

Final Phase of Harvesting: Armageddon
(vv. 17-20)

VERSE 17 **And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle** (Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἔχων καὶ αὐτὸς δρέπανον ὄξύ [*conj kai + adj.nom.m.s. allos another + noun nom.m.s. angelos angel + aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai come out + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.s. naos temple (inner sanctum) + art.gen.m.s. "which" + prep en + art.w/noun loc.m.s. ouranos heaven + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + conj kai also + pro.nom.m.s. autos "he" + noun acc.nt.s. drepanon sickle + adj.acc.nt.s. oxus sharp*]).

VERSE 18 **Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar** (Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος [ἐξῆλθεν] ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου [ὁ] ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός [*conj kai + adj.nom.m.s. allos another + noun nom.m.s. angelos angel + aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai come out + prep ek from + noun abl.nt.s. thusiasterion altar + art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.f.s. exousia authority + prep epi over + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. pur fire*]; **and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying** [καὶ ἐφώνησεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ ἔχοντι τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξύ λέγων [*conj kai + aor.act.ind. 3s. phoneo sound; address + noun instr.f.s. phone voice + adj.instr.f.s. megas great + art.w/pres.act.part.dat.m.s. echo have + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. drepanon sickle + art.w/adj.acc.nt.s. oxus sharp + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. lego say*], **"Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe** [Πέμψον σου τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξύ καὶ τρύγησον τοὺς βότρυας τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἤκμασαν αἱ σταφυλαὶ αὐτῆς [*aor.act.ind.2s. pempo send; "Put in" + pro.gen.s. su "Your" + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. drepanon sickle + art.w/adj.acc.nt.s. oxus sharp + conj kai + aor.act.imper.2s. trugao gather or harvest + art.w/noun acc.m.p. botrus bunch, cluster + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ampelos grape + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth + conj hoti because + aor.act.ind.3p. akmazo be fully ripe + art.w/noun nom.f.p. staphule grapes (bunch) + pro.gen.f.s. aute "her"*])."

ANALYSIS: VERSES 17-18

1. The second part of this last scene is a portrayal of a final stage of harvesting within the tribulation.
2. The final stage portrayed here is the battle of Armageddon in connection with the 2nd Advent.
3. John sees a fifth angel in a series of angels, and like the fourth, he comes out from the heavenly temple.

4. This angel comes to gather the vintage as Christ did the harvest.
5. The harvest associated with the One who sits on the cloud has to do with bringing negative volition to the place of judgment over the course of the tribulation.
6. Just as grapes are harvested in the vineyard before they are placed in the crushing vats, so humanity within the vineyard of the world will be brought to a place where all unbelievers will be judged.
7. The various judgments that take human life over the course of the tribulation is pictured in the crushing of grapes.
8. Here in the final scene we have the grapes (e.g., humans) that are judged in connection with Christ's coming.
9. The Second Coming is the subject of chapter 19.
10. This angel is responsible for seeing to it that the grapes are harvested (e.g. brought in from the vineyard).
11. This corresponds to that assembling of the existing nations and their armies at Jerusalem (cf. Zech. 14:2 "And I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle...").
12. The gathering of nations to do battle is likened to the gathering in bunches of grapes.
13. Here the emphasis is on the treading/crushing of the grapes (v.20).
14. This angel like the Son of Man has a sharp sickle.
15. Pruning the vine required the same tool as removing the bunches of grapes.
16. A sixth angel, this one originating from the altar, comes forth indicating the arrival of the appointed time to gather in the grapes.
17. The altar from which the angel exits is the golden altar of incense (cf. 8:3).
18. This is appropriate since this is the altar associated with the prayers of the saints (cf. 6:9; 8:3; 16:17).
19. This angel is the attendant of the altar of incense in heaven.
20. His authority over fire is an allusion to 8:3ff. where an angel took a censer full of fire and threw it in the direction of the earth.
21. So the implications of this reference to fire suggest the figure of a minister of wrath responding to the prayers of the saints.
22. This is probably the same angel as the one who cast fire toward the earth earlier, and here as there, the connection of the imprecatory prayers of the saints for vengeance is conspicuous.
23. This angel "summoned with a loud voice" to the angel with the sharp sickle.
24. Here is the only occurrence of the verb *phoneo* in Revelation.
25. The combination of this verb with "with a loud voice" appears in Mk. 1:26 and Acts 16:28.
26. His two-part command "send" or "put in" and "gather in" indicates that it is time for the vintage to begin.
27. "The clusters" (*tous botryas*) to be gathered are further defined by "the vineyard" (*tes ampelou*), which is "the earth" (*tes ges*).
28. These grapes of wrath have reached the point of full ripeness: "because her (earth's) grapes are ripe."
29. In verse 15 the verb translated "is ripe" is the aorist passive indicative of *ezraino* which means to wither or dry up.
30. It is used of a harvest that has reached full maturity.
31. Here the verb for ripeness is *akmazo* a word occurring only here in the NT.
32. It means fully ripe and essentially is the same idea as that conveyed in v.15.
33. It is time to extract the effects of the growth process.

34. The growth process is the maturation of evil on the part of those who are directly involved in the attack upon Jerusalem.
35. “Bunches of grapes” (*tous botruas*; hapax) is seen over against the grapes themselves (*hai staphulai*; cf. Matt. 7:16; Lk. 6:44).

“Grapes” Deposited in the “Wine Press” (v.19)

VERSE 19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth (καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ ἐτύρηνεν τὴν ἄμπελον τῆς γῆς [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. ballo cast; “swung” + art.w/noun nom.m.s. angelos angel + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. dreanon sickle + pro.gen.m.s. autos “his” + prep eis into + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. trugao harvest, gather; cf. Lk.6:44; Rev.14:18,19 + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ampelos grapevine, vineyard + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]), **and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God** [καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. ballo throw + prep eis into + art.w/noun lenos a tub, vat, wine press; cf. Matt. 21:33; Rev. 14:19,20; 19:15) + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thumos anger, wrath + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + art.w/adj.acc.m.s. megas great (antecedent is “winepress”)]).*

VERSE 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city (καὶ ἐπατήθη ἡ ληνὸς ἔξωθεν τῆς πόλεως [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. pateo tread/step on + art.w/noun nom.f.s. lenos wine press + prep exothen outside + art.w/noun gen.f.s. polis city*]), **and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles** [καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ληνοῦ ἄχρι τῶν χαλινῶν τῶν ἵππων ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai come out + noun nom.nt.s. haima blood + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.f.s. lenos wine press + prep achri “up to” (extent) + art.w/noun gen.m.p. chalinos bridle + art.w/noun gen.m.p. hippos horse + prep apo + noun gen.m.p. stadios 600 feet, 200 yards, 190 meters, or one-eight Roman mile, almost a furlong + adj.gen.m.p. chilioi a thousand + adj.gen.m.p. exakosioi six hundred*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 19-20

1. The figurative language of verse 19 is fulfilled when the combatants march on Jerusalem from the nations (ex. “kings from the east” of 16:12).
2. The motivation to the hostile nations to mobilize and attack Jerusalem is prefigured in the angel casting his sickle into the earth.
3. The sickle does not harm the grapes per se; it is merely a very sharp instrument designed to cut the bunches of grapes from the vine.

4. It is not easy to define the part angels will have in bringing the nations to the winepress of the wrath of God.
5. The imagery of crushing grapes is seen in Joel 3:13 and Isa. 63:1-6 dealing with the same event.
6. The nations will mobilize and march against Jerusalem with the same irrational fanaticism that took Pharaoh to his doom at the Red Sea.
7. Whereas the crushing of the grapes is only implied in the preceding scene (vv. 14-16), here the account goes further to depict the gruesome outcome of the harvesting process.
8. The harvesting process in this scene is the gathering of the nations to Armageddon at the close of the tribulation as per the prophecy of Zech. 14:2.
9. Here “the winepress” represents the killing fields or battlefield associated with the battle of Armageddon.
10. A typical winepress in ancient times consisted of two basins hewn out of rock; an upper and a lower basin.
11. The grapes to be crushed were placed in the upper basin and were treaded skins and all by workmen.
12. The upper vat would overflow and the juice would run in a duct connected to the lower basin.
13. The staining of the workman’s garments supplies an apt picture of divine judgment falling upon the combatants at Armageddon (cf. Gen. 49:11).
14. The passive voice “was trodden” leaves unstated the agent of the treading, but the location of the treading is fixed as being “outside the city.”
15. Jerusalem is the obvious answer as to which city is in view.
16. The OT predicts that the final battle will happen near there, in the valley of Jehoshaphat which is traditionally located in the area of the Kidron Valley (cf. Joel 3:1w2-14; Zech. 14:4).
17. This identification also agrees roughly with the wording of 11:2.
18. However, Rev. 16:16 fixes the battle at Armageddon which is nowhere near Jerusalem.
19. This is not insuperable, however, if the battle zone is a widespread one covering land within and outside the land of Israel.
20. The Messiah will march from Bozrah, the capital of ancient Edom, which is clearly outside either Armageddon or the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Isa. 63:1ff.).
21. If one measures from Tyre (in Lebanon) in the north to Bozrah in the southeast the distance we arrive at a distance of some 200 miles.
22. This, then, is the extent of this winepress that Christ will tread fulfilling the wrath of God.
23. This then, is “the great wine press of the wrath of God” (v.19).
24. The event will take place immediately after the 7th bowl judgment of Rev. 16:17-21.
25. Buy the time of the 6th bowl judgment all the combatants will be in place of the final slaughter of negative volition (cf. 16:12-16).
26. So great will the slaughter be that human gore will reach in some places the depth of a horse’s bridle.
27. To further underscore this gory scene see Zech. 14:12ff.
28. So will end the futility of man and the insanity of waging war against God and His Christ.

END: Revelation Chapter Fourteen

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