

LEARNING TO INTERPRET REVELATION

Rev. 14:14-20

Introduction: As we investigate the final portion of Revelation 14, it is very important to remember what we saw about the relationship of chapters 14 to 19 which we discussed in the last lesson.

What we have in Revelation, chapters 14 to 19 is a three-fold view of the ____ of this age.

Rev. ____ gives us the overview.



Rev. _____ enlarges the picture and gives us more detail.

Rev. _____ enlarges the picture yet again and provides us with even more detail.

In the final part of Rev. 14, we are shown an overview of two great harvests. As we examine the text, we will discover what these harvests are, what they mean; but it will require the next five chapters (and the next four weeks) to tell us all the detail of how these harvests take place.

A quick read of these seven verses of Rev. 14 clearly reveals that two events are taking place. We will look at each separately.

I. 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.

Two primary questions arise requiring interpretation:

1. Who is the _____ of the harvest?
2. What is the _____ being reaped?

A. The Reaper of the Harvest

Let's list what the text says about him:

1. He sits on a white _____.
2. He is like the Son of Man.
3. He has a golden _____ on his head.
4. He has a sharp sickle in his hand.
5. He reaps the _____ of the earth with his sickle.

And let's consider each statement one at a time.

1. **He sits on a white cloud.** This seems to be such an innocuous sentence, saying no more than the person must be a heavenly being, an angel or such to be sitting on a cloud. However, this statement teaches us to never _____ the smallest portion of the Word of God.

If we let Scripture explain Scripture and do a search on "cloud" (_____, not plural), we make a very rich discovery. In the Old Testament, the word "cloud" was almost always used to describe

- a. The _____ of the Lord as He led Israel through the wilderness.

Exodus 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.

- b. The presence and _____ of the Lord as He appeared above the Mercy Seat in the tabernacle and the temple.

1 Kings 8:10 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

- c. Another, similar, manifestation of the glorious presence of God.

In the New Testament, "cloud" also often carries special significance.

- d. At the transfiguration of Jesus, God the Father spoke from a _____ cloud.

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

- e. When Jesus ascended back to heaven, He went up in a cloud, and angels said He would return "in _____ manner." (Acts 1:9-11)

2. **He is like the Son of Man.** If we search on the phrase "son of man," we are led to 190 verses of Scripture. Most of them fall into three categories:
 - a. A way of referring to a human being, a son of a man.
 - b. The primary designation of _____ in his book of prophecy.
 - c. A primary title _____ took for Himself during His earthly ministry.

3. **He has a golden crown on his head.** Elsewhere in Revelation, we see both Christ and antichrist with crowns, so we will have to be careful here.
4. **He has a sharp sickle in his hand.** A search on “sickle” yields two interesting results beyond these references in Rev. 14.
 - a. One in Joel 3 which is a chapter about God’s judgment of the _____ of the world. **Joel 3:13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow— For their wickedness is great.”**
 - b. In the other, Jesus is talking about the _____ and says, **Mark 4:29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”**
5. **He reaps the harvest of the earth with his sickle.** Every one of these searches has yielded helpful information, and already a picture is forming. But a search on the word “harvest” is the _____ buried in the field.
 - a. Jesus calls lost souls ready to be _____ “the harvest” and calls Himself the “the Lord of the harvest.” **Luke 10:2 ... “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.**
 - b. When Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mt.13:24-30), He says

Matthew 13:38–43 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, **the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.** 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Put this verse with another we found when searching on “cloud,” but I saved the best for last!

Luke 21:25–28 25 “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 **Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.** 28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

- B. **The harvest is the final ingathering of the _____ during the tribulation,** people who have been saved during these seven years. (Remember, this is an overview. It does not all happen in a single moment. The details are spread through the next 3½ years and five chapters in Revelation.)

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.” An examination of the word “ripe” here and in verse 18 is fruitful. They are

different Greek words. **Here the word ripe means “so ready to be gathered it is about to _____.”** Remember that Jesus said these days were shortened for the sake of the elect.

Also notice that it is _____ who swings His sickle on the earth, and “the earth was reaped.” Jesus personally gathers in the harvest of those saved by grace through faith in Himself, but He sends _____ to gather in the wicked.

II. THE GATHERING OF THE VINTAGE (Rev. 14:17 – 19:21)

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.**

Actually, all the detailed work we did to understand reaping of the harvest, equips us to now just let the plain sense make sense.

After the harvest by Jesus of the believers upon the earth, another angel announces that the grapes of the earth are ripe and ready to be gathered. **The wheat represents _____.** **The grapes represent the _____.** (Reread Joel 3:13 above) This will not be a gathering for _____ or preserving as was the harvest of believers. It is a gathering for _____.

In verse 18 the word “ripe” means “ready to _____,” 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 winepress of God. In the wine press, a man stomps the grapes and their juice splatters and flows. The unbelievers will be destroyed in such a way that a river of _____ 4 to 5 feet deep flows for a distance of _____ miles.

This will happen at the Battle of Armageddon.