right? So you give them the old silent treatment. You ever done that? You ever done that? I mean, that'll show them, right? That'll punish them, just the silent treatment. So I heard about the story about a man and a wife who were having problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. And suddenly the man, the husband, realized that the next day he would need his wife to wake him at 5 a.m. so that he could catch an early morning business flight. But not wanting to be the first one to speak and break the silence and therefore lose, he wrote on a piece of paper, please wake me at 5 a.m. And he left it where he knew she would find it. The next morning he woke up, only to discover it was 9 a.m.

And he missed his flight, furious. He was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, it's 5 a.m., wake up.

Men are not equipped for these kinds of contests. Not good judgment.

Judgment. That's the theme today. Jesus told a lot of parables, right? Do you remember any parables that he told on judgment on the end of time? Lots and lots of parables? He did some on the end.

Remember any offhand? Huh? Lazarus. Lazarus? It's through Lazarus and the... Oh, right. Right. Lazarus, the poor man. Not Lazarus, the raised from the dead man.

[10:14] And Lazarus, the poor man and the rich man who were in Hades, right? Yeah? Yeah? We got several. Actually, I was surprised how many. There's the parable of the weeds and the wheat.

The weeds and the wheat being separated in the end, right? The dragnet. Parable of the dragnet. Gathering all the fish. All the fish. And then later being separated and sorted into good and bad fish.

Parable of the vineyard. Parable of the vineyard where the wicked tenants, right, did not give what was due and they were judged.

There's the parable in Matthew 22 of the wedding feast. They all were invited, but only the unworthy would come. Interesting.

Matthew 24, parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants. There's the parable in Matthew 25 of the talents. They give out different talents.

[11:17] And so there's a separation between those who are good and faithful and those who are wicked and slothful, who do nothing with their talent. Perhaps the best known parable on the end that Jesus told was in Matthew 25 when Jesus said, When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

Before Him will be gathered all the nations. And He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

And He will say to the sheep on the right. Then the king will say to those on his right, Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Why? For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me.

I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer and say, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you and you thirsty and give you drink?

[12:37] When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you and naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? And the king will answer them, Truly I say to you, As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.

Then He will say to those on His left, Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food.

I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me. I was naked and you did not clothe me. I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me. Then they also will answer saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?

Then He will answer them saying, Truly I say to you, As you did not do it to one of these, the least of these, you did not do it to me. And these will go away into eternal punishment.

The righteous will go away into eternal life. Jesus gathers the nations and He separates. That's what judgment means. Judgment is a separation.

[13 : 57] We make judgments every day. We decide right from wrong. We make discernments about what's good or what's bad. That's a judgment. Judgment does not mean condemnation.

It means making a decision, discerning a choice. So God separates the sheep from the goats. And did you notice the basis of what the judgment was upon?

When did we see you? Well, when you saw the least of my brothers. As you treat my brothers, the church, my followers, so you treat me.

Judgment is based on how you treat the church. How you treat God's people. Isn't that interesting? Judgment is based on how you treat the church. So we see judgment.

I just wanted to introduce this topic of judgment. We talk about two harvests. Obviously, there's separation going on here. There's a judgment we see in the second harvest that's very clearly about wrath.

[15 : 05] So what's going on? We see two harvests here. There's one sickle in verse 14 given to one who's like the Son of Man. And then in verse 17, we see another sickle given to an angel that comes out of the temple.

So these two harvests, what are they? Are they two different harvests? Or are they the same one from a different point of view? So as always, in the book of Revelation, you have different views on these things.

So some see these two harvests as really the same one from different points of view. One's more general. One gets more specific. One is enlarging on the other.

Others see two different, totally different harvests. The first one being more of a general harvest and a separation. And the second one clearly, the second one's clearly about judging of the wicked.

They end up suffering the wrath of God. Right? So how do you decide? How do you know? And as we've been saying in this book of Revelation, there are things that are absolutely clear and there are a number of things we can't make dogmatic statements about.

[16 : 21] But we can say what's more likely. So what's here? So we see similarities. These two, if you put these two harvests down side by side, you see a same pattern for each one.

There's an agent who's reaping. There's a call to reap. And then there's the harvest. Each one has that same pattern. But there are a number of differences. So in each one, the agent, the reaper is different.

First one is the son of man. The second one is an angel. Okay? Then we see a different call in each one. So one's called to put your sickle in and reap.

The other one's called to put your sickle in and gather. Not a big difference. By itself, not a big difference, but still different. And then we see what's gathered is different.

Right? There's different words for ripe. They say gather the harvest. And the first one, and the second one, it's clear, oh, we're talking about a grapevine and grapes. The first one doesn't mention what it is.

[17 : 24] But we have different words for ripe. Gather it or reap it because it is ripe. So why different words for ripe? So for the first one, it's a word that means dried out.

And the other one, it's a word that means flush and blooming and flourishing. Two totally different words. Then you add, you have a very simple one in the first one where you got a reaper and then a call to reap and then the actual harvest.

The second one has a lot more detail to it. It's we're told what the product is. We're told there's extra acts, not just a reaping, but you gather and then tread.

And then we get the whole effect added, an emphasis on judgment in the second one. So I think we're dealing with two different harvests here.

I think the first harvest is really about, especially since you have the Son of Man coming to do it personally. The first one, I think that's the harvest of the righteous. And the second one is clearly a harvest of judgment, condemnation, of punishment.

[18 : 38] So, not going to die for that, but I think it's more likely. So the final judgment. This is the picture here, final judgment.

And the judgment is a great separation. We see from all of Jesus' parables, everything is a separation. He separates sheep from goats. He separates wheat from weeds.

He separates the faithful from the unfaithful. All the parables of judgment or of the end, of the last final harvest, is a separation.

So today we've got to ask, what is this all about? Why are we told this? What is so significant about this? How does this impact us? What difference does this make?

What do these harvests symbolize? What does that teach us? So we see two harvests. One, the first one I believe is a harvest of grain. Even though it doesn't mention that, I think a clue is that it's grain or wheat.

[19 : 37] And then the second harvest is obviously a harvest of grapes that are then put in a wine press. So let's look at the first harvest. I would describe it this way.

The son, he's called the son of man. The son reaps grain from the earth to separate apart his wheat, his sheep, his faithful.

Okay? That's what I think is going on here. The son reaps the grain or the wheat from the earth to separate out his good harvest.

So first of all, who's the ruler? We see verse 14. We have somebody with a golden crown. Look at how he's described. There's no one else described like this but one person in all of Scripture.

Verse 14, when I looked, a white cloud. White cloud. Okay, that's heavenly. That's godly. That's holy. Seated on the cloud. Okay, that's like sitting on a throne. One like a son of man, which is the very exact description from Daniel 7 of the Messiah.

[20 : 42] It's also the description we have in Revelation 1, verse 7. He's the son of man. And he also comes with clouds. So it's really unmistakable about who this is.

This is Christ. Picture of Christ. Christ himself coming through the reaping. So then we have a call in verse 15. He's told to put in your sickle and reap.

But notice, who's this person telling him? Verse 15, it's another angel. Now, some people get caught up in the another angel thing because then they think, that first one can't be Jesus because this is referred to as another angel.

But remember, we've had like a hundred angels in Revelation so far. So to say another angel is not really out of place. Another angel, another angel, another. Yeah, he's got tons of angels.

And then the other problem is, well, but this angel, if that's Jesus, then the angel is commanding Jesus to do something. Put in your sickle and reap. Isn't that a problem? Can an angel command the Son of God to do something?

[21 : 50] Depends on where he's from. What is an angel? What's the name angel mean? Messenger. Messenger of who? God. God. So he's not doing the command.

He's relaying the command from God. Notice that he's an angel, verse 15, from the temple, the temple in heaven. That's where the throne is and where God is.

So he's just relaying the message to Christ now. Which is interesting because remember that Jesus said about the last day, nobody knows except the Father. Remember that?

And the picture, this picture picks that up as if Jesus still doesn't know. He's waiting for the call from the Father. And here's the picture of the Father saying, tell my son now.

Tell him now. Time. Now. So. Send your sickle. So he's told, send your sickle and reap. Or put in your sickle.

[22 : 47] Right? Send it out. Why? Because the hour to reap has come. The time. The hour is here. Time of judgment. Time of separation. And what are they reaping?

It says, it doesn't tell us. Verse 15. Verse 15. He says, the harvest of the earth is ripe. Well, the harvest of what? But then we have this word ripe.

Which means, literally, it's usually translated dried up or withered. Yeah, the fig tree was withered. Remember the fig tree that withered?

Dried up. It's that same word. The man with the withered arm. It was all dried up. So it's the same thing. So what fruit, if it dries up, makes it ripe?

Grape. Grape. Grape. Wheat. So it's a picture that actually describes the wheat and grain harvest.

[23 : 48] So it's then, it's Christ himself, or 16, who does the reaping. He puts in the sickle. It says he swings his sickle across the earth and the earth is reaped. What's a sickle, by the way?

You know? Sickle? You see one? Anybody see one? You see it? Oh, you see it. Yeah, see this? We like to hang weapons around our house.

Actually, I hang guns. She hangs more primitive, scary. So it's a, yeah, it's just a, it cuts the grain. Right? Sweeping and cutting the grain. You're chopping.

It's a weeder, you know, chopper. So it could be used for all kinds of different kinds of, of harvest. So it's got the curved knife. Right? Oh, no. Pretty dull, this one.

Not sure it would cut anything. But if you're doing grapes, same thing. so you take the cluster, you go to the vine and you just chop off, cut off. So it's a knife. So it could be done a stroke of, of cutting or precision cutting.

[24 : 53] So they're all different sizes. So should that be on the cross? Yeah, it should. It should. I'll tell you why in a moment. It's about judgment, isn't it? And the cross is about judgment, isn't it?

So since he is reaping wheat, it gives us a clue as to what this first harvest is. Listen to the parable Jesus told in Matthew 13.

He taught about final judgment. He taught about the harvest of wheat, which is a picture of his own people in Matthew 13. So here's the parable.

Jesus put another parable before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

So when the plants came and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field?

[25 : 59] How then does it have weeds? He said to them, An enemy has done this. So the servant said to him, Well, do you want us to go and gather them? But he said, No.

No. Lest in gathering the weeds, you root up the wheat along with them. By the way, that's a practical picture to us.

The kingdom of God is wheat and tares. In this world, the kingdom of God is wheat and tares. It's not our job to sift out the weeds. Got it?

Believe it to the end. That's God's job. Not your job to sift out. Why? Because until harvest time, when it's apparent what they are, they look the same.

And you might accidentally just take an immature wheat for a weed. Important. Very important about how we treat people.

[26 : 59] Let them both grow together until the harvest. And at the harvest time, I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first. Bind them in bundles to be burned. But gather the wheat into my farm.

So wheat's good. Weed's bad. Right? Then later in the same chapter, Jesus gives the interpretation. They say, What does this mean? He says, The weeds are the sons of the evil one.

And the wheat are the sons of the kingdom. And the harvest is the close of the age. So Jesus is saying, This is a parable about the very end. It's about the close of the age.

And the reapers. Who are the reapers? Well, the reapers will be angels. And just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, So it will be with the close of the age. And the wheat will be gathered into his barn.

What's significant about this? Which one are you? Right? Only you can answer that. Which are you? Which harvest will you be part of?

[27 : 58] The first harvest, Christ personally is coming for his own. He separates the wheat from the weeds. So now, In verse 17 to 20, We have a second harvest.

Which I think is completely different. Even though it follows the same pattern, The details are quite different. And striking. So we have a second picture.

The first picture is the son gathering his wheat, Gathering his grain, Gathering his own people. Second picture is now it's the angels. The angels are the reapers. Now, An angel gathers grapes of the earth.

And we're told why. Here is for the wrath of God. Unlike the first picture, We're not told what happens. When he reaps the grain, We just say he just reaps the grain.

We don't tell what happens to it. It doesn't tell us. Now he tells us. Now it's clear. Oh, This is clearly about judgment for choices made.

[29 : 07] So, Verse 17, We have a different gatherer. Instead of the son, One like a son of man, Now we have an angel. Another angel. Because we've got a bunch of angels. This is an angel from the temple. Coming from the temple means he's coming from where the throne of God is.

He's coming out of the temple in heaven. And we've already shown it. Back in chapter 4, The temple, Right? Is where the throne of God is. It's where Christ is.

It's where all the decisions come from. From the throne. God is the one who decides when this judgment happens. Then, Verse 18, We have another angel.

So who's the one that's going to tell him what to do? We have another angel. It's a different angel who comes out from the altar. First angel comes out from the temple. This one, Verse 18, Comes from the altar.

The altar. Now the altar's in the temple. So he's technically coming from the temple too. But this is a different, More specific angel. We're told he comes from the altar. By the way, He's the angel who has authority over the fire.

[30 : 08] So what's that? Fire. Have we seen fire in Revelation before? Yeah, I've seen lots of fire. Have we seen fire from the altar? Remember that? What's the altar?

We've heard the altar before. Back in chapter 6. Verse, The sixth seal. No, It's the fifth seal is broken, Right? And we see a vision in heaven, And the souls under the altar.

Remember that? The souls under the altar. And they're crying out, Oh Lord, How long? How long? Right? These are the martyred souls. These are the souls who gave their lives for God. Who gave their lives for Christ.

And they're crying out, How long? Before you avenge our blood. We've been wrongfully killed. How long before you, Right?

And so what does God tell them? Just wait a little longer. Rest. Give them white robes. And he does answer. He says, When?

[31 : 04] When the last martyr I have determined is killed. That's when. Till the final number of martyrs that I've determined is fulfilled. And then we get another answer right after that seal.

We get the sixth seal. And it's kind of a picture of the everything blows up, right? The sun, moon, stars, and everything. Mountains are flying away. And everything's ending. And then we have the seventh seal in chapter eight of Revelation.

Remember that one? First there's silence in heaven. So whatever that means. Insert preacher joke here. Don't do that. You don't remember? Good.

Good. I've already been forgiven. All right. So. And then he takes, right? It's the angel from the altar. He comes and he takes the fire from the altar. He takes the incense from the altar.

And he takes the prayers of the saints. Remember that? He mixes fire and incense and prayers. Very symbolic. And then he.

[32 : 05] I won't do it. I'll throw off my right hand. And he casts it to the earth. Symbolic. The prayers are part of the judgment.

The prayers are effectual to the judgment. So there's those saints who've been praying under the altar. The saints who are on the earth praying. How long, O Lord? The saints who are suffering.

Maybe they're not being killed, but they're dying every day. They're sacrificing their lives for Jesus and they're hurting and they're in pain. And they're sacrificing this life for the next. And they're saying, how much long, O Lord?

How long will the evil get away with evil? How long will the innocent suffer? And we all ask that question, right? Where is God?

Why is God really just? Does God take care of the evil? He seems to not care, right? That's the question that this passage is answering.

[33 : 05] Does God care? Will the wicked be held accountable? And the answer is yes.

So here's this angel from the fire of the altar, right? And he gives the call. Now, send and gather. Not reap this time, but gather.

Gather the fruit. Fruit. So here we have a different gatherer, verse 17. Verse 18. We have a different produce, right? Now it's called grapes. It's called the grape vine.

Go gather the vine and get the grapes. It's clusters of a vine. So that's very, very picture-out. We can see. How do grapes come to us, right?

They come in a little package of, you know. I know how we buy them, right? But how do they really come, right? They come in a grape vine and you cut the cluster off. You don't pick all the grapes. You cut the whole cluster off, right?

[34 : 05] That's how we still buy them in the store. They're clusters of grapes. All right? So he talks about the clusters. So harvest. So take the...

Cut off all the clusters. Right? That's the picture. And for its grapes are ripe.

Now we have a whole different word. Whereas the other word in verse 15, the ripeness was about dried out, so it's grain. Here it's a picture of fruitfulness. Here it's a picture of blooming and flourishing.

Which is an appropriate picture for a grape. It's ready. It's all ready to go. Ready to reap. Now things change.

Verse 19. Radically change. So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest from the earth. He threw it into the great wine press. Now that's what we expect.

[35 : 01] That's normal. Throw it into a wine press. Wine press is where we make wine. Right? Good thing, right? Wine's good, isn't it? In fact, grapes are good, aren't they?

Aren't grapes a good image in the Bible? Jesus talked about, you know, we're all the... He's the vine and we're the branches. We're bearing fruit. Right? That's a good image.

Right? But grapes aren't always a good image in Scripture. Grapevine is not always a good image in Scripture. Isaiah 1 and 5 calls Israel the grapevine of God.

And he says, What happened to my vineyard? I gave it everything it needed and what? It's gone unattended. It's in shambles. There's no fruit. So that whole image can...

It's a neutral image. It could be good or bad. Whereas wheat seems to consistently be a good thing. So gather them. Put them into the wine press.

[36 : 03] So the wine press is really... It talks about trotting. So remember the old I Love Lucy episode where she's making... Anybody see that one? That's what I picture. I don't know why I go there.

That's what I grew up... I was 8 years old or whatever when I saw that. There it is. Tromping on the grapes. Right? Falling in and all that. So that's the image. That's the way they did it. They're pressing the wine.

Pressing the juice. Harvesting the juice for the wine. And then there would be a trough where the juice would then flow out. Right? Into a vat. Where they collect it. But this is no normal wine press.

In fact, we're told... The imaging kind of stops here. The symbols kind of stop here because now he says it's a great wine press of what? Of the wrath of God.

Now we're told what it is. In fact, then he goes and says... In fact, the wine press was trodden outside the city and what? Blood flowed.

[37 : 01] Not juice. Blood. So now he's interpreting a bit for us. He's making it more clear for us. Here's the image. So, wine.

Grapes. What is another good image of wine that becomes blood? That's in Scripture.

Anybody think of anything? Anything come to mind? You're laughing because it's like, well, yeah, we know we do that every month. The cup. The cup of the juice of the vineyard.

Jesus took that and said, this is my blood. So he's using that same image. God requires blood.

Hmm. Hmm. Blood for blood. Blood for blood. So folks, whose blood?

[38 : 08] Why is this a part of the cross? Sacrifice. This blood of Jesus was shed for us.

That's why we get to be part of the first harvest. That's the only reason we get to be part of the first harvest. Because otherwise, if it's not his blood, it's our blood.

An appropriate symbol on the cross. Yes, Lord, I'll leave it down. Okay. The symbol of God's wrath.

The winepress is a symbol of God's wrath. And he just kind of casually mentions it's outside, and the winepress is trodden outside the city. Outside the city. So that's just a picture that goes way back to Leviticus.

When they sacrificed the animals, they would take the blood, and they would put the blood on the altar, and part of the body. But often, then what did they do with the rest of the body?

[39 : 15] Well, they took it outside the camp. It's now unholy. You've taken the holy. Now the unholy we take outside. Jesus was killed outside the gates of the holy city.

Not in the holy city. Taken outside the gates. At Gal, the place of the skull just outside.

You can go to Jerusalem and see a place that looks like a skull. So outside. So this is probably the cities referring to. It's probably the city in chapter 22.

It's talking about the holy city of Jerusalem, where the holy city of Jerusalem, chapter 22, is outside are the dogs, and those that have been separated from the holy city.

I know. Bad news, right? Dogs are not in there. But my dog is good. All right. Sorry, just a joke. Don't take me literal there.

[40 : 14] Then we have this gruesome language. The end of verse 20. What do we do with that?

The blood flowed from the wine press as high as a horse's bridle. How high is that? Anybody have a horse?

I know they're different sizes, but generally horses, we're talking up here, right? Or probably over my head. I don't know. Why?

And then it says, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1600 stadia. Stadia is a term for a race, you know, a lap around. It's a horse race term.

But it equals, one stadia is about 600 feet, apparently, to us Americans, 600 feet, and then which equates, if you add 1600 times 600, you get 184 miles.

[41 : 17] What's that? Numbers matter in Revelation, right? We've got sevens, we've got fours, we've got tens, we've got 144, which is 12 times 12.

So what does this number? 1600, what? Some clever people, though, oh, well, if we calculate it by 40 squared, then 40 means something, right?

Because 40 is like wilderness, and that's a number that means something. Yeah, but if that's what they meant, they'd have 40 squared in there. What's 1600? Well, the distance, it's really about a distance, it's four 1600 stadia, 184 miles, which just happens to be the approximate length of Israel.

Not today's Israel, today's Israel is about 16 miles. The promised land Israel, the original Israel, from north to the border of Egypt, 184, well, more like 186 miles, but it depends on which rock you're measuring.

So, what's the picture? Here's the thing, it's not about the detail. This is apocalyptic literature. Lots of symbols, and some of these symbols, like verse 20, are gruesome and shocking.

[42 : 47] That's what apocalyptic literature intends to do, to shock you. It's not so much about the detail, how far is 160, it's more about more picture.

That's just a shocking, horrible picture. That's extensive and severe. Is it fair?

Yeah. But it's a picture to get us, to catch us, to say, okay, God is going to take this very, very seriously.

He's been putting it off for how long? How long has evil been tolerated by the Lord? It's storing up.

So, Revelation, Romans chapter 2 says, you, as you continue to resist God, you know what you're doing? You are storing up wrath for yourself.

[43 : 51] We put off God. We put Him off. Put Him off. Remember, Romans talks about the wrath of God as not coming at us, but pulling back from us.

Right? He gives us, is that what you want? I'll give you also. You're going to be stubborn in that? I'll give you more. That's what you want. I'll give you more you. I'll pull back the grace. That's wrath.

That's separation. of pulling back. So, the graphic language we have here really echoes Old Testament language judgment images from the prophets.

We see the same kind of language in Isaiah 34, Isaiah 63, 66, Ezekiel 39, Zechariah 14, but let's just look at one. Let's look at Joel 3.

Joel 3 really is almost identical language. And Joel 3 gives us an explanation for the language. It gives us a reason for the graphicness of the language.

[44 : 55] You know, why the image of blood. It gives us reason. So here's Joel 3, verse 12. Let the nations stir themselves up and come to the valley of Jehoshaphat for there, God says, I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

Sound familiar? I will sit to judge the nations. That's what Jesus said. Here's the language. Put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe.

Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. That's just the language from Revelation 14. The vats overflow. Why? For their evil is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision. For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. This is the end time because look, the sun and the moon are darkened and the stars withdraw their shining.

Remember that sun, moon, stars language? It's the sky is falling, the world is ending kind of language. And God roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem and the heavens and the earthquake.

[46 : 10] But, but, but, but, but the Lord is a refuge to His people. A stronghold to the people of Israel. Even in the midst of judgment, God is our refuge.

to His people. He separates. So you shall know that I am the Lord, your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy.

That's the new Jerusalem will be holy. And strangers shall never again pass through it. And in that day, the mountains shall drip with sweet wine. That's a good image. And the hills flow with milk.

And all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water. and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and water the valley of Shatim.

Egypt, on the other hand, shall become a desolation and eat of a desolate wilderness. Why? For the violence done to the people of Judah. Remember, Jesus said, why do you enter the kingdom of heaven and why are you cast out into darkness?

[47 : 17] Because of how you treated my people. As you did to one of these the least of my brothers, so you do to me.

And what is the same thing in Judah, in Joel, for the violence done to the people of Judah, God's people. Because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

But, another separation, but Judah shall be inhabited forever and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood.

Blood I have not avenged. For the Lord dwells in Zion. Blood for blood. Blood for blood. Blood for blood.

Or, ooh, sorry, blood. Or blood. God have mercy.

[48 : 22] So this judgment, this picture of these harvests, the harvest of grain, the harvest of grapes, this judgment is about avenging martyrs.

The first one is the separation, pulling out his people. Nothing said about what happens to them, but we already know what happens to them at the beginning of chapter 14. They're on Mount Zion.

They're singing songs. They're in comfort and peace and joy. They are resting from their labors. that God will take serious what happens to these who have rejected him.

What is this all about? What do we really want to learn from this? Not what do we want to learn. What does God want us to see here? That's most important. There's lots of lessons here.

There's lessons of warning. There's information about the future. what really matters in all of this? What's really at stake besides our destiny?

[49 : 29] What's at stake more than our destiny? Character of God. The character of God. How long, O Lord, will you delay?

How long before you avenge the blood? How long before you vindicate your name for all the evil that is done in this world?

God doesn't care. Right? Or if he cares, he's not strong enough to do anything about it. So we get two messages from the world.

One, well, God doesn't care. He lets innocent people suffer. The other side is, my God's a loving God. Well, you can't have both.

You've got a loving God, then he's going to let all the evil go. If you've got a holy God, he's not going to let the evil go, but, so how do you reconcile that? Well, our God reconciles that.

[50 : 26] He is both merciful and gracious and loving and kind and forgiving and holy and just and righteous. How does it resolve it?

Right here. He is loving and kind and merciful and forgiving in the cross. He is also holy and just and righteous in the cross.

See, I look at verse 20 and say that should be my blood. That should be my 2.6 corpse or whatever it is.

Is that right? Dude, what is that? Because it's going to, so the image of the wine press, right? not just pour out some of my blood, it's going to be pressed out.

That's the image, right? You get all the juice of that grape. That should be mine. My blood deserves to be there. But Jesus gave his blood for me.

[51 : 35] That's the significance. And it's the character of God that matters. God is just, righteous, he does what is right. In fact, the next chapter, look just ahead, just a few verses in chapter 15.

We have again, worship breaks out in heaven. Judgment just happens, but worship breaks out in heaven. Verse 15-3, they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and they sing the song of the Lamb saying, to God, great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God, the Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?

Who would not? For you alone are what? Holy. All nations will come and worship you.

Why? For your righteous acts have been revealed. That's the point of these two harvests. God's holiness is vindicated.

[52 : 51] God's righteousness is vindicated. Our destinies are at stake, yes, but more important than that, God is shown to be God.

who would not fear. And fear is a good thing. Fear is a good thing.

This is Advent season. What difference does all this make? See, this isn't a sermon for Advent season, is it? Yeah, Jesus came.

He said, I didn't come to judge. I didn't come to condemn, but as a result of my coming, you will be judged. In fact, if you do not believe in me, you're already judged.

You have rejected what the Father has sent. Now is the time of salvation. That's what today is. God invites every person.

[53 : 56] Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. The angel said to Joseph, you shall call his name, what?

Emmanuel? Yeah, that's part of the name. You shall call his name. What name shall we call this Jesus? Shall we call him Joseph after his father? No, you're going to give him a special name.

You're going to call him Joshua. You're going to call him Yehoshua. Because he will Yehoshua his people from their sin. That's why he's here. And yes, he is Emmanuel.

He is God himself with us. This Jesus. Let's pray. Our father, we thank you for this text.

We don't at first look like it. And whether this text speaks clearly about two very different harvests, whether the first one really does speak about the harvest of the righteous, even if it's just about a general harvest, Lord, we do know that you will bring the righteous and separate the righteous and bring them into your barn.

[55 : 18] That's still truth. And what is crystal clear, Lord, in the second harvest is that you are avenged, you are vindicated, you are shown to be who you are, you do what is just and right.

All your ways are true. And at the end of the day, you are holy God. And what's so amazing to us, oh father, is that you as holy God have every right to strike every one of us down.

You have every right for the irreverence, for the rebellion, for the dismissal, for the lack of honor, or even failure to give thanks to you.

Yet, oh father, in your son sacrifice, you offer us not just forgiveness, but life everlasting with joy and bliss, things we do not deserve.

So remind us, oh father, today who you are. We celebrate today the advent of the son who is the holy child, who comes from a holy God.

[56 : 35] For this we give thanks, in Christ's name, amen. Amen. Thank you.