

THE SONG OF THE LAMB

Revelation 14:14 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^[i] 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.

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.

15 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

² And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark^[a] and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works,

Lord God Almighty!

Just and true *are* Your ways,

O King of the saints!^[b]

⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For *You* alone *are* holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested.”

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold,^[c] the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Our last message ended with Babylon fallen and the Lord bringing His judgment upon all of those who do not place their trust in the Lord, but are trusting of anything else. Those who obey God and keep His commandments are given rest and receive God's blessings. This week finds a new image in the Book that brings us back to earlier images in the Scriptures.

Today's text starts with:

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.

There is very little mystery as to who this one sitting on the cloud is. "One like the Son of Man," is a very common reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. What is interesting though is that He is sitting on the cloud. What this cloud means will cause a little more examination though. Cloud's in the Bible are very often associated with the Lord and with His presence or His judgment. When the children of Israel traveled through the wilderness they were led by the great cloud, which represented God's presence. When Moses went to the top of Mt. Sinai to receive the commandments from the Lord, the mountain was covered by the glory cloud. Moses was in the very presence of God and this was represented by the cloud that surrounded that mountain, throughout the pages of the Old Testament when God cast judgment on a nation or empire the language often used is the language of clouds.

In the prophecy that we have referenced over and over in this series, the prophecy of Daniel 7 the culmination of that prophecy takes place in the 13th verse where we read:

"I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.

In his dream Daniel sees the Lord Jesus Christ coming, but it is important to get this, because this is one of the most often misunderstood texts in the Bible. The Lord Jesus Christ and His coming with the clouds is not speaking of our Lord's return, no it is speaking of His coming to "The Ancient of Days." This coming to the ancient of Day's is the point where all the Kingdoms of the world are given to Christ Jesus. The very next verse tells us:

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.

Please note: this is not a denial of the second coming. This is not a denial of the resurrection of the body, but I am simply pointing out that the verse that so many people reference as referring to the return of the Lord is a verse that is about His ascension.

Now we see Him, one like the Son of Man, clearly a reference to the prophecy in Daniel 7, and He is wearing a crown, an indication that He has received His Kingdom, but He has in His hand a sharp sickle. Obviously the sickle has reference to harvest, which is why it appears here in this passage. The next verses deal with a harvest. This harvest as we will see it a harvest of both good fruit and bad fruit.

It is interesting, that many images in modern mythologies attempt to picture this reaper, or as he is often referred to "The Grim Reaper." It really should not surprise us that "The Grim Reaper," is somehow related to biblical imagery, but as is often the case the illusions are often not quite exact. As we will see there are two beings here with sickles, one is "Like the Son of man," and one is an angel. It should not surprise us that the two are harvesting quite different fruits.

The Son of man who carries sickle is not "death," but is Christ Jesus. He is preparing to harvest the land. This section of the text begins with His inserting His sickle into the earth, and it tells us the harvest of the world has begun. The Great Harvest that the Bible often speaks about is beginning. One of the glories of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that "All who call on the name of the Lord, will be saved." The harvest truly is plentiful.

While this is happening, we see another angel.

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.

Notice, this angel also comes forth out of the temple of God which is in heaven. He also has a sharp sickle. There is an important lesson that needs to be learned from this text.

Why the distinction between the earthly temple and the heavenly one? In Hebrew 8 beginning in the 3rd verse we read the following:

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. ⁴For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

There is quite a lot of interest in these verses but what I want us to see here is that everything that was given to Moses when he was on Mt. Sinai was given as a copy and a shadow or a type of something that was in heaven. The temple in Jerusalem was a copy or a shadow of the heavenly temple, the implements in the temple were all types and shadows of heavenly implements. Now here judgment is coming from the temple in heaven, and this judgment is being poured out specifically upon the land of Israel. Ultimately this judgment is going to be unleashed even on the earthly temple.

There are two harvests going on. I want to make this really simple, the Son of man is harvesting the righteous the angel with the sickle is harvesting those for judgment, and ultimately destruction. His harvest interestingly enough begins with the land. I have said this many times, but I want to make sure we understand this. Very often when we read these texts in our English Bibles we read about judgments upon the earth, or on the world and we think these judgments are speaking of worldwide calamities. They are very general and specific judgments though, speaking of judgment that will be poured out directly as a judgment on the Land of Israel.

All the way back in the 4th chapter of Genesis we read about the idea of blood guiltiness. After Cain slew his brother Abel, God says to Cain:

"What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. ¹¹So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand"

Cain is cursed because the land itself cries out for vengeance, and ultimately God will avenge.

In Matthew 23, immediately before Jesus gives the Olivet discourse where he prophesies the destruction of the City of Jerusalem, he tells the people:

Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the

blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Notice, the Bible says here that all the righteous blood on earth will be avenged on these people, on this very generation, but also this is a very specific judgment upon the land of Israel.

This next angel in this passage sticks in his sickle "*and gathers the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.*" We read on here that these grapes are then thrown into the winepress of the wrath of almighty God. It is very clear that this is a harvest unto destruction. It should draw our attention, not surprisingly to an Old Testament passage from the Book of Isaiah Chapter 63. We have sung this song periodically here at Church of the King, and it is one of those songs that I think maybe too often we don't understand what is being spoken of.

Who *is* this who comes from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This *One who is* glorious in His apparel,
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—
"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."
²Why *is* Your apparel red,
And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?
³"I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one *was* with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,
And I have stained all My robes.
⁴For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come.
⁵I looked, but *there was* no one to help,
And I wondered
That *there was* no one to uphold;
Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me;
And My own fury, it sustained Me.
⁶I have trodden down the peoples in My anger,
Made them drunk in My fury,
And brought down their strength to the earth."

The imagery in this passage is taken from the destruction of Edom. The question asked is "Who is this coming from Edom, and why are his clothes stained red?" We find that His clothing is red because He is covered with juice from the stomping of the grapes. He is stained with blood. This is the imagery that is meant to be portrayed in this passage as the grapes of wrath are being cast into the press, and they are being destroyed. Here of course, in Revelation this casting of the fruit of the harvest is the casting of apostate Israel into the press of the wrath of God.

This subject does seem quite controversial amongst many today, but the idea of the casting out or ex-communication of Israel is a prevalent theme of the New Testament and is often foreshadowed and or prophesied in the Old. The Apostle Paul alluded to this when he wrote in Galatians 4. Here he referenced the events that Pastor Stoos has recently preached through in the Book of Genesis. When Abraham recognized Jacob as the son of promise this required the casting out of the bondwoman Hagar and her son Ishmael. Paul then goes on to tell us that this event was an allegory comparing Israel after the flesh, with Ishmael:

For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷ For it is written:

*"Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband."*

²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. ²⁹ But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. ³⁰ Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

After this proclamation, this proclamation of judgment, Chapter 15 begins and it begins with a great sign. Up to this point in the Book of Revelation we have had two earlier great signs. In Chapter 12, the woman clothed with the sun, and the great red dragon are the earlier signs. Now, here in chapter 15 we read this:

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

These great angels are carrying the final judgments that will be poured out upon apostate Israel for her rejection of her messiah. This is not meant to be an indication that there will be no more judgment, but that the judgment on Israel will soon be complete. Of course these last judgments are very severe, but first we see another amazing sight.

And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true *are* Your ways,
O King of the saints!
⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For *You* alone *are* holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.”

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

Here we again see a contrast. You will notice all the way through this book we see representatives from two conflicting sides. This should not surprise us because the Bible is full of this underlying conflict. I call this the antithesis. We have the seed of the serpent, and we have the seed of the woman. The Lord God promised in the Garden that He would work this enmity between the seed lines. Here in the Book of Revelation we see this conflict in rich and vivid imagery.

We have just witnessed the grapes of wrath being poured out on the enemies of the lamb, and now we see another crowd. They are standing on a sea of glass mingled with the fire, this fire is meant to be contrasted with the blood running the whole length of the land of Israel. This sea of glass is again one of those pictures of the heavenly throne. In Exodus 24 when Moses ascended to Mt. Sinai to receive the commandments from the Lord we read the following description:

"and they saw the God of Israel, and was under his feet as it were a pave work of sapphire stone and it was like the very heavens in its clarity."

Here in Revelation we see the same "crystal sea," but now it is mixed with fire. Fire is often in the Bible a symbol of judgment. But do remember, judgment is not always eternal judgment.

In 1 Corinthians 3 the apostle Paul speaks of this:

¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

¹⁶Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

The over-comers as they are described in Revelation are those who have been through the fire, and they have been victorious. And because of their over-coming, because of their following the lamb where ever the lamb goes, because they loved not their own lives unto the death, their works are revealed by fire, and they find themselves standing on the sea of glass and they are given golden harps where they sing the song, that no one else is able to sing.

*“Great and marvelous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways,
O King of the saints!
⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.”*

It is immediately after this, that John looks and sees that the temple in heaven is opened. and the angels carrying the last judgments are ready to issue their judgments. I will not be talking about that today, but I want us to understand what is a very important detail about this passage. The temple is where the judgment comes from. We will detail this judgments in the coming weeks, but the saints of God when they are worshipping properly have a great deal of authority.

When the Church of God worships God properly it does not mean they never suffer, it does not mean they never undergo trials, it does mean though that they recognize the source of their authority. Authority and dominion come from the temple of God. Victory in time and eternity belong to those who fear God. May we be people who recognize this. May we be those who join with those standing before the throne of almighty God and singing.

*“Great and marvelous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways,
O King of the saints!
⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.”*