

INTRODUCTION:

In Part-6 we began to see God's plan and its ultimate completion through a wider lens and a broader context. We stepped back and began to see the big picture; what has been going on behind the scenes. On earth we see only the physical manifestations of an even greater heavenly battle between good and evil. In chapters 12 and 13, we gained insight into a struggle that began in the Garden of Eden, but became fever pitched with the first coming of Christ. We have seen Satan cast out of heaven, and begin to pour out his wrath upon the people of the earth. We have seen how he mocks God, creating his own false and unholy trinity. We have seen how he attempts to destroy that which has been created in God's image by deceiving us into breaking God's law and creating a false image to worship. We have even become aware that Satan's master plan is to trick us into elevating ourselves above God just as he attempted to do resulting in his condemnation. We now know that we mark ourselves by our own actions and thoughts as to who we worship, God or Satan. We finally understand that Satan's great deception is to get us to worship ourselves, to put the created before the Creator. We know that the number of the beast is that of man, when he puts himself above God, and places his faith in himself rather than his trust in God.

In Part-7 we will witness an expanded view of the events immediately preceding the pouring out of the wrath of God. Part-7 will be limited to Revelation 14 alone.

CHAPTER 14:

In this chapter, we begin with stark contrast to the ending of chapter 13. We move quickly from the number of the beast, and those who bear his mark, to the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with those who have been sealed with His name and His Father's name. We are shown seven visions, depicting worshipers of the Lamb and worshipers of the beast. Each is complete in itself, but they are not necessarily presented as a chronological sequence of events, but rather panoramically with details to be revealed in subsequent chapters. The visions will include: (1) the Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion who have been found blameless; (2) the angel with the everlasting Gospel; (3) the fall of Babylon; (4) the judgment of the worshipers of the beast; (5) the blessing upon those who die in the Lord; (6) the harvest of the elect; and, (7) the gathering of the wicked for destruction, which many associate with the last great battle of Armageddon. We continue

to see the unfolding and expanded view of the events which followed the seventh trumpet compressed into Revelation 11:18. This chapter provides a final transition before God pours forth His wrath upon the wicked.

Vision-1: The Martyrs and the Lamb on Mount Zion

Revelation 14:1, states: ***“And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and name of His Father written on their foreheads.”*** The Lamb who stands on Mount Zion is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ, but the location of Mount Zion is not clear. You see there are two possibilities regarding its location. We might assume that Mount Zion is on earth, and the place revealed in Scripture as the city of Jerusalem, the City of David, and even more specifically the Temple Mount. But in this passage it might also be a heavenly Mount Zion where Jesus stands with those who follow Him and prepares to return to the earth. Hebrews 12:22 seems to describe such a place, stating: ***“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels...”*** While ultimately, Mount Zion will be the place where Christ will reign in glory forever, in regard to the End Times, it will be a place of war and judgment. The prophet Zechariah depicts Jerusalem as a place of great battle in the end, saying, ***“For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!”*** (Zechariah 14:2-5). The prophet Joel, speaking of the great and terrible Day of the Lord, references Mount Zion as the place God will come down and pass judgment upon the nations, saying, ***“And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who***

escape, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls. For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land” (Joel 2:32—3:2). In the end, as we can see in the world today, Jerusalem will be at the center of conflict and the place where nations will gather in an attempt to destroy God’s people. In the wide angle view we are being given in these final chapters of Revelation, and in consideration of the terrible wrath and battle that is to be fought at Jerusalem on earth, it seems more likely that John’s vision of the Lord on Mount Zion is a heavenly one.

Regarding the one hundred and forty-four thousand who have the Lamb’s name and the Father’s name on their foreheads, many presume these are the same 144,000 from the tribes of Israel who were sealed in Revelation 7:4-8. The key may be in that they bear both names, that of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) and the Father (Jehovah). This could confirm that they are out of the tribes of Israel, but now follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Another insight comes from the letter to the church in Philadelphia. This was the church praised because they “kept the word” and “did not deny Jesus’ name” (3:8), Jesus said to them who overcome: *“I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name”* (3:12). We are told that these people, who did not deny the Lord’s name and remained faithful to His word, will receive the “name of My God” and “My new name.” In other words, they receive the name of the Father and the Son. We will learn more about this 144,000 in the verses that follow.

Revelation 14:2, states: *“And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.”* The sound of the voice is given a three-fold description as being like many waters, thunder, and harps. In Ezekiel 43:2 the sound of many waters is associated with the Lord coming into His temple. In Revelation 1:15, the Lord’s voice is said to be like the sound of many waters. In Revelation 19:6, the sound of many waters and the sound of thunder are used to describe the multitude,

praising the Lord as He begins to reign. But verse 14:3 begins saying, “they sang a new song.” This would imply that the song comes from the 144,000.

Revelation 14:3, states: ***“And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.”*** The fact that no one can learn the song except the 144,000 reinforces that they are the source of the song. This could also imply that only those who have not denied the name of Jesus and have kept the word can learn this song. Also clear is that the 144,000 are in heaven because they sing ***“before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders.”*** This seems to verify that the Lamb and the 144,000 are standing at the heavenly Mount Zion rather than in the Jerusalem on earth. The ending phrase, ***“purchased from the earth,”*** could also imply that this group is not limited to converted Jews but people of all nations. We gain this insight from the “new song” sang by the four living creatures and twenty-four elders who had been given “harps” and sang: ***“Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation”*** (Revelation 5:9).

Revelation 14:4-5, states: ***“These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.”*** Clearly the 144,000 have been purchased for God through the blood of the Lamb and are followers of Christ. But are the 144,000 limited to virgin men, who ***“have not been defiled with women”*** and ***“kept themselves chaste”***? This interpretation would not be consistent with God’s word. From the beginning God has sanctioned marriage, saying in Genesis 2:24: ***“For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”*** Proverbs 18:22 states: ***“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord.”*** God has made a distinction between the sexual relations that occur in the marriage bed from those outside of marriage, as expressed in Hebrews 13:4, which states: ***“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”*** While it is possible that the Lord literally means virgin men, it seems more

likely and consistent with the context that the 144,000 are sinless regarding “idolatry.” In the Old Testament, often the word “adultery” is used to describe “idolatry” as in Ezekiel 23:37, where it is said: **“Thus they have committed adultery with their idols and even caused their sons, whom they bore to Me, to pass through the fire to them (idols) as food.”** Also, and consistent with an understanding that the beast wants us to put ourselves and the things of this world before God, James 4:4 calls this “adultery” saying, **“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend to the world makes himself an enemy of God.”** We need to remember as well that the Church, made up of many people of many nations but all following one Lord, is considered the virgin bride of Christ. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 11:2, saying, **“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.”** Therefore, the 144,000 may be considered “virgin” and “chaste” because they have been completely faithful to Christ and have not “fornicated” with the idols of the world.

Regarding the 144,000 being called the “first fruits,” this term is generally used to describe the best of fruits. Consistently in Scripture we are told to offer to God our best as “first fruits.” Exodus 23:19 says: **“You are to bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord your God.”** The apostle James refers to the early followers of Christ as “first fruits” saying, **“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures”** (James 1:18). Even if we have been washed clean by the blood of Christ, most of us have fallen short of the glory of God and have likely committed the sin of adultery or idolatry with the world at some point in our lives, but perhaps the 144,000 comprise those who have never failed to remain faithful to the Lord.

Finally in verse 5, we are told that “no lie was found in their mouth” and that the 144,000 are “blameless.” Satan is the author of lies and the accuser of the saints. To say that these followers of Christ have not lied and are blameless is to say that they have never fallen under Satan’s deception, listened to his lies, or strayed from Christ’s example. Peter instructs us to follow the example of Christ, which is to never lie and remain blameless. In 1 Peter 2:21-22, he says, **“For you have been called for this**

purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.”

Vision-2: Angelic Admonition to Worship God

Revelation 14:6-7, states: *“And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water.”* This passage may remind us of Revelation 8:13, when an eagle flying in “midheaven” spoke of three “woes” about to come upon the earth just prior to the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets. In this case the angel brings both good news and a stern warning of impending judgment. The word “gospel” literally means “good news” and we know the good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ has died for the sins of the world, and through His blood we may be forgiven our sins and reconciled with God. But in order to be washed clean through Christ’s blood, we must accept Him as our Lord and Savior, and through genuine repentance, change our lives to follow His teachings and example. Jesus told Peter when he first refused to allow Him to wash his feet, *“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me”* (John 13:8). Likewise, if we fail to submit to Christ as our Lord, allowing Him to be Lord over our lives, we cannot be washed clean of our sins. The message of the angel is universal in that it is intended for all people. He warns the people of earth that they must worship the one true God, who is Creator of all things, or they will soon perish. This is God’s final warning to the earth. It is apparent that God has kept the door for repentance open, but it is about to be closed, and quickly followed by judgment. This event is likely what Jesus was speaking of when in Matthew 24:14 He said: *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.”*

Vision-3: Angel Pronounces Doom on Babylon

Revelation 14:8, states: *“And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of wine of the passion of her immorality.”* This is the first mention of Babylon in Revelation, but it will be a prominent subject in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. We know that Babylon

was the empire that conquered Judah in 586 B.C., destroying the Jewish Temple, and carrying away God's people into exile. There they would remain for 70 years until after the fall of the Babylonian Empire. A Jewish remnant would return about 536 B.C. but many would continue to live around Babylon, having become established there. Is it the city of Babylon and the Babylonian Empire that is being addressed in Revelation?

Perhaps our best clue is the phrase "Babylon the great." While the name Babylon is used 294 times in the Bible, the phrase "Babylon the great" is used only six times, all of which are found in Revelation with the exception of Daniel 4:30. The context of its use in Daniel provides us great insight. After standing on the roof of his royal palace and looking out over the great city of Babylon, the king proclaims: "***Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?***" Daniel 4:31 then states: "***While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you...'***" The king's declaration that the greatness around him is of his own creation and for his own glory results in God immediately stripping him of his kingdom. This lesson is consistent with what we learned in Revelation 13. Satan wants us to elevate ourselves above God, proclaiming ourselves as the creators of our world, and worshiping ourselves. King Nebuchadnezzar would also create a statue of himself and declare that everyone must worship it or die, similar to the beast instructing man to create an image of the beast that God's faithful must worship or be killed. The parallels are too similar to ignore. The Babylonian Empire is long gone and the city of Babylon long destroyed. Babylon the great is not a place or an empire, but a system of belief that elevates man above God, where man believes that he is his own creator and master of his own world, and excludes God from his world. The angel declares that Babylon the great is fallen, and the nations will no longer drink of this deception that leads to immoral behavior and death. Before moving forward it should be noted that in the phrase, "***wine of the passion of her immorality,***" the word translated as "passion" literally means "anger, wrath" or "violent emotion." Drinking of the wine of Babylon the great will result in God's anger and wrath being poured from His cup.

Vision-4: Angelic Condemnation of the Worshipers of the Beast

Revelation 14:9-10, states: ***“And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”*** This is a clear and unmistakable warning that those who worship the beast, his image and receive his mark will face God’s wrath. This simply means that those who elevate themselves above God, worship themselves, and mark themselves as belonging to the beast through their actions (hands), and focus of their mind (forehead) will be subject to God’s wrath and punishment. Their punishment will be the fire and brimstone of hell. The fact that their torment will be in the “presence” of the holy angels and the Lamb may bother some people, who think this means that the Lord and His angels will gain some pleasure or satisfaction out of their torment, but I do not think this is the intent of what is being expressed. Rather, they will face eternal shame in that their evil actions and choices will be forever exposed in the presence of what is good and holy.

Revelation 14:11, states: ***“And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”*** Many find the concept of eternal punishment unsettling. How could a loving God ever cause anyone to suffer punishment forever? This strikes us as unfair or too harsh, but it is not God who destines people to a place of eternal punishment, but the actions of those who have rejected God and His gift of eternal life through Christ. The Bible is consistent in its teaching. The place of punishment will be eternal, forever, and everlasting. Speaking of the eternal punishment at the end of time, the Lord proclaims through His prophet Isaiah, ***“Then they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind”*** (Isaiah 66:24). In Matthew 25:46, Jesus distinguishing between those who fail to serve Him and those who do, saying, ***“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*** Later in Revelation 20:10,

we will be told that this place is the “lake of fire” which is a place of torment, ***“day and night forever and ever.”*** Choose Christ! Choose life! And escape the eternal fire!

Vision-5: Heavenly Benediction of the Martyrs

Revelation 14:12, states: ***“Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”*** Most scholars link this verse with the condemnation found in the preceding verses 9-11, as an assurance to the saints that punishment will not be their fate, if they keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. We were given a similar assurance in 13:10, when we learned that many saints would face captivity and death in the end. I am again reminded of Jesus’ words to the church at Thyatira, saying, ***“I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first”*** (2:19). I believe there is a link between our “perseverance” and our continuing to do the “deeds” that Christ has called us to do. Therefore, I believe these two verses are “linked.” We witness best our perseverance of faith when we continue to openly serve the Lord even when it is most difficult, and from a worldly perspective, may cost us our very lives.

Revelation 14:13, states: ***“And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”*** There is some debate regarding the true meaning of this passage. I feel the key to understanding it is found in the words ***“who die in the Lord from now on.”*** We know that the final warning has just been given and punishment is about to rain down on the earth. Christians who are still alive on the earth have presumably endured great hardship in living their faith. But perhaps also, this passage speaks hope to those who will genuinely repent and turn to the Lord in their final moments. Paul in Romans 10:13, quotes the words of the prophet Joel, speaking of the end times, saying, ***“Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”*** Jesus reinforces this understanding in His story of the “Laborers in the Vineyard” found in Matthew 20. Here he gives those who enter the field to work in the last hour the same reward as those who worked all day. It should be our prayer that people will turn to Christ to the very end and be saved.

Regarding the phrase, ***“their deeds follow with them,”*** in 2:23 Jesus said, ***“I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.”*** We are told that at the final judgment

and the books are opened, that everyone will be judged *“according to their deeds”* (20:12-13). Even as Revelation closes, Jesus will remind us, saying, *“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done”* (22:12). Paul tells us in Romans 12:28 that *“man is justified by faith apart from works,”* but James reminds us that *“faith without works is dead”* (James 2:26). The bottom line is that how we live our faith and what we do with our faith will be remembered by God, and our deeds will follow us even after death.

Vision-6: The Son of Man and the Harvest

Revelation 14:14, states: *“And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand.”* Some Bibles translate the above as “son of man” and others as the “Son of Man.” The distinction makes all the difference in how we understand the verses that follow. The Greek phrase is identical to that found in Revelation 1:13, *“one like a son of man.”* In 1:13 the description which follows is clearly that of Jesus Christ. The “cloud” is an important clue. God has frequently appeared or been associated with a cloud. When Jesus was baptized, God spoke and a dove descended from a cloud. When Jesus was transfigured, God spoke from a cloud. Jesus was raised and disappeared into a cloud. And we are told Jesus will return on the clouds of heaven. Another clue may be that He has a golden crown on His head. Again, this may be intended to depict His as Lord and King. On the other hand, the one who sits upon the cloud may be an “angel of the Lord” sent by Christ to gather the harvest, because in Matthew 24:31 Jesus, speaking of the time of His return, says: *“And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”* Also, in the parable of the “Tares and the Wheat” Jesus says, *“and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels”* (Matthew 13:39). In either case, whether this is Christ Himself or His angel, because He alone has been given authority to harvest the elect and punish the wicked, these actions are by His authority.

Revelation 14:15, states: *“And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.”* It may trouble us to think that an angel could be directing Christ or Christ’s agent, but Matthew 24:36 says:

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” The angel comes out of the “temple” to inform the one on the cloud that the ***“hour to reap has come.”*** Something else I found interesting in this particular verse is that the literal meaning of the Greek word translated as “ripe” is “has become dry.” We harvest crops when they have reached their peak. With grain crops this is when they become dry, meaning the stalk will provide no additional nourishment and growth. A time is coming when God will determine the Church has grown dry and lacks the potential of further growth. Then the harvest will come swiftly.

Revelation 14:16, states: ***“And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.”*** The verb translated as “swung” in Greek literally means “to cast, throw, or bring,” and in some cases can mean “to thrust or strike.” In all cases it happens as an impulse or suddenly. Many see this moment as the moment that the elect are harvested from the earth. Scripture gives us numerous accounts of this sudden event. In 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, Paul speaks of the mystery of the moment we are all changed from perishable to imperishable. He says: ***“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality.”*** Perhaps the best description of this scene from Revelation is described by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, saying, ***“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*** And of course, Jesus Himself spoke of this moment in the Apocalyptic Discourse found in Matthew 24. Jesus says: ***“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other”*** (Matthew 24:30-31). All of these descriptions may be of the same event, the gathering of the elect, the reaping of the harvest.

But why does there appear to be two harvests back to back in Revelation 14:14-16 and then 14:17-20, which follows? Perhaps the explanation can be found in the parable of the “Tares and the Wheat” found in Matthew 13:24-30, and explained in verses 36-43. God plants a harvest with good seed, but the devil comes in the night and sowed tares among the wheat. Tares have the same appearance as wheat when they are growing, but when they yield their fruit it is different and poisonous. When it is apparent that tares are growing with the wheat the slaves want to pull them up, but the landowner tells them: **“Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn””** (Matthew 13:30). At the end of Revelation 14 we see a harvest followed by a second cutting. The first, which we have just depicted in 14:14-16 is clearly designated as a “harvest,” which by very definition is a crop that has been planted and is of value. The second cutting, as we will see in the following verses will be placed in the **“wine press of the wrath of God”** (14:19). This does not sound like a harvest but punishment and destruction.

Vision-7: The Angel and the Destruction of the Wicked

Revelation 14:17, states: **“And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.”** A second angel comes from the temple in heaven, which we can interpret as being sent by God the Father. He comes after the “harvest” has been conducted by the one who is like the “Son of Man.” If what is good has been harvested, then what will be the fate of that which remains?

Revelation 14:18, states: **“And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud 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.”** We are told this angel has power over fire, and comes from the altar. In Revelation 8:5, an angel took fire from the altar and threw it down upon the earth, which was clearly an act of punishment. It would seem immediately apparent that this event will be associated with punishment. Note that the sickle is to gather clusters of grapes from the **“vine of the earth.”** In John 15:5, Jesus says: **“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”** This vine is not connected to

Christ but to the “earth.” The beast has deceived people to worship the creation rather than the Creator, to depend on themselves rather than on God. This crop has grown out of the deception of Satan rather than the grace of the Lord. This crop is full of all that is evil and is ripe for judgment and destruction.

Revelation 14:19, states: ***“And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.”*** If there was any doubt about the nature of the grapes being gathered, it is dispelled when we learn they are to be placed in the ***“great wine press of the wrath of God.”*** This is not a place you want to end up. The prophet Joel, speaking of the “Day of the Lord” and when the nations are judged, says: ***“Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great”*** (Joel 3:12-13). Those gathered into the wine press are doomed to destruction.

Revelation 14:20, states: ***“And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.”*** According to Revelation 19:15, the one who treads the wine press is the coming Christ, for it is written: ***“And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.”*** It may be no coincidence that the river of blood that flows from the wine press is two hundred miles in length. This is the approximate length of the nation of Israel from its northern to southern borders. The numbers that are slaughtered will be great. According to Ezekiel 9:12-13, ***“For seven months the houses of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. Even all the people of the land will bury them; and it will be to their renown on the day that I glorify Myself, declares the Lord God.”*** The battle of Armageddon will be revealed in more detail in Revelation 16 and 17. Many scholars associate this great slaughter with the battle of Armageddon. They make this association because, as we will learn in the chapters which follow, the great battle of Armageddon will occur in this same general area, and will be the ultimate culmination of the struggle between good and evil on earth, between God’s people and those who oppose God and His people.

(End of Part-7)