

REVELATION 14

The Great Harvests of God

TEXT: Rev. 14

Introduction: Today we are going to consider Revelation, chapter 14. All of our reading in the Book of Revelation this week shows what will take place during the Great Tribulation, the final 3 and ½ years of the 7 year period of God's judgment upon the earth. However, what we see in these chapters is that while **Satan**, here called the dragon, **the antichrist, and the false prophet do their wicked worst to let evil rule over planet earth,**

- **The Lord God Almighty still reigns upon His throne;**
- **and the Lord Jesus Christ wears the crown as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**
- **And King Jesus is working to accomplish His eternal purpose.**

Chapter 14 offers us an overview of God's great purpose in the Tribulation. It reveals to us two monumental events that will most certainly take place during the dark days of the Tribulation.

- And you may be wondering, what have these things to do with me now?
- I am pretty well tied up rebuilding my house, wrestling with insurance, pleading with FEMA or others to help.
- Why should I even give thought to these events that I as a believer will not even be on the earth to see, since God will bring me home to be with Him before the Tribulation begins.

Well, dear brother and sister, these two future events have more to do with you than you could possibly imagine, even right now! In a little while, I will tell you what that connection is, but first, let me tell you what the events are.

I. THE PREPARATION (Rev. 14:6-13)

To make preparation for the two momentous events, God sends three angels to fly around the earth delivering a message from heaven.

A. Why does God use angels?

1. **Because the church is gone to heaven.**

2. Because the Two Witnesses are gone to heaven.

3. Now the 144,000 Jewish Missionaries are gone to heaven.

B. The First Angel

This angel flies in mid-heaven and **proclaims the gospel**. He also issues a warning that the hour of God's judgment has come.

C. The Second Angel

Announces the fall of the wicked world system of the antichrist called Babylon.

D. The Third Angel

Warns the followers of the antichrist of the coming wrath of God and eternal judgment. Then he adds, "Endure, you believers who are left. You who die in the Lord will be happy."

II. THE TWO COLLOSSAL EVENTS: that accomplish the purpose of God Almighty in this wicked world.

A. THE REAPING OF THE HARVEST (Rev. 14:14-16)

Rev. 14:14-16 14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

The Reaper of the Harvest is the Sower of the Seed, the Son of Man, **the Lord Jesus.** **This pictures the final ingathering of the saints during the tribulation,** people who have been saved during these seven years.

An angel comes from the presence of the Father in the heavenly temple and says, 14:15b "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Here the word ripe means "so ready to be gathered it is about to wither." Like leftover turkey after Thanksgiving. Save it, put it in the fridge, turkey sandwiches, turkey salad. Finally mama says, "If you want any more turkey, better eat it today. Tonight I'm going to throw it away because in another day it will spoil." Remember that Jesus said these days were shortened for the sake of the elect.

Jesus swings His sickle on the earth and “the earth was reaped.” All of redeemed mankind will be gathered into the Presence of the Lord. We do not know exactly when the last people saved will be gathered to their home with Jesus, but sometime during this period.

B. THE GATHERING OF THE VINTAGE (Rev. 14:17-20)

Rev. 14:17-20 17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” 19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. (184 miles)

After the harvest of God of the believers upon the earth, another angel announces that the grapes of the earth are ripe and ready to be gathered. **The wheat represented believers. The grapes represent the lost.** This will not be a gathering for keeping or preserving as was the harvest of believers. It is a gathering for destruction. Like much debris stacked on the street.

The word “ripe” in this passage is a different word in the Greek. It means **“ready to burst” and it implies that sin and iniquity is literally swelling the lives of people to the point they are consumed with it.** Now they will be gathered and thrown into the wine press of the wrath of God. In the wine press, a man stomps the grapes and their juice splatters and flows. The unbelievers will be stomped like over-ripe grapes and a river of blood 4 to 5 feet deep flows for a distance of 184 miles. This occurs at the Battle of Armageddon.

Folks, **there will be two great harvests:**

- **The gathering of the tribulation believers**, those who during this seven year period of judgment on the earth, turn in faith to Jesus and trust Him as their Lord and Savior. **They will live with the Lord forever!**
- **The gathering of those who refused to trust Christ, who will be condemned to experience the wrath of God forever.**

Every person who ever lives will come to one of these two eternal conditions.

- **FOREVER Saved and living with the Lord**
- **FOREVER Lost and exiled from the Presence of God.**

EVERYBODY!

III. THIS IS WHY IT MATTERS TO US NOW!

A. Everybody we know will either

- 1. Spend eternity with the Lord by trusting Jesus Christ.**
- 2. Spend eternity in hell because of their failure to trust in Jesus.**

EVERYBODY!

Your husband, wife, kids, parents, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, grandma, grandpa, friends. EVERYBODY!

B. Everybody we meet will either

- 1. Spend eternity with the Lord by trusting Jesus Christ.**
- 2. Spend eternity in hell because of their failure to trust in Jesus.**

EVERYBODY!

People you know at work, at school, at stores or restaurants you go to. EVERYBODY!

C. Where people spend eternity is the most important thing there is to God.

- Each one is created in God's image.
- He loves each person.
- He does not want them to perish.
- This is why Jesus came.
- This is why Jesus gave us the Great Commission.

Mt. 28:19-20 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" Amen.

- This is why Jesus gave us Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

D. God tells us to cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us.

So, it is more than OK to pray often about

- Our damaged houses
- Our insurance payment or lack thereof
- Our stuff that is lost forever

It's OK to pray about that, and God cares because He cares for us.

But do not think that restoring our stuff or making us comfortable again is suddenly God's new purpose for existing.

No! **God's purpose is saving the men and women** He created who have rebelled against Him, and redeeming those sinners to Himself **that they might live with Him forever as a part of the Family of God!**

E. **God's desire is that seeing people saved to live with Him forever would be our purpose also!**

- Sure you need to fix you house,
- Get rid of the trees.
- Clean up the mess.
- Keep or get a job.
- Take care of the family.

God knows that. He cares for you and He will help you do all those things that are good and right to do. But while we do them, He wants us to take the time to notice the opportunities He gives us and join Him in His most important work.

- God wants us to take time to talk with some of the people who are doing our adjusting and estimating and watch for opportunities to share about our faith in Christ.
- He wants us to notice those who are vulnerable and therefore open to our help and our witness.

- God will not be content if we just all got the external things of our life glued back together or replaced so that our world looked shiny and new.
- God wants new people brought into His forever family.
- He wants eternal destinies changed.
- He wants to save and change lives.
- And He wants us to be a part of making it happen.

CONCLUSION: Folks, it is no exaggeration at all to say that everybody will be a part of one of two great harvests. A person either trusts in Christ and lives with Him forever, or he or she fails to trust Jesus and is banished forever to the winepress of the wrath of Holy God called hell or the lake of fire.

The setting in which God is working in Bay County has changed much from our perspective. But God's purpose and desire has not changed at all. And God very much wants us sharing His purpose and joining Him as witnesses and disciple makers even while we get roofs on our houses and cut up fallen trees!

Stand for prayer.

- While we pray, would you say to the Lord, "Jesus, this week I will look beyond the rubble and the to do list, and watch for the people you give me opportunity to talk to. And as I find one that is willing, I will take the time to talk of You, and my faith, and the difference it makes in my life."

If you will say this to the Lord this morning, just lift your hand.

- If you are one of those that Jesus is seeking to save you and give you eternal life, Thomas is going to be hanging around in the area to your left. When we dismiss, go talk to him.
- If you know the Lord but you need a church, Jeremy is going to be hanging around to your right. Go talk to him about becoming a part of our church when we dismiss.

The hurricane as brought us many challenges, but it has also brought us great opportunities.

That is true concerning our buildings.

- Already we have completed the mitigation and most of the cleanup.
- We are close to beginning reconstruction.

- In the process, we will get a brand new roof on every building of our campus and each of our Center of Hope Ministries: Benevolence, Medical, and A Sheltering Tree.
- And as we saw last week, God has made our Worship Center ready for the refurbishing we were already planning to do, and even now our architects are at work to give us a new design.

But that is also true of ministry. God has some great opportunities for us.

- Hasn't our worship since the hurricane here in the gym been grand? Yet we miss our small groups and this worship service is full.
- So, our long range plan has always been when we get full we go to flip flops. We have two worship services and two small group times.
- That is what we are going to start **January 13.**
 - **At 9:00 we will have Lifechange Groups meeting in D bldg., the Conference Rooms, and Fellowship Hall.**
 - **And also at 9:00 we will have our first Worship Service right here in the Gym.**
 - **At 10:30 we will have other Lifechange Groups meeting in D bldg., the Conference Rooms, and Fellowship Hall.**
 - **And also at 10:30 we will have our second Worship Service in the Gym.**

Between now and then, you will be given a lot of information to explain the details of how this will all work.

But let me share one thing with you right now. God has called us to be a 4 Gen Church. So both hours of Lifechange Groups and both Worship Services will have people from all the generations of our church.

The staff and I do not see this step as an interim necessity that we will change when we get all of our buildings, including the Worship Center, rebuilt. We see this as the next step of developing both small groups and worship to accomplish the task God has given us: to reach 4 Generations to Come.

Obviously, this means change. Everybody cannot have their Lifechange Group at 9 and go to worship at 10:30. But we can all come at 9 and all be finished before noon, and all have had an opportunity to fellowship and study God's Word in a small group and worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Let us embrace the opportunities and blessings that God is putting before us!