

# Reaping and Pressing

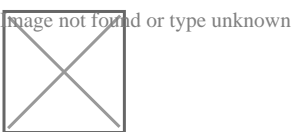
## Reaping and Pressing (Revelation 14:14-20)

### Foundation for the Biblical Harvests

Deuteronomy lists the major crops of the land of promise:

Deuteronomy 8:8—A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

### Three Harvest Seasons



In ancient Israel the primary harvest season extended from April to November. This harvest period might be subdivided into three seasons and three major crops: the spring grain harvest, the summer grape harvest and the autumn olive harvest. Let us highlight the two of the three major crops because they relate directly to our text in Revelation 14.

#### Grain Harvest (Spring)

Barley and wheat were the most important crops of the spring harvest. Barley and wheat were planted in the autumn and ripened in spring. Pentecost was celebrated near the end of the grain harvest with grain and loaf offerings (Leviticus 23:16-17). Newly harvested grain could not be eaten until the offering of the firstfruits to God was first made. Pentecost was also called the "The Feast of Harvest" and "The Feast of Weeks".

Exodus 23:16—And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

#### Grape Harvest (Summer)

After Pentecost, most of the harvest was fruit: grapes, olives, dates, figs, pomegranates and numerous fruits, seeds and vegetables of lesser importance. Grapes were the first major crop to ripen. In a good year, when the grain yield was great, threshing and grape picking overlapped. The grape harvest was usually completed before the Feast of Tabernacles.

### Two Festival Seasons: Spring Feasts and Fall Feasts

The three harvesting seasons were celebrated by two major festival seasons. The Spring Feasts of Passover, Firstfruits, Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost teach of the beginning of Christ's ministry and the Fall Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles represent the completion of His ministry.

Consider these feasts in sequence:

## Spring Feasts (May/June)

Passover—God passed over the Israelites when he killed the Egyptian firstborn.

First Fruits—The first fruits are the first to come and are specially dedicated to God as a reminder that all good things come from God. It also was a pledge of a greater harvest to follow.

Unleavened Bread—A Memorial of Israel's hasty exodus from Egypt.

Pentecost—Pentecost (Shavuot) was originally a festival for expressing thankfulness to the Lord for the blessing of the harvest.

## Fall Feasts (September-October)

These feasts, which became known as "The High Holy Days", celebrated in the 7th month marked the conclusion of the religious year.

Trumpets (1st day of 7th month)—The feast that called people to prepare to stand before the judgment of God. Instead of celebratory it was spent in private and grave introspection—fasting and prayer.

Atonement (10th day of 7th month)—The importance of the Day of Atonement is revealed by the fact that in the Talmud the name was shortened to simply "The Day." Celebrates God's Creation and God's new creation through atonement. A new beginning celebrated having been cleansed from sin. Day of Atonment represented the conclusion of the judgment that began ten days earlier.

Tabernacles (15th day of 7th month)—The Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Booths and Sukkot, is the seventh and last feast that the Lord commanded Israel to observe. God delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt and they were to live in a temporary tabernacle for eight days and look forward to the coming Messiah.

Luke 12:37—Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching:...

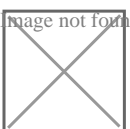
## Reaping of the Harvest (vs. 14-16)

Revelation 14:15—And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

## ...Thrust in Thy Sickle...

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Image not found or type unknown



Execute the judgments which God has decreed. It is time for the judgment—no more delay or waiting. God has waited, but no more! The Lord coming in a white cloud speaks both of righteousness and judgment.

- White/Righteousness (Matthew 17:2; Revelation 3:5,18; 4:14; 7:9; 19:8).
- Cloud/Judgment (Matthew 17:5; Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7).

Revelation 1:7—Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Sitting on the cloud, He is in a position of rulership. Christ is seen here ruling in judgment. It is Christ for John says "like unto the Son of Man" (Revelation 1:13).

On His Head is a Golden Crown (His church in glory and already awarded; I Cor. 6:1-3; Rev. 4:4; II Timothy 4:8) and in His hand is a sharp sickle. The sickle is a hooked knife and harvesting instrument used to pluck, gather, or cut.

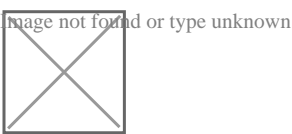
## ...For the Harvest of the Earth is Ripe...

The cup of iniquity is full. Their sins are ripe or ready for judgment. Sin has ripened to the harvest.

## ...And the Earth was Reaped...

What plagues descend with the sharp sickle! What a cutting down and devastation.

## Pressing of the Vintage (vs. 17-20)



After the grain harvest comes the grape harvest. The grapes are cut down and then placed in the wine press. This pressing will be performed by God himself in a place called Armageddon.

## The Gathering into the Great Wine Press of the Wrath of God

Revelation 16:14-16—For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

This is the harvest of the "earth" and judgment not on a local but global scale. All the nations will be gathered: the kings, leaders, armies, antichrist, false prophet, and the followers of the beast.

Armageddon is a name occurring only once in the Bible and designating the place where the last great battle of the ages will take place. Armageddon is a Hebrew word, although it does not occur in the Old Testament. Its meaning is not exactly clear, but it is best taken to mean Mount Megiddo, since "Har" in Hebrew means mountain and "Mageddon" is the place-name of Megiddo.

In Old Testament history Megiddo was a place of numerous decisive battles because of the broad plain that stood before it. Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera and his Canaanite army there (Judges 4-5), Gideon drove off the Midianites and Amalekites ( Judges 6 ), Saul and the army of Israel were defeated because of their failure to trust in God ( 1 Sam 31 ), and the Egyptian army under Pharaoh Neco killed Josiah, king of Judah ( 2 Kings 23:29 ).

Some take John's designation literally, expecting the armies of the earth to gather against God in the endtimes below the remains of Old Testament Megiddo; others see in it a more figurative element. They point out that Megiddo was not really a mountain at all and that the battle will take place in the plain. Perhaps John designated it Mount Megiddo as a clue to its symbolic meaning, drawing together the historic place of conflict in Israel's history with the prophecies of Ezekiel that speak of the great end-time conflict taking place in the mountains of Israel ( Ezekiel 39:2,4, 17 ).

# The Treading in the Great Wine Press of the Wrath of God

Grapes would be tossed into the winepress, and then a person or persons would stomp on the grapes with their feet until all the grape juice was pressed out. The Wine press is the wrath of God and these grapes are all the enemies of God.

Isaiah 63:1-3—Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

Psalm 2:9—Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Revelation 14:20—And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

And the winepress was trodden without the city, eternally without the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, and far from the presence of God; eternally crushed and trodden down by his justice; eternally tormented in body and soul, without any hope either of living or dying! This is the miserable lot and portion of those who shall have despised the law of God, and died in impenitence. My God, pierce my heart with a salutary dread of thy judgments!—Adam Clarke

A lake of blood to the size of 200 square miles and as high as a horse's bridle! Such a slaughter is the end sin brings. Christ is victor over all His enemies. Revelation 19:13 tells us His vesture is "dipped with blood" and his name is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS".

## Conclusion

As there were intertwined the harvesting and the festivals, so in the midst of the end of all things and God's judgment is both the God-ward and man-ward side of all things. God ultimately reaps the harvest and humanity is that harvest. There will be a harvest of the wicked as well as in in-gathering (as the crops are ready) of the Believers. God is allowing the tares and wheat to grow together, but soon there will be an ingathering and distinction made.

Matthew 13:30—Let both grow together until the harvest:...

The first-fruits is an in-gathering dedicated entirely to and for God.

2 Timothy 2:19—Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.