***The Campaign of Armageddon

RV191-01***

We now move another step ahead to Revelation 14:14-16. Our subject is "The Vision of Armageddon."

**Unbelievers**

God, in the immediate context of John's vision here, has made very clear the eternal destiny of unbelievers. He has made very clear that there will come a time when people who are without Christ will receive the just wrath of God in the form of constant suffering forever in the lake of fire. We are told here in Revelation that no moment of rest will be experienced from this agony for unforgiven sins. They will suffer in the presence, worst of all, of Jesus Christ and the holy angels. He who could have been their Savior, they have left to become their judge.

**Believers**

We have seen that the believers of the tribulation, on the other hand, escape such torments because of their faith in Jesus Christ, and their positive volition to doctrinal. Believers who die go into a place of eternal, unmitigated joy and peace. I suspect that the people in heaven that we know find it a little hard to think back and to remember us. They're so enamored and enthralled with the experience that they're going through, that we probably don't play a very great role in their memory in the midst of their happiness.

But indeed, it takes more than an inscription on the tombstone of "Rest in Peace" for that to be the experience of one who has died. It takes what these tribulation saints were willing to take upon themselves in the face of suffering at the hands of the antichrist, and their loyalty to Jesus Christ, and their faith in him the Savior.

John is told that these people, of course, are also rewarded. They take their divine good works which they have perform with them into eternity. In fact, your divine good works become part of your eternity. As a matter of fact (as another point), the book of the Revelation teaches us that the white robes that we wear as believers (the glory gowns) are made up of our divine good works.

Then, after a pause at the end of verse 13, to encourage believers of the tribulation in their suffering because of their loyalty to Jesus Christ, John's vision now returns to God's judgment once more upon the lost. So, we direct your attention to Revelation 14:14: the Son of Man.

First of all, we note His position. John says, "And I looked and, behold, a white cloud." The word "looked" is the Greek word "horao." The word "horao" is the word for "see" in the Greek language to express an overview, or a panoramic view. It is not a focusing view. It is an overall view that one has. Here, John observes something in a wide panoramic overview.

Then another word is added. That is the word "behold." That is the Greek word "idou." It so happens that in the book of the Revelation, when these two words are combined ("looked" and "behold"), it is a technical phrase that indicates that another major revelation is to be made. This has happened several times in this book. It indicates a major advance on the vision that has been presented up to this point. This major advances is contained in verses 14-20, which will conclude, at the end of verse 20, this major set of parenthesis that we've been studying. Beginning with chapter 15, we then turn to the final dramatic judgments of God: the seven bowls of wrath that come like hammer blows upon humanity, one after another, near the end of the tribulation. So, this phrase, "And I looked and, behold," enables us to know that we should very closely look and behold something very important here. This is a major advance of information that is being presented.

**The Campaign of Armageddon**

What is presented here is what we have contained in Revelation 14:14-20, which is a preview of the campaign of Armageddon. It is not quite right to speak of "the battle of Armageddon." It is "the campaign of Armageddon," because it is a series of battles that take place. It is not just one battle. And I must reiterate that this is a real place. The field of Megiddo exists today. It's a place of geography. I have stood on the hill overlooking this enormous plane of Megiddo, and it is the very spot where the campaign of Armageddon will take place as the armies sway back and forth, and finally come to the climactic battle. It was Napoleon who stood, overlooking that same field, who, in his day, said, "This is the most magnificent battlefield in the world."

So, the field of Armageddon is a geographic reality, and history is moving the armies of the nations of the world for their final warfare on that field. Here you're getting a preview (an overview) of what is going to take place at the close of that campaign. What is being referred to here is the final battle of that campaign, and it is brought to a close by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

So, this section deals with the final battle of the campaign of Armageddon. This is actually described (if you want to jump ahead) in Revelation 16:12-16. This is the sixth bowl of the wrath of God: "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings of the east. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon; out of the mouth of the beast; and, out of the mouth of the false prophet three unclean spirits like frogs (demons). For they are the spirits of demons performing the signs which go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for war of the great day of God the Almighty."

These are demonic spirits that trick the leaders of the nations of the world to make the decision to go to war, and they all head for the Near East, and come to the confrontation on the field of Megiddo: "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake, and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked, and men see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place which in the Hebrews called Armageddon (hill of Megiddo)."

So, Revelation 16:12-16 is giving a little more insight on the very thing that we're reading about here in chapter 14. There, it is under the pouring out of the sixth bowl of God's wrath. This final battle results in the destruction of the armies of the nations, which will have been gathered together to fight the antichrist, and to rebel against him. Jesus Christ appears out in space. The armies of the world form an alliance immediately to fight Christ and the host that is with Him; that is, the army that comes with Him, which includes you and me. This is described for us (if we want to jump ahead) to Revelation 19:11-19: the final battle, and its final destruction. Here's the end scene. We're entering a preview of it. Here is the full picture.

**Jesus Christ**

Revelation 19:11: "And I saw heaven open, and behold, a white horse, and He sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness, He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems, and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed and fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword so that with it He will smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty."

In the latter part of the passage that we are now in, in Revelation 14, you will find that we have two images of God's destruction of these armies: One is like a farmer going out and cutting grain down; and, the other is like somebody stomping grapes in a wine press, and pressing the grapes into a pulp. Those two images are there. This is the reference here to the winepress. God is seeing all of mankind, all the rebellious tribulation humanity, poured into a wine press, and then God gets into it and stomps it, as they did in those days with their feet. That is why the stains of red are on His garments.

Verse 16: "And on His robe and on His thigh, He has the name written, 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords.' And I saw an angel standing in the sun. He cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heavens, 'Come and assemble for the great supper of God.'" The supper of God are the dead bodies of the armies of the world: "In order that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of commanders, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both freedmen and slaves, great and small.

"And I saw the beast (the antichrist) and the kings of the earth, and their armies assembled to make war against Him, who sat upon the horse, and against His army;" that is, against Jesus Christ. So, we're pulling together a variety of Scriptures that are now going to come upon us in more detail. But in Revelation 14:14, this is the overview that John looks out and sees.

**A White Cloud**

What he sees in this major advance of information is a cloud. Furthermore, it is a white cloud. The color white indicates heat at its most intense and purest point. This cloud is not just an ordinary rain cloud. This is a special kind of cloud. It is the cloud of the glory of God which accompanies Him as He performs His work, and has historically accompanied Him.

**The Shekinah Glory**

This has come to be known among the Jewish people as the Shekinah glory. The word "Shekinah" means "presence." This is the cloud of His presence. And the Shekinah glory cloud indicated to the Jewish people that God was in their midst. Anytime they saw this glory cloud, it is very awesome, and they knew that God was there.

**The Israelites**

This was truth upon their deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 14:19-24). This is the cloud of Shekinah glory: "And the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them. And the pillar of cloud (the Shekinah glory) moved from before them, and stood behind them. So, it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. And there was the cloud, along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus, the one did not come near the other all night." Here, God, in the form of the Shekinah glory cloud, places Himself between the fleeing Israelites and the pursuing Egyptians.

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned to sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. And the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land. The waters were like a wall to them." The Egyptians pursued. Their chariots went in, and verse 24 says: "So, then it came about at the morning watch that the Lord looked down on the army of Egyptian through the pillar of fire and cloud, and brought the army of Egyptians into confusion." So, the whole picture there is God, in His presence, demonstrated by this glory cloud which surrounded Him.

This Shekinah glory was also present when the God dealt with the food problems of the Israelites in Exodus 16:10-15: "And it came about, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." Here again, this was a cloud which was associated with the works of God: And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'I've heard the grumblings of the sons of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight, you shall eat meat, and in the morning, you should be filled with bread, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God.''

So, came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of due around the camp. And when the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness, there was a fine flake-like, as fine as the frost on the ground. When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it (which is the word manna)?' For they did not what it was. And Moses said to them, 'It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.'" So, here was a major provision for the people of Israel. Without this, they would have died physically. And God took an action, and He made it very clear that He was doing it by the presence of this Shekinah glory cloud.

Today, we live in a great era of rebellion against the laws of God. The reason for the rebellion against the moral code of God is because there is a challenge as to whether men have made up those rules; or, whether God has made up those rules. So, if the vice president of the United States says something critical about fornication, and bearing children out of wedlock, he is ridiculed, and he is berated, and he becomes the brunt of everybody's stupid jokes, because he has spoken the truth which God has declared to be a truth.

But when the law was given (when the code of morality was given), there's no doubt in anybody's mind where it came from. In Exodus 19:9, the presence of God was made again very clear by the Shekinah glory: "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I shall come to you in a thick cloud in order that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe in you forever.' Then Moses told the words of the people to the Lord.'"

Then drop down to Exodus 19:16 "So, it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet so that all the people who were in the camp trembled."

In Exodus 24:15-18, this is reiterated again – the presence of God at the giving of the moral law: "Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. And on the seventh day, He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And to eyes of the sons of Israel, the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop, and Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights."

When he came back, he had the detailed instruction for the religious life of Israel, and at the heart of it was the moral code. Moses didn't make that up, in the Shekinah glory cloud on the mountain. He recorded what God had said. And in Exodus 40, we're told that God's presence was with the tabernacle. Their place of worship was made clearly evident by the presence of the Shekinah glory cloud. In Exodus 40:34-35, they have just completed building the tabernacle. They put it together, and now it's being dedicated: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it. And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

Those were exciting days. You couldn't see God, but when you saw this glory cloud, you knew He was there. You knew that you were in His presence. While the eyes of those of us who are Christians cannot see God, our spiritual eyes should never fail to see the glory cloud that surrounds us, because I guarantee you that it is there. Look carefully over your shoulder. He is near at hand. I don't care what your situation is. I don't care what travail you go through. He is there, and all we need to do is let God be God. He is there in the impact of the glory cloud. It settled on the tabernacle, and it was the source of great divine guidance when the people of Israel were traveling in the wilderness.

I understand that they have invented a device which you may put on your car now, into which you can program a trip which you are going to take. And as you drive along, a voice will tell you, "Turn left here... Go straight two blocks." And it's all out there, and you just have to drive, and you don't have to think. You just turn and do what it says, because it's all going to be programed so that you can get from one place to another without thinking. That's the program. That program is not new. It was patented by God out in the wilderness travels of the people of Israel.

You have this in Numbers 9:16-22. Here was a marvelous visual capacity to follow God, a thing that all rational, sensible believers want to do. The cloud covered the tabernacle in verse 15. Then verse 16 says, "The cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward, the sons of men would then set out. And in a place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. At the command of the Lord, the sons of Israel would set out. At the command of the Lord, they would camp. As long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the Lord's charge, and not set out. If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the Lord, they remained camped. Then, according to the command of the Lord, they set out.

"If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move on. Or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out, whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped, and did not set out. But when it was lifted, they did set out. At the command of the Lord, they camped; and, at the command of the Lord, they set out. They kept the Lord's charge according to the command of the Lord through Moses."

That's really a wonderful way of being guided. I like that verse: "At the command of the Lord, they set out; and, at the command of the Lord, they stayed put." We cannot hear Him now. We do not visibly see His cloud, but I can assure you that anybody who has known sins confessed, and is not in rebellion against what is the will of God, has a sensitivity and an awareness of what God wants you to do. It's not that hard, and it is not that complex. You just don't go too fast. You just wait, and He clarifies, and the Word of God is the anchor point of your guidance system. When you know doctrine, and the Holy Spirit is free to guide you, because you're in temporal fellowship, the system works, and it is just as effective as this was for the Jews, where they could see the Shekinah glory cloud.

God spoke directly to Moses, of course, as we've seen on occasions, such as in Numbers 11:25, from the second to glory cloud.

Eventually, the Jewish people built that permanent temple site, and they quit worshiping in this tabernacle, which was a tent that they carried from place to place. The time came, and the happy day arrived, when the temple was completed. It was a magnificent structure built by Solomon. On its dedication day, in 1 Kings 8:10-11, God demonstrated His approval and His presence once more with the Shekinah glory: "And it came about, when the priests came from the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord."

Here was a tremendous moment in Israel's history. Now they were permanently in the land. Now they had a permanent, magnificent temple. And here, once more, the very presence of God was visibly confirmed to them with the Shekinah glory cloud. God, when He dealt with them, always was associated with this cloud. But, in time, as the centuries passed, it also became the point of a moment of great sadness in Israel's history, when the presence of the Shekinah glory cloud departed from the temple, and from the sinful nation of Israel, which had turned its back upon the Lord.

You will find the first step of that departure described for you in Ezekiel 9:3: "Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub, on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple." The Shekinah cloud of glory centered in the holy of holies compartment of the temple, where the ark of the covenant, the most sacred object, was located, on which were two cherubim angels facing each other with their wings touching. That was called the mercy seat, and from there, God spoke to the people. Suddenly, the glory cloud leaves the mercy seat, and goes to the threshold of the holy of holies: "And he called to the man clothed in linen, in whose loins was the writing case."

Move over to the Ezekiel 10:4: "And the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the Lord." Now the Shekinah of glory cloud leaves the temple, and goes out into the open courtyard. This is an astounding sight. People are standing watching what's happening. The glory of God is on the move.

Ezekiel 10:18-19: "Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings, and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them, and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the Lord's house, and the glory of God of Israel hovered over them." Now the Shekinah glory, with the surrounding angels (the cherubim angels – the living angels, not the golden images) move toward the east gate, and hover there, looking back upon the city of Israel.

Move to Ezekiel 11:22: Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them (the Shekinah cloud), and the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain, which is east of the city." You have this sad picture of seeing God moving out of the city at the East gate, and almost seeing God the Holy Spirit longingly look back once more at a people who had been so stupid as to reject Him because of their sin and their negativeness to the will of God. And that's what He does. Eventually, He'll cut you loose. And they didn't realize what a terrible thing happened as the cloud moved up to the mountain, and God looked back upon the city that was the apple of His eye. But because of its rebellion against His Word, he now abandoned it to a terrible fate – a fate to which the people of Israel have suffered all these years since.

The happy news is that this glory cloud, marking the presence of God, will reappear on earth once more at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. You can read that in detail in Ezekiel 43. That gives you the details of that return.

Now, God, being associated with the cloud that indicates His presence, was also true in the New Testament. Luke 1:35 gives us an interesting observation concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus, at the point of her conception with the Christ child: "And the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason the Holy offspring shall be called the Son of God." Here you have the power of God as a cloud overshadowing Mary at the point of her conception. This is probably this Shekinah glory cloud. The presence of God in the form of the Holy Spirit came down upon Mary, and implanted the seed that triggered the sinless body and the sinless perfection of Jesus Christ, born without a sin nature.

The shepherds, at the birth of Jesus Christ, were surrounded by the Shekinah glory cloud. That's the very thing they saw.

Then you remember on the mount of transfiguration, the three disciples saw a preview of Jesus Christ in His millennial glory, ruling as the King of the world. And Peter, in his old age reminisces about that day when the three of them (Peter, James, and John) sat on the mountain and saw Jesus Christ pull away His veil of humanity, and let His Shekinah glory shine through. And, suddenly, they were very convinced that they were in the presence of Jesus the man who was Jesus the God. The Shekinah glory was surrounding Him and was upon Him. 2 Peter 1:17-19 is Peter's record of that: "And when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the majestic glory." He is speaking of that day on the mount of transfiguration: "'This is My Beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.' And we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. So, we have the prophetic Word made surer to you, which do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and a morning star arises in your heart."

Peter says, "We have had it confirmed to us personally that Jesus Christ is going to rule over this earth in a millennial kingdom. We were there on the mount of transfiguration, and we saw Him in his millennial glory. God confirmed to us that this was true. Therefore, Peter says, "Christians, you would be smart to study Bible prophecy and to learn where God is moving, and to remember the timetable of prophecy, in order to know where you stand, and how close you are to the climax of these events.

Of course, Acts 1:9 tells us about a cloud which took Jesus up out of the sight of the disciples when He ascended to heaven. This was the Shekinah glory cloud of God. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 tells us that when Jesus returns, it will be upon this Shekinah glory cloud, and everyone will see Him. And at the Second Coming of Christ, at the end of the tribulation, He will return with His church to the earth once more with the evidence of deity – the cloud of glory.

**The Son of Man**

Matthew 24:30 says: "Then the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the sky. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn as they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory." He will be surrounded not only with the natural cloud, but with that cloud of the glory of the Shekinah.

In Matthew 26:64, the cloud again evidences the presence of God: "Jesus said to them, 'You have said it yourselves. Nevertheless, I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'"

In Revelation 1:7, the presence of the cloud of glory was associated with the Lord: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so, Amen."

So, I took you through that background in order to remind you once more that you interpret the book of the Revelation by how symbols are used elsewhere in the Bible. Here, this special glory cloud is clearly an evidence of the presence of God. And Jesus Christ, being associated with this kind of a cloud here that John sees, is the special glory cloud that identifies Him as deity. So, look and behold. Pay attention. Here comes a new bit of information – a white cloud (perfect holiness signified). And there, seated in this position on this Shekinah glory cloud was someone *like* a Son of Man. The word "like" does not mean that he wasn't actually a human being. The term Son of Man indicates humanity. This simply means that it clarifies that He actually was. He was in the form, not of an animal, but of a human being.

In Revelation 1:13, you can see how this works with this same word: "And in the middle of the lamp stands, one *like* the Son of Man clothed in a robe." Well, was this Jesus Christ, or was this just a human being?

Well, drop down to verses 17-18, and you see clearly that the one that He describes as *like* the Son of Man was the deity of the divine one, Jesus Christ.

Verse 17: "And when I saw Him, I felt at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, and the living one, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and of Hades.'" Clearly that is referring to Jesus Christ.

So, here, what John sees is someone sitting on this cloud, and he describes Him by the term "Son of Man." Do you remember what "Son of Man" meant to the Jews? Yes, it stressed humanity, but the term "Son of Man" is a technical term again. To the Jews, for you to say, "I am the Son of Man," meant that you were claiming to be God in human form. Where did they learn that? Daniel 7:13-14. Let's look at it once more. This is an important passage that you should be acquainted with, because Jesus repeatedly used this phrase to describe Himself. He used it more than 80 times that we have recorded in the New Testament to describe Himself. This is where He was taking it from: "I kept looking in the night visions, and, behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming." OK, a human being is coming, but is He more than human?

"And he came up to the Ancient of Days (to God), and was presented before Him." Verse 14 identifies His deity: "And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed here." This is clearly describing the Davidic Millennial Kingdom to be ruled over by the Messiah Savior who will be a God-man. That's why the Jews could understand Isaiah's remark that the Messiah would be called Emmanuel (God with us). As a human being, this child who is born would be called Emmanuel. "God with us" is with what "Emmanuel" means. So, here, Daniel clearly associates this term, "Son of Man," with deity.

Matthew 8:20 is the first place that Jesus is called the Son of Man. There it talks about His poverty. Jesus was one of the homeless people. Did you know that? And the government didn't do a thing about it. That passage said, "He had no place to lay His head." Even the animals have a den to go to, but He didn't have any place to sleep. So, the first time He's called "the Son of Man," it stresses His poverty.

The last time that this term is used is right here in Revelation 14:14 where we're looking at it. This is the last time that He's going to be referred to as the Son of Man. In this position, this time, it refers to His great powers. Here is God incarnate. It says that He has a golden crown. Gold signifies deity; and, "crown" is the Greek word "stephanos," from which we get our English name Stephen. "Stephanos" is a particular kind of crown. It's a victor's crown. It's not the other Greek word, "diadema," which is the crown of a ruling imperial authority, such as a king or an emperor. This is the crown that you get at the Olympics. This is what they put on the head of the victor in the Olympic Games – the crown of the victor.

Well, it is suitable that John should see the divine God-Man sitting on this cloud of the Shekinah glory, and that He's wearing this crown of the victor, because He is properly the one to wear that – who conquered Satan on the cross, and by His resurrection, also defeated death itself. The golden crown on the head of the Son of Man clearly identifies the one on the cloud as being Jesus Christ, the king of the Jews. As such, He has the right to exercise judgment on the unbelievers.

So, John says that this one who sits on this cloud, with the victor's crown of gold on his head, also has also in His hand a sharp sickle. Do know what a cycle is? It has a sharp blade on the end of a handle, and you swing it, and you cut grain down with it. It is for cutting down a harvest of grain. What a strange thing for Him to be holding this tool in His hand there, for harvesting grain, as He sits up there on that particular cloud. Jesus Christ has this sickle in His hand, and it is very sharp, which indicates the true discernment of God for using this sickle, and its effectiveness when He uses it. You know how terrible it is to try to use a knife that is not sharp. This is an effective instrument, and Jesus Christ is going to use this in judgment upon tribulation mankind. John 5:27 tells us that Jesus Christ has been appointed by the Father to be the one who executes judgment upon the earth.

Here again, the significance of this figure is to be found elsewhere in the Bible. Joel 3:9 is the background of this image that you're seeing fulfilled. Joel 3:9 is being fulfilled there in Revelation 14:14: "Proclaim this among the nations. Prepare a war. Rouse the mighty men. Let all the soldiers drawn here. Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, 'I am a mighty man.' Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves here. Bring down, O Lord, Your mighty ones. Let the nations be roused, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat." This is one of the battles of the Armageddon campaign – the valley of Jehoshaphat battle. For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come and tread, for the winepress is full." The last part of Revelation 14 uses this image of the winepress: "The vats overflow for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision."

Here in the book of the Revelation, Christ is seen with this Shekinah glory, and with the sickle of judgment in His hand, sharp and very effective when it's used, and He is waiting, as God now brings into a valley of decision all of the New Age humanity – all of those who are the followers of the new world order of Satan. And Christ is sitting up there on that cloud waiting. God brings them into the valley of decision. Joel 3:14: "For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." The day of the Lord begins with the tribulation: "The sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness, and the Lord roars from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble. But the Lord is a refuge for His people, and the stronghold of the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So, Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more.

"And it will come about in that day that the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with water, and the spring will go out from the house of the Lord to the water in the valley of Shittim. Egypt will become a waste, and Edom will become a desolate wilderness, because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, in whose land they have shed innocent blood. But Judah will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem for all generations, and I will avenge their blood, which I have not avenged, for the Lord dwells in Zion."

Yes, God has not yet avenged the blood of the Jewish people. God has not yet made peace for Israel, and made it a land flowing with milk and honey once more. But in this passage, Joel is giving this prophecy – that God has a plan that He's going to do exactly that. Well, that's what you're reading about here in Revelation 14 that is about to be triggered in this overview that John gives us of the threshold entrance into the campaign of Armageddon.

The Lord Jesus Christ is eventually to have dominion over all the earth. Psalm 2:7-9 point that out: "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord. He said to Me, 'You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possessions. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" This has never taken place. The one thing that is not true is that the nations of the world are not subject to Jesus Christ. He has not shattered them with a rod of iron. That is what is coming. Revelation 14:14 is Christ sitting on that cloud, tapping His foot, waiting for the command to come down to go.

In Matthew 13, you have a series of parables in which Jesus Christ is portrayed as the sower of good seed, while in Revelation 14:14, He is seen as the Grim Reaper, waiting to do His deadly work upon tribulation humanity.

In Revelation 14:15-16, we have the command then to harvest: "And another angel came out of the temple." This angel, one like the previous angels, is in contrast to the angel that showed up in verse 6; the angel that showed up in verse 8; and, the angel that showed up in verse 9. Now another angel comes on the scene, and he comes out of the temple. What he is coming out of is the sanctuary on the earth. There are a couple of words for "temple" in the Greek Bible. This one is "naos," which tells us that He is talking about the holy of holies part of the temple. This word "naos" refers to that. There is a different word that refers to the temple as a whole.

So, suddenly, John says, "Here comes this angel who has come out of the holy of holies." What is in the holy of holies? Here is where the ark of the covenant is, the most sacred object of all, that represents the person of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. This is the temple in Jerusalem. What has happened here? The antichrist has set his own image up here on top of the leader of lid (the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant). So, the angel comes, and he sees the ultimate in blasphemy. And he comes out of the temple where he has seen this degradation of this holy place, and he cries out. That means to forcefully speak out, and He does it with a loud voice. And he gives a commandments to the one who sits on that cloud. This is a reference to Jesus Christ, and His Shekinah glory identifying his deity. The angel acts as God's messenger to Jesus Christ. He brings the orders. The evil of the tribulation humanity, like that of Noah's day, has reached its full degradation. It has reached its climax. The cup of iniquity is filled to the brim, and now the time has come for divine judgment.

This is a principle which you must remember about the Word of God. We are very tempted to think that we get away with resistance to the will of God; to the Word of God; and, to the plan of God. But you must remember that He's letting you fill your cup. He will not hit you until the cup is full. Until that time, you have grace to back out. But when the cup is filled, He will take you by the scruff of your neck, and you will drink the cup to the bitter dregs. This is what's happening to all tribulation humanity. They have had a gay old time. They've been riding high. The believers have been persecuted and been made fun of, as Noah was in his day. Now, the cup is full.

So, the angel cries to the one who is on the cloud, "Put in Your sickle." This is in the form of a divine command. He's to take the tool for cutting, and He is now to start cutting. And he says, "Because the hour to reap has come." The word means simply "to cut down." This is a command that God's judgment upon sinners, which is necessitated by His holiness, is now to be executed. The angel directs Jesus Christ, sitting on the cloud, to proceed to harvest the field of wicked unbelievers, as was described in Joel 3:13.

**Harvest**

Throughout the Bible, this concept of harvest associated with God's judgment upon evil is repeated. Hosea 6:11, for example: "Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you, when I restore the fortunes of my people. There is going to be a judgment upon them.

You may also find this this concept of harvest expressing the judgment of God in Jeremiah 51:33: For thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: "The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor. At the time, it is stamped firm. Yet in a little while, the time of harvest will come for her." Here is the specific judgment upon the evils of Babylon, and all that they have turned loose.

In Matthew 13:30, we have recorded where the Lord himself, compares the final judgment that is to come upon the world as a great divine harvest. And I stress these verses to you because some people make the mistake of thinking that this harvesting refers to winning souls to Christ. The Bible here is not talking about harvesting souls to salvation. This is talking about cutting unbelievers down, and giving them what they deserve. In Matthew 13:30, "Allow both to grow together;" the wheat and the darnel, the false wheat – the tears: "Allow them both to grow together until the harvest, and at the time of the harvest, I'll say to the reapers, 'Gather first the tears, and bind them in bundles to burn them up. And gather the wheat into my barn." So, the judgment is associated with harvesting.

**Jesus is the Harvester**

It is the Lord Jesus himself who is the harvester (John 5:22-27). So, Christ is given the orders from God, the Father through the angel. The hour has come. The iniquity is filled because the harvest of the earth is ripe. He says, "You're being ordered to do this now because God's precise moment has now been selected from thousands of years since the time of Eden and the time of Nimrod at Babel. The kingdom of man has been having sway over this earth. Now the kingdom of the antichrist is the final grossest expression of self-will, conceit, and rebellion against God and against His laws. Finally, mankind's house of cards is going to be destroyed with one blow of that sharp sickle, and all those self-deluded, arrogant, spiritually ignorant people are going to find the new world order quickly coming to an end.

**Ripe**

He says, "The reason for this now is because the earth is ripe." The word "ripe" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "xeraino." "Xeraino" means "to become dry" or "to become withered." Whenever this word is used in the Bible, it has a bad connotation. You'll find in Matthew 21:19-20 an example of this word. It has a bad connotation: "And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He (that is, Jesus) came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only. And He said to it, 'No longer shall there be any fruit from you.' And at once, the fig tree withered. And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying. 'How did the tree wither at once?'" Mark 3:1, Mark 11:26, and Luke 8:6 all give examples of the word "xeraino," meaning something bad.

This actually implies that something is overripe. When something becomes overripe, what happens to it? It begins to decay. It begins to rot. And when it has finally been decayed and rotted, it dries out, and it begins drying away. That is the picture you have here – that mankind, by this time, is so degenerate; it is so foul; it is so ripe; it smells bad; and, it tastes horrid. And the tribulation world of the antichrist is putrid rotten. That's what this word is referring to. Christ is told: "This is the hour. The cup is full. Cut it down."

So, the tribulation unbelievers are going to be harvested for hell by the sickle of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 14:15, the time for God's judgment is passed, as for a field of overripe grain. The time has come to cut it down.

Then, finally, in verse 16 is the reaper's response: "He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped." Notice the enormous efficiency of Jesus Christ. He swung His sickle over the earth. It was sharp. That sickle, in part, represents the Word of God and the truth of doctrine. When that swings over you, buddy, you're going to get cut down if you think you can stand in its way. No one, in the long run, gets away with resisting the Word of God.

These people in the tribulation have been doing it for seven years, and they've had a high time. They've had a ball. Now Jesus Christ stands up; takes this cycle; and, with one sweep across the earth, it is reaped. The harvest of tribulation unbelievers is all executed by Jesus Christ. They don't execute themselves. This is passive voice. He does it to them. The harvest is carried out rapidly, and this finishes off the campaign of Armageddon.

For thousands of years, false cults have flourished. For thousands of years, Satan has had his way, and especially during the tribulation period, when the Holy Spirit has been removed from this earth seven years before by the rapture of the church. The reason things are not so bad now is because God the Holy Spirit is here restraining evil. If God the Holy Spirit wasn't restraining evil, you'd have a lot of terrible, gross politicians running for public office. They're all sweet guys now. Wait till the Holy Spirit isn't here to hold back the evil of man, and see what kind of people are going to be in positions of power then.

During the tribulation, when the Holy Spirit is not here to hold it back, anything will go. And even believers will be tempted, as we are today, by the glamor of Satan's systems, and many believers will be demonized. While we Christians cannot be indwelt by a demon, do not fail to realize that you can be demonized just like that. It is a dangerous path to stand in the way of the authority of the Word of God. His sickle will cut you down. And demonism will take over, and your mind will go berserk from reality. False religious leaders will continue to see those who are ignorant of the Word of God. That's why I get those ridiculous applications for teachers who know nothing about the basics of the Christian life, and they're good, sincere folks. To be ignorant of the Word, or to be negative to it, false leaders are going to be there, and they're going to lead into evil acts of rebellion against God.

So, Jesus Christ, the rejected Savior, becomes the Grim Reaper for the unsaved rebels of the earth. And with one blow, Jesus Christ wipes out Satan's rotten harvest from the earth. Why does He do this? In order to set up His own holy kingdom of righteousness and peace. In the Millennial Kingdom, a true world government will come to pass with a beneficent dictator. Can you find that combination today? That's what we need today – a dictator. There is no question about it. All the smart men of the world have put together the right idea. We need somebody in authority up there who cannot stand around and discuss it, but someone who says, "This is what we're going to do." That's why Ross Perot is so attractive. That's the kind of person he is. Jesus Christ is going to be a dictator. The problem is that, unless you do not have a sin nature, you will not be a beneficent dictator. You'll be a tyrannical dictator. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to be a beneficent dictator.

Revelation 11:17 says, "We give You thanks. O Lord God, the Almighty, who is and was, because You have taken Your great power, and have begun to reign."

In Revelation 19:16, we close with this reminder of where the Lord Jesus is headed in His plans: "And on His robe and on His thigh, He has a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords." He is not now recognized as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But once He swings that sickle, He will wipe out that whole house of cards that Satan has built, and He will replace it with Himself as Lord of Lords, King of all the nations of the earth, and his kingdom, reign, and rule will begin.

So, the first part of Revelation 14, of the nature of the final battles that will make up the campaign of Armageddon, is compared to a man harvesting his grain. Next time we shall look at even a more sobering comparison to a man stomping and crushing out the juice out of a vat of grapes made up of human beings, whose blood will flow for a distance that you wouldn't believe, and for a height that is inconceivable. So, much human blood is constricted within the walls of the canyon of that valley that will be created, that it will be a sight that will be the most fearful that any human being has ever faced on this earth. Thank God, you and I are free of that. We never have to worry about that. In fact, we will have a front row seat watching it all happen, and that's the place to be.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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