

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Lamb and the 144,000

Revelation 14:1-5

What a refreshing sight after the horrors of *Revelation 13*. *Chapter 14* deals with the seven visions, each complete in itself. They are not presented in a chronological sequence of events but rather panoramically with details following later. Let me illustrate this point. The pronouncement of doom upon Babylon, for instance, is uttered in *Verse 8*. However, the details are presented in *Revelation 16:17-21*. With this point in mind, let's investigate.

There are seven outstanding things to be noted in our present chapter:

1. We see the 144, 000 sealed ones on Mount Zion (Sion). *Verses 1-5*
2. God's closing testimony to earth: "*the everlasting Gospel.*" *Verses 6-7*
3. The announcement that Babylon is fallen. *Verse 8*
4. The terrible doom of the Beast-Worshippers. *Verses 9-12*
5. The blessedness of those who die in the Lord. *Verse 13*
6. The harvest of earth is reaped. *Verses 14-16*
7. The fullness of God's wrath and vengeance is poured out. *Verses 17-20*

I. JOHN SEES THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 REDEEMED, STANDING ON MOUNT ZION.

Verse 1: And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, [Zion] and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Before we get into the outline allow me to interject a few observations about verse one with regard to the Lamb:

The Lamb, as we already know, is the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist called Him by this name as he saw the Lord walking upon earth saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)*. Also, John sees the Tribulation saints overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb (*Revelation 12:11*). This same Lamb and His bride are the honored participants at a marriage feast conducted in *Revelation 19:7* which states: *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* The wedding occurs in heaven but the feast probably takes place on earth as the Lamb returns to Mount Sion (or Zion) for His millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This would fulfill scores of Old Testament prophecies.

Did you know that Zion, or Jerusalem, is the place God seems to love most? Today's anti-Zionists should take heed. They are opposing the Almighty himself as they rebel against His city and His people because—I repeat—Jerusalem is closest to God's heart. *For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it (Psalm 132:13-14)*. While the first verse of *Chapter 14* is the only place where Zion is mentioned in the Book of Revelation, it nevertheless authenticates an unlimited number of Old Testament passages that point to Jerusalem as the headquarters of

Christ's earthly kingdom. Seemingly, God is saying through this text, *"I know that millions are following the Antichrist. I see that the false prophet is scoring many victories as he, through lying wonders and deceits, turns the hearts of multitudes to the super-deceivers. However, 666 is the number of man. It is the number of incompleteness. It will soon end."* Why? *I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion [or Jerusalem] (Psalm 2:6).* God adds, *"Though horrendous judgments are about to fall, look up! Your redemption draws nigh. My son, the Lamb, is about to come forth and take His proper position on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. He shall soon arrive at Jerusalem."*

The Prophet Zechariah also stated this same truth:

His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south (Zechariah 14:4). Additional verses depict the establishment of Christ's earthly kingdom: *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion...the city of the great King (Psalm 48:2).* *In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion [or Jerusalem] (Psalm 76:2).* *Thou shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion [or Jerusalem] (Psalm 102:13).* *Psalm 110:2* pictures His reign and states: *"The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."* *"Again, The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 146:10).* As He reigns, the people are pleased and cry, *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King (Psalm 149:2).*

Isaiah the prophet predicted this time of peace. He said, *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:3-4).*

Jesus Christ is coming soon to sit upon David's throne. How do I know this momentous event is about to occur? Because Jerusalem, where He will reign—captured by the Jews in 1967—became the eternal, undivided capital of Israel on July 31, 1980. And this is only the beginning. Soon Jerusalem will become the capital of the entire world—upon the arrival of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord Jesus Christ. The way has been prepared in our day. Let's triumphantly shout the news, **"The King is coming! Amen! The King is coming!"** First, however, He must return for the Church (all Christians) so that we can return with Him *Revelation 19:14*. Thus, the Rapture cannot be delayed much longer. Since we return with Him, and it is visibly manifest that we must return together soon, then the fact is clear that our remaining time upon earth is extremely limited.

At this point in our text, that time has come! How glorious is the hour of the Lord's return to Jerusalem—the capital of the world—with His people. Part of His entourage is composed of the 144,000 Jews mentioned in *Chapter 7*. They have the Lamb's Father's name written (or inscribed) in their foreheads. This is a result of the sealing mentioned in *Revelation 7:3-4*.

Now that these facts have been entered into evidence let us begin the outline of **Chapter Fourteen!**

- A. Who are the 144, 000 in **Verse One**? Are they a separate group from the 144,000 sealed in **Revelation 7**? I believe them to be the same.
 - 1. These are sealed between the 6th and 7th seals.
 - 2. They are still alive after the sounding of the seventh trumpet - the third woe - and the revealing of the man of sin.
 - 3. They live through it all.
 - 4. These were mature persons when sealed and they are still alive, not having died during the terrible days of Tribulation.
- B. They are conspicuously marked, having the names of the Father and of the Lamb in their foreheads. They are redeemed from the earth and are no longer part of the ungodly worldly systems. They are a segregated group, separated from all earth's inhabitants.
- C. These 144,000 are of the truth in the midst of gross Untruth. They stand blameless before God.
 - 1. A singular thing about these witnesses is the song they sing... a song no one but themselves could learn.
 - 2. They sing this song in the presence of the living ones (creatures) and the elders who are wearing golden crowns (the Bride, those of us who are believers and make up the church).
 - 3. This expresses a lesser heavenly dignity. These 144,000 do not hold the same position as the Bride of Christ... the Pearl of Great Price.

Verse 2: *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.*

- D. What a majestic sound fills the heavens and the earth as the heavenly chorus, with the voice of many waters (an unusual amount of octaves), crescendos into thunder-like proportions. The multitudinous choir is accompanied by harps—a symbol of joy. This joy has to do with Christ's redemption. The word of God does not say that these 144,000 have crowns. They sing before the throne, but are not said to be connected with the throne. These are not of the highest order of the saved.

Verse 3: *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

- E. The new song of these redeemed Jews is undoubtedly similar to the song of the saints presented in **Revelation 5:9:** *And they [sang] a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

1. Still, the song of the 144,000 differs somewhat in that it is exclusively their own.
2. The point is that the redeemed in every dispensation have something about which they can sing—the joy of the Lord.
3. The purity, holiness, and sanctification of this group are described in the next verse.

Verse 4: *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

- F. Some commentators, particularly priests in the Middle Ages, stated that this honor was reserved for them because they had refrained from sexual intercourse. Such an explanation, however, is impossible in the light of the sanctity of marriage, *for marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled (Hebrews 13:4)*. That is why, *whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord (Proverbs 18:22)*.
1. The meaning, then, has to do with the undefiled walk of the redeemed Jews as stated in the next part of the verse: *These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*
 2. They are free from spiritual fornication as described in **James 4:4** which states: *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*
- G. Idolatry, the ultimate form of spiritual adultery, is the sin of the hour during the Tribulation period, as we have already observed in **Revelation 9 & 13**. Yet, even during such a time as this, there are multitudes who remain true to the Lord.
1. I dogmatically believe that the “undefiled” of **Verse 4** are those who have kept themselves unspotted from the world.
 2. This truth is also pictured in **2 Corinthians 11:2** concerning the Church, the bride of Christ: God says, *I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* BOTH CHRIST AND HIS FATHER WANT PURE SWEETHEARTS!
 3. The Jewish virgins in our text are most likely those referenced in **Matthew 25:1-13** (the parable of the wise and foolish virgins).
 4. In all dispensations, God wants His people to be separate from the world, the flesh, and the devil. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the*

living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

- H. These untainted Jews who walked the pathway of holiness are the firstfruits of the Tribulation period.
 - 1. The harvest is to follow as millions more turn to Messiah.
 - 2. So all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, *There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins (Romans 11:26-27).*
 - 3. Another attribute of the 144,000 Jews is mentioned in the next verse.

Verse 5: And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

- I. God hates the sin of lying. In fact, the Bible lists lying as one of the sins that will keep a man out of heaven (see **Revelation 22:15**).
 - 1. The Tribulation hour, under the Antichrist, produces a world inundated with deceit.
 - 2. The Antichrist works lying wonders (**2 Thessalonians 2:9**),
 - 3. Multitudes believe a lie (**2 Thessalonians 2:11**).
 - 4. Even during this age of fraud, however, the redeemed Jews do not follow Satan, who is a liar, and the father of [lies] (**John 8:44**).
- J. Oh, that there were more believers who never used deceit, who never passed rumors (usually exaggerated lies), and who refused to listen to the lies that Satan, *the accuser of [the] brethren*, hatches! God wants holy people in every dispensation of time. Let's be like Jesus who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth (**1 Peter 2:22**).
- K. After studying the first five verses of **Revelation 14**, we must admit that this group is a special, singular group. There is no other group in heaven or on earth like them.

II. THE ANGEL WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL!

Revelation 14:6-7

Verse 6: And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

- A. This verse introduces us to the first of the angels who proclaim a special message to the world. This angel flies through the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to

preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

1. The word gospel simply means “good news.” It is also called *glad tidings (Luke 1:19)*, *good tidings (Luke 2:10)*, and *good tidings* once again (*1 Thessalonians 3:6*).
 2. This good news always includes the message of the blood in every dispensation. *To [Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43), and remission of sins is through the blood, for without shedding of blood is no remission (Hebrews 9:22)*.
 3. In addition to proclaiming the everlasting gospel, the angel announces that all those who have rejected the message of Jesus for the mark of the Antichrist (666) are about to be bombarded with a series of judgments from God himself.
 4. So we have this everlasting Gospel that is to be preached to the peoples on earth at the end of the Great Tribulation period, immediately preceding the judgment of the nations when the sheep will be divided from the goats (*Matthew 25: 31-46*).
- B. The everlasting Gospel is not the Gospel of the Kingdom; it is not the Gospel of Grace of God. The message is judgment - not salvation; however, even though the message is judgment, it is good news to the elect (Israel) and to the saved, because they have gone through the great tribulation and have endured till the end.

Verse 7 gives the message of the angel.

Verse 7: [The angel said] *with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

- C. The angel’s message is God’s final call to a Christ-rejecting world, and the message is “turn or burn; repent or die.” “This is mankind’s last opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as Messiah, as Lord, yea, as the true God.”

III. THE FALL OF BABYLON

Verse 8: *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

- A. In verse 8 we learn that following the angel with the everlasting Gospel, there is another angel who is making an announcement. The angel with the everlasting Gospel is preaching judgment; the second angel announces what would, in our language, be an “amen.” The angel cries, “*Babylon is fallen, is fallen! The great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine, of the wrath of her fornication.*”
- B. Here we learn of the impending judgment to be unleashed upon religious and political Babylon in *Revelation 17 & 18*. (We will deal with the fulfillment of these predictions,

plus the fact that all nations are made to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, when we reach those sections.) For the present, suffice it to say that the abominable portrait before us typifies

1. A one-world church united to a one-world political system using every type of corruption imaginable to promote herself into prominence at the end time.
2. Beware! The present ecumenical effort, attempting to unite all religions under a so-called “*banner of brotherhood*,” regardless of one’s belief about Christ, is the forerunner of a monstrous fornicator who makes all nations drink of the wine of her wrath.
3. It is happening today with leaders from many of the prominent religions of the world today including some of our Protestant brethren!

IV. THE DOOM OF THE BEAST-WORSHIPPERS!

Revelation 14:9-12

Verses 9-11: And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ⁽¹⁰⁾ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ⁽¹¹⁾ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

- A. In *Verse 9* we see still third angel.
 1. The first angel is preaching the Gospel of judgment.
 2. The second angel announces the fall of the earthly system of corruption.
 3. The third angel announces the doom of Beast-Worshippers.
- B. The doom of those who receive the mark of the Beast, or who worship the Beast, is clearly outlined. In verse 10, they will taste the wrath of God. They will be tormented with fire and brimstone.
- C. The torment is forever and ever. And they have no rest night or day. This scripture is very clear concerning this wrath. The wicked will not be consumed.
- D. Hell and the torments of hell are real whether or not we choose to believe it.

I would like to make a couple of points outside the outline regarding this stage of our study.

This third angel announces the doom of those who are worshipping the Antichrist and his image, and who have received the mark “666” in their foreheads or hands. For the weak-kneed sisters of Christendom who claim that “THE GOD OF LOVE COULD NEVER PUNISH SINNERS,” verses 9 through 11 are probably the Bible’s most graphic picture of judgment.

Although the text before us is self-explanatory, I feel it prudent to practically state the same truths twice, in order that mockers may see that there is a judgment of hellfire taught in this book, as well as throughout the Bible. Those individuals who have received the mark of the beast taste of the *wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture* [without dilution or weakening of his wrath as it is stirred up] *into the cup of his indignation*. The judgment is so horrendous as it is administered in the presence of Christ and his angels that the smoke of [the Antichrist's partners and pawns] *ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name*.

Contrary to the teaching of certain cultists, this judgment is also endless. The words *everlasting* for the lost and *eternal* for the saved are identical in the Greek, both places—heaven and hell—last for the ages of ages—eternally, everlastingly. Thus, **Matthew 25:46** states: [The lost] *shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal*. I repeat, both are of equal duration.

Some may raise an objection that this punishment cannot be eternal because of the words “day and night.” Nonsense! The apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, constantly uses this terminology in place of “unceasingly.” For example, in **Revelation 4:8**, the four living creatures before the throne of God *rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*. Isaiah declared this truth in **Isaiah 66:24** *For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched*. Jesus himself had this text in mind when He said in **Mark 9:43**, *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched*.

The most terrible experience of time and eternity is to be lost. Our quartet used to sing a song that creates a soul-winner's heart within those who hear it. The chorus states:

*Think what it means to be lost forever,
No one to guide you across that cold river.
Darkness, crying, none to deliver,
Think what it means to be lost.*

Thank God, this awesome portrait does not have to be the future of any human being, for **Romans 10:13** victoriously announces that *whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*. Don't delay making life's most important decision.

Now, the subject of fire also causes us to recall that time during the Tribulation hour when one-third of the earth's population is reduced by fire, smoke, and brimstone (**Revelation 9:18**). Possessing a foreknowledge of all these events, and knowing that earthly sorrows can last only as long as one has life, the Holy Spirit, through John, gives an assuring promise about the future.

Verse 12: *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

V. BLESSEDNESS OF THE HOLY DEAD!

Verse 13: And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

- A. There are those who believe in soul-sleep... unconsciousness of the soul. It's a mystery to me how one could believe that the dead in the Lord are "Blessed." There is joy in Heaven. The righteous dead are happy. They are at peace.
- B. All believers who have died since the day of Pentecost have gone to Heaven. The dead in Christ are with Him now and will remain with Him until the Rapture. Then the spirit will be reunited with the body in a resurrected body. Those who are left shall be caught up with Him. The righteous dead go immediately to be with the Lord; the wicked dead go immediately to hell, then someone asks, "Why the resurrection?" I will explain that when we study Revelation 20.
- C. Do not worry about the dead who have trusted in the Lord for they are with Him even now.
 - 1. This will be especially true during the Tribulation hour when the toils of life are so great. Remember, this is the worst time of heartache in history.
 - 2. Jesus said, *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matthew 24:21).*
 - 3. Now, at last, it is over for some.
 - a. They have died and happiness is theirs.
 - b. They rest from the heartbreaks of life, exchanging them for rewards as their good works and deeds follow them.
- D. As for the Christian, there should not be any fear of death for it is but the last step of faith we will take unless we are alive when Jesus call us forth!

VI. THE STAGING OF ARMAGEDDON.

Revelation 14:14-20

Verse 14: 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.

- A. A white cloud—the Shekinah or "glory of God" cloud—is usually associated with Christ.
 - 1. This is the same cloud that went before the Children of Israel as they wandered through the wilderness (*Exodus 13:21-22*).
 - 2. It was also present at the giving of the Law (*Exodus 19:9*).
 - 3. This glorious cloud illuminated the transfiguration scene (*Matthew 17:5*) and received [Christ] out of their sight at His ascension (*Acts 1:9*).

4. At the Rapture, all church-age saints, living and dead, will be caught up together...in the clouds (*1 Thessalonians 4:17*).
5. Finally, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to planet earth, he cometh with clouds (*Revelation 1:7*).
6. Thus, in *Verse 14* of this chapter the Son of Man is seen situated upon the cloud as He comes to thrust in His sharp sickle of judgment.

Verses 15 & 16: 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. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

- B. One cannot get away with sin forever: *Be sure your sin will find you out (Numbers 32:23).*
1. Sin will catch up with you, and when it does, *they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same (Job 4:8).*
 2. The time of reaping has come, and the sickle, sharp and steady, does its judgmental work.

Verses 17-20 describe this hour as the greatest blood-bath in history, ARMAGEDDON.

Verses 17-20: And 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, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. ⁽¹⁹⁾ And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ⁽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.

- C. The battle described here and the battle of Gog and Magog, described in *Revelation 20: 8-9*, are two separate battles. This battle (Armageddon) will be fought at the close of tribulation period. The battle of Gog and Magog will be fought at the close of the one thousand years' reign of Jesus. We will study that in *Revelation 20*. The battle here is a battle of blood. The battle in *Revelation 20* is a battle of fire.
- D. As seen in *Verses 14-16*, Jesus will judge the quick and the dead, His appearance is on a white cloud. He is the one who will clear earth of all the, hellish seed sown by the Antichrist and his followers. He will destroy the Antichrist "with the brightness of His coming" (*2 Thessalonians 2:8*).

- E. In **Verse 17**, another angel appears out of the temple which is in Heaven, and he also has a sharp sickle. In **Verse 18**, still another angel comes from the altar, and this is the angel of fire. He cries with a loud voice to the angel with the sickle, saying, *“Thrust in Thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.”*
1. Now the wrath of God is about to be poured out upon these murderers here on earth.
 2. The angel thrusts in his sickle, and the vine of the earth is gathered; cast into the winepress of the wrath of God, the wine-press is trodden by God, and the blood comes out at the length that adds up to approximately 200 miles of blood.
- F. Jerusalem is the city referred to here. The valley is Armageddon, just north of Jerusalem. This is the terrible battle described in **Revelation 16:14; 19: 19**. We will cover the battle more in detail when we reach that study.

Before moving onto Chapter Fifteen allow me to make some closing statements regarding these final events of Chapter Fourteen:

This final scene of **Revelation 14** describes the work of two angels. The one with a sharp sickle comes from the temple in heaven, while the other with power over fire emerges from the altar. The one in command is the angel from the altar. He immediately orders that the vine be cut off and cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. Since true children of God are branches of the vine (see **John 15:5**), the members of the one-world church of the Antichrist and false prophet are called members of Satan’s vine. The time of their pruning or destruction has arrived at last, and they are cut off and cast into the great winepress of God’s indignation.

Oh, what a purging of branches takes place during this hour! The conflict begins in the Valley of Jehoshaphat and becomes centered in the Valley of Jezreel, which is on the plain of Esdraelon near the hill of Megiddo (**Revelation 16:16**). *I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down: for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision (**Joel 3:2,10-14**).* Eventually the battle encompasses the entire nation of Israel and is, of course, global in involvement as the armies of the world meet in the Middle East for the final holocaust of history—the Battle of Armageddon (see **Zechariah 14:2**).

The result is a 200-mile-long area soaked with blood, (one thousand six hundred furlongs, in American mathematics, is a distance of 200 miles.) Interestingly, the nation of Israel is 200 miles long, from north to south. According to **Ezekiel 39:8-16**, seven months will be required to bury the dead and the armaments of war will be burned for seven years afterward! The tense Middle East situation certainly signals the return of Christ.

In light of the unprecedented devastation just described, a few additional thoughts are appropriate at this time. First of all, when the Soviet Union, under the names Gog, Magog, Mechech, Tubal, and Rosh, invades Israel, the largest armies in the history of the world will converge on the Middle East. Ezekiel states that they will come up like a cloud (see **Ezekiel 38:16**). John tells us that *the number of the army of the horsemen [is] two hundred thousand thousand— or two hundred million (Revelation 9:16)*. No wonder the conflict is so incredible.

Secondly, the weapons are the deadliest ever used in the history of mankind. *A fire goeth before him (Psalm 97:3). For, behold, the Lord will come with fire (Isaiah 66:15). The flaming flame shall not be quenched (Ezekiel 20:47). A fire devoureth before them (Joel 2:3)*. Who? The northern army from Russia that is driven back to Siberia. Hear God's statement: *But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things (Joel 2:20)*.

The retreat is effectual in **Joel 2:30**, for the prophet states: *And I [saw] wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars [or literally columns] of smoke*. These are the exact characteristics of a nuclear blast! *The whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy (Zephaniah 1:18). For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven (Malachi 4:1)*. Now we understand why the nation of Israel will be drenched with blood. No wonder **Jeremiah 30:7** says, *Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it. Daniel 12:1* adds, *There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was*. This time is so horrendous that there will never have been anything like it in the past nor shall there be anything like it again in the future. Jesus agreed. He said in **Matthew 24:21**, *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Revelation 9:18* adds, *By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths*.

Finally Russia is going to be smashed in the Middle East. Proof: *Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee (Ezekiel 39:1-2)*. Later, the Battle of Armageddon will be fought and will assuredly become history's most terrifying holocaust. However, the good news is that, as a Christian, you will not be present—and if you are not yet a believer, you do not have to be present. So I plead with you to receive Christ without delay.

We now move into a portion of Revelation known as the “**Seven Bowls of God's Wrath**” that many feel are some of the strongest applications of God's judgment of all upon mankind!

Chapter Fifteen, The Seven Last Plagues, (Seven Bowl Judgments).