

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

REVELATION 13-14

Recently, I ran across the following: **If 666 is the mark of the beast; then 1-666 is the beast's area code... 00666 is the zip code of the beast... 666-66-6666 is his social security number... 1-800-666-0666 is his toll-free hotline... Route 666 is the highway of the beast... 667 is the street address of the beast's next door neighbor."**

Revelation 13 is the chapter that describes the infamous "mark of the beast," but it speaks of so much more... Today, we'll talk about the sinister Antichrist.

The Chapter begins, **"Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea..."**

In the Bible **"the sea"** is symbolic of a vast ocean of people adrift. We speak of **"the sea of humanity."** John sees a leader rises onto the world's political stage.

In popular culture, this diabolical leader is **most often referred to as "the Antichrist,"** but throughout Scripture, he goes by numerous titles: **"The Assyrian, Bloody and Deceitful Man, Crooked Servant, Cruel One, Evil Man, Little Horn, Proud Man, Spoiler, Destroyer, Extortioner, Vile Person, Violent Man, Wicked One, Willful King, Worthless Shepherd, Lawless One, Man of Sin, Son of Perdition, Unclean Spirit..."**
just to name a few...

Here's a man so evil, so ruthless, and so animalistic John calls him by the unflattering term, **"the Beast."**

And like most beasts, he travels in a pack. He heads a Satan-inspired **gang of three**. Chapter 13 spotlights *the beast, another beast, and the image of the beast*.

I call them, **“The Beastie Boys.”**

The world is a jungle, and jungles are full of beasts.

Be thankful that Jesus is the King of the Jungle! At a time of His choosing, He'll hunt down **the beastie boys!**

Now the beast comes **“having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.”** ...this Beast is an agent of the dragon, Satan, in Chapter 12 with his heads and horns.

“Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” Here's a ferocious beast...

In Daniel 7, the prophet was shown 2500 years of Gentile world domination. He saw the lion of Babylon, the bear of Persia, and the leopard of Greece. Daniel also saw a final Gentile kingdom, **“a beast dreadful and terrible.”** It had ten horns and a little horn among them.

The little horn is a world leader who defies God.

The Beast of Chapter 13 is Daniel's little horn. He has *Babylon's swagger, Persia's strength, Greece's speed*. This Beast is the king of a last days kingdom.

And he rules a revival of ancient Rome, a European superstate... *And today, for the first time in 1400 years we have such an entity...* Rent a car in Madrid and drive to

Rome, then Paris, then Berlin, then Prague, then Budapest. You won't have to stop at a border.

And you can pay for meals and lodging with a single currency, the Euro. *Welcome to the European Union...*

Here John sees a future leader. His seven heads refer to Rome, and his ten horns are nation-states. His power and authority are from the dragon or Satan.

This is the ruler who opposes God in the last days.

Ironically, Jesus has been faithfully knocking at the door of every human heart for the last 2000 years. He has timeless, eternal answers - not temporary patches.

But most folks keep their door bolted, and Jesus on the outside. *Yet when this Beast knocks they'll open.*

Verse 3 reveals why *the Beast* will be so persuasive.

“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.” What if John Kennedy had walked out of Parkland Hospital in Dallas, *surviving the bullet to his brain?* It'd be hailed a miracle. This is what's going to raise the approval ratings of *the Beast*. He'll recover from a potentially lethal head wound... perhaps, an assassin's bullet.

Notice, verse 3 doesn't say *the Beast* rises from the dead. Nowhere in the Bible is Satan given power over death. It's *“as if (he) had been mortally wounded...”*

This might just *seem to be a miracle*, yet it does the trick. His recovery rockets him to superstar status.

Zechariah 11:17 speaks of his injuries, "His arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded."

The Antichrist loses the use of an arm and eye.

Jesus has lost far more for us. And the wounds from His crucifixion were no illusion! Yet the world has and will ignore His scars, while they run after *the Beast*.

Verse 4, "So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast..." This is Satan's ambition. From His days as heaven's choir boy, he's wanted men to worship him. Now *the Beast* gives him what he wants.

As Jesus draws people to the Father, the Beast captures and enslaves souls to Satan. "And they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months." And here's the timeframe we saw in the last two chapters - 42 months, or 1,260 days, or 3.5 years.

Recall Revelation 6-19 records God's judgment of this world during the final **seven-year** period called "Great Tribulation." Chapters 12-13 are a parenthesis that zeros in on events that occur at the halfway point.

Up until now, the Antichrist has preached tolerance.

He's solved mankind's problems. World religions are cooperating. Jews and Muslims are living in harmony. Perhaps they're even co-existing on the Temple Mount.

After the narrow-minded Christians are taken in the rapture, the Antichrist can sell his "coexist theology." He'll probably

explain the rapture as an evolutionary leap forward that eliminated the bigoted Christians.

The world will be poised for a New Age... but then at halftime of this final seven years, *the Beast* will show his fangs. He's not the peaceful ruler he claimed to be.

He'll become the personification of evil and murder God's two witnesses... then set up an image of himself in the Temple, and require the world to worship him. Matthew 24 calls this "the abomination of desolation."

According to Revelation 12, it's after this blasphemy that war erupts in heaven. The devil gets the boot, and in retaliation, Satan attacks God's people, the Jews.

There's a quote by Revolutionary War leader, William Penn that fits here, "Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants." Never in history is this more applicable than the 42 months prior to Jesus' return. Under *the Beast*, the world is ruled by pure evil.

Verse 6 reveals more, "Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven." Suddenly, this *Future Fuhrer* opposes everything that's of God.

He trashes God's name, and God's Temple. He'll look to heaven and even ridicule Christ's Church.

As he attacks those who missed the rapture, before deciding to follow Jesus. We're told, "It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them." The Tribulation saints are now in his crosshairs.

And here's a great proof-text for the Pre-Trib rapture.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

"Prevail" in Matthew 16 is the same Greek word as "overcome" in Revelation 13. Thus here, the Antichrist prevails against the saints, yet Jesus said the gates of Hades would never prevail against the Church. That means "the saints" in verse 6 aren't part of the Church.

I believe these are the folks who are saved in the Tribulation, while the Church is with Jesus in heaven.

"And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation." The Beast will rule globally.

What Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, the Caesars, Genghis Kahn, Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin failed to accomplish - a *world dictatorship* - this ruler achieves...

Recall the story of Nimrod and the tower of Babel. It was the first attempt at globalization. Nimrod brought culture, commerce, language, government, even religion under one big tent. Nimrod was a unifier of mankind, yet he had ulterior motives. He wanted to sub himself for the Savior, and be worshipped as a god.

Nimrod defied the true God's decree to scatter and multiply. **And the world is still under that command.**

Nothing is wrong with cooperation among nations.

The UN is not inherently evil. But when efforts are made to abolish national boundaries and consolidate governments we should question the motive. Antichrist will seize authority over "every tribe, tongue, nation."

We're told in verse 8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

The world worships the beast, and life gets very hard for those who don't. It'll take great "*patience and faith.*"

Remember, Chapter 13 isn't just about *the Beast*, but *the Beastie Boys*. That's why verse 11 reads... "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon."

This second beast is the Antichrist's ecclesiastical sidekick. He's a religious leader who appears gentle as a lamb but speaks the threats and lies of Satan.

Jesus had a forerunner. John the Baptist paved the way for Messiah. This second beast will pave the way for the first. He'll give religious sanction to Antichrist.

Imagine this man in the world's great cathedrals, mosques, and temples encouraging people to lay aside their differences and rally together under one banner!

Verse 12 tells us more, "And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." This man will become the High Priest of

heresy and apostasy. Later in Revelation, he's also called "the false prophet."

"He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." *The priest of the Beast* even works miracles.

Recall, Satan is a deceiver. He doesn't just do miracles but replicates biblical miracles. Malachi 4:5 predicts Elijah will appear "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." This is why the Beast calls down fire. He's not an *Elvis-impersonator*, but an *Elijah-impersonator*. Malachi predicts Elijah will precede Messiah, and this guy falsely claims to be him.

Verse 14, "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."

Here's where the plot thickens... When we think of idolatry we think of a statue or trinket on a mantle, but here is an animated image - the "*image of the beast...*"

It has "*breath.*" It speaks. It discerns worship. It enforces allegiance. It executes people who refuse to bow to *the Beast...* *Here's idolatry gone high-tech!*

What is this third **Beastie Boy**? We're not sure. But today's technology provides all kinds of possibilities.

Is it a touch-sensitive screen? A computer-generated hologram? A robot with artificial intelligence?

Imagine, millions of computer users on the web, interacting with this image. Idolatry could go online.

John continues speaking of *“the image of the beast”* in verse 16, *“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”* A hundred years ago this would make little sense, *but not today!*

In 2020, this kind of technology is commonplace. Money and data are constantly passed electronically.

In a cash-based society, you could never control commerce with a mark on your body? But today, cash is a relic of the past... *My kids no longer carry cash.* In the future, buying and selling will all be done digitally.

Do the *“Run the Reagan,”* Snellville’s road race, and you put a microchip in your shoe. It records your time.

Soon they’ll be injecting a silicon chip under a baby’s skin to track the child... *And if you’ve ever momentarily lost a child in a crowded store you realize the upside.* The technology makes sense. It isn’t intrinsically evil.

But this is what the Antichrist will use to blackmail the world into worshipping him. To get the mark you’ll have to bow... you’ll have to pledge allegiance to *the Beast.*

And without this mark of loyalty, you won’t be allowed in the Kroger or Walmart. *This will force excruciating choices. Stand*

for Jesus and your family starves? I don't want to be here when this kind of choosing starts!

Finally verse 18, **"Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666."** If we gave an award for the one Bible verse that has drawn the most speculation, it'd have to go to Revelation 13:18.

Everyone from *Nero* to *Hitler* to *Kennedy* to *Kissinger* to *Gorbachev* to *Clinton* to *Tony Blair* to *Obama* has somehow been associated with the number **666**.

Yet let me introduce you to a different idea...

Throughout the Bible, *"six"* is the number of man. It's one less than *"seven,"* *the number of God's perfection*, and man at his best always falls short of God's ideal...

Yet next to Jesus, **the one man in the Bible who may've come closest was King Solomon.** Remember, in Luke 12:27 Jesus said of the lilies, **"even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."** In Luke 11:31, Jesus applauded **"the wisdom of Solomon."**

In the OT, King Solomon was the wisest of the wise. He was the epitome of human achievement.

Now remember, the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible - and there's only one other place in Scripture where the number **"666"** appears. **2 Chronicles 9:13 lists Solomon's yearly allotment of gold as 666 talents.**

There's another connection between Solomon and the number 666. In 1 Kings 10 we learn that **when you looked at**

his throne you saw *six lions* to the left, *six steps* in the center, and *six lions* to the right... "6-6-6."

Here's an idea... when you think of the Antichrist, don't think of Darth Vader, or Osama bin Ladin, or Adolf Hitler - *think King Solomon*. There're lots of parallels...

David was a man of war, and because of it, he wasn't allowed to build the Temple. Solomon was a man of peace and a Temple-builder. That's how *the Beast* starts. He builds a false peace and a rebuilt Temple.

Both men are admired for their wisdom... Both will start out as God-fearing leaders, but eventually, lead people into idolatry... Both will amass great fortunes...

The parallels are numerous. Suffice it to say, *the Beast* doesn't show his fangs, until he has the world in his clutches. **Evil is not always so easily identified.**

And the Antichrist will be further proof that man apart from God - *even at his wisest - at his most refined* - is still corrupt to the core and brazenly rebellious.

In the end, the great human hope will turn beastly.

Chapter 13 closes with the evil Antichrist on top of the world, but remember **Jesus is the King of beasts!**

If you removed Chapters 11-14 from Revelation, **it'd be like watching a football game without a program. You'd enjoy the action - but you couldn't identify the players.** These chapters are "a roster of the end times."

The Rebel forces include the dragon, beast, and his accomplice (*the false prophet*). Whereas **God's troops** include

the 144,000 Jews, 2 Jerusalem witnesses, 3 angelic messengers, One like the Son of Man who's carrying a sharp sickle, and the armies of heaven.

Chapter 13 focused on the bad guys, **the Beastie Boys**. *And like any good roster, it lists a jersey number.*

Chapter 14 lists **God's team**... And it's only fitting the first person listed is *our best player, our captain, our coach, our manager, our team owner, our everything all rolled into one.* John begins Chapter 14, **"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion..."**

John sees Jesus! After all, this book is **the Revelation of Jesus**... not the Beast, or seals, or trumpets, or 666. All too often we get caught up in the peripherals and miss Jesus. This book is about Jesus.

Jesus is no longer the humble Galilean preacher who walked dusty trails in first-century Israel. He is now **"King of kings and Lord of lords."** He's now glorified and exalted, and today all creation is under His feet.

Here John sees Jesus as the Lamb, but notice *His posture* and *His place*... He's **"standing on Mount Zion."**

That Jesus is **"standing"** tells us a lot. In Hebrews 1:13 tells us what the Father God says to His Son Jesus, **"Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool..."** Well, for nearly 2000 years now that's where Jesus has been - **sitting at God's right hand.**

But here He **"stands to His feet!"** He's finally ready to stride, and ride, and make war with this wicked world.

And notice *where* Jesus stands? He's "*on Mount Zion.*" Mount Zion is one of the hills of Jerusalem. Over time "*Zion*" became the name for the entire city.

John sees the Lamb standing in Jerusalem, *the place of kings*. His intent is to rule. And it's no accident He's returned to the scene of the crime. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. And this is God's issue with our rebel planet. The world mocks and despises *the cross of Jesus*. *He bled for us, why won't we be led by Him?*

Don't get upset when this chapter speaks of Hell, and blood, and judgment. *What would you think if you sacrificed your only son for me; then I spit in His face?*

God is just and righteous in all He does.

Revelation 14:1 is a powerful picture... It needs to shape how we think of Jesus today... One day soon, the Lamb will stand where He once was slaughtered.

He'll be glorified where He was crucified.

He'll be worshipped where He was hated.

He'll *rule from a throne* where He *hung on a tree*. Where Jesus showed *mercy*, He'll bring about *justice*.

When you think of the Jesus in your future - the Jesus everyman will meet, and face, and bow before...

Don't think of Mary's infant, or Jesus washing His disciples' feet, or Jesus silent before His accusers...

Think of Jesus in all His regal glory, standing on Mount Zion, ready to put His foot down in judgment.

Yet, before this judgment, one last call to repent goes out. Chapter 14 is “the last chance chapter.”

It’s a “*last call*” for salvation... Today, **the Church** preaches the Gospel, but in the last days, God has **other messengers**. Verse 1, “with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand...” We met them in chapter 7. They’re Jews - 12,000 from each of Israel’s 12 tribes.

As Chapter 13 closes worshippers of the beast have their allegiance sealed in their right hand or forehead, a mark, a number 666. *But there’s a godly antithesis...*

God’s witnesses are dearer to Him than Satan’s are to him, so they’re sealed not with a number, but “having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.”

Then verse 2, “And I heard a voice from heaven...” The scene now shifts from Mount Zion to heaven.

John hears a voice “like the voice of many waters (or a roaring waterfall), and like the voice of loud thunder (the boom of a thunderclap). Recall, in Chapter 1 this is how John described the voice of Jesus. He speaks with authority. His voice drowns out all other opinions.

“And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.” The Lamb and 144,000 witnesses are standing on Mount Zion... *So who is this singing in heaven?*

These are the Tribulation saints who were martyred for their faith. The 144,000 sing with them since they've tasted what the martyrs endured. In Chapter 6 these saints once asked, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Now they're no longer asking but singing. The long-sought judgment is about to begin.

The vast majority of heaven's population - *the Church* - was spared Great Tribulation. That's why only the 144,000 witnesses and the martyrs sing this song.

And John says of the 144,000, "These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins."

Apparently, these witnesses are men on a mission.

They lack the time for marriage or family. *How can you celebrate an anniversary or coach Little League as God readies to judge the world?* This is God's last call... The eternal destiny of men hangs in the balance.

God's witnesses need to be single-minded. Pledged to preach, not play! This will be *different from today...*

John adds, "These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes." Surely, the 144,000 will live at a different time and minister under different conditions - **but this is something that should be true of us all!**

We need to follow the Lamb wherever He goes!

"These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb." The 144,000 Jews were saved at the beginning of God's last call. They were the first fruits of the final harvest. Now they lead others to salvation. "And in their

mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” They’re *impeccable witnesses* in *perilous times*..

Like in baseball - your best pitcher is your closer. Here God raises up an army of closers for a *last call*.

But that’s not *all*. That’s not God’s only method of last days’ evangelism... As the clock winds down - and time is running out - the Lamb pulls out all the stops...

Verse 6, “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people - saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

And this should speak volumes to us...

One day God will use angels to proclaim the good news. And I’ll bet angels are never too scared or busy to share their faith. They’re far more efficient than us.

Yet Jesus loves us and wants us to share in the joy of seeing other people come to know Him. God sees value in using folks *saved by grace to share His grace*.

Yet once the Church goes up, God uses angels. Like the airplane that pulls the banners along the beach, the angel in verse 6 buzzes the heavens preaching the everlasting gospel. The Lamb’s last call is delivered by 144,000 Jews, two witnesses, and now three angels...

Verse 8, “And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” As Jerusalem will be the headquarters of God’s Kingdom on Earth, Babylon has always been Satan’s headquarters. *The Bible is a tale of two cities..*

Here this second angel proclaims the crumbling of Satan’s kingdom... *The devil’s days are numbered.*

Verse 9, “Then a third angel followed them...” The first angel shared God’s salvation. The second, Satan’s devastation. A third warns of the sinner’s destination...

This angel is “saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.”

Usually, God tempers His judgments with mercy, but not here. People who resist the witness of the Church, *and now God’s last call*, are sentenced to the “full strength” - 100 proof - undiluted - wrath of God.

And apparently, the final straw is when they receive the mark of the Beast in their forehead or in their hand.

Whether the damning mark is a *barcode, microchip, vein scan, infrared tattoo, or a technology not invented yet*, it’s certainly more than just convenient commerce.

It’s paid for by a pledge of allegiance to the Beast.

Rather than trust Jesus Christ, people put their faith in “Anti-Christ.” It’s the final rejection of God’s mercy.

This third angel warns... *“He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”*

Up until now, John’s vision has shown us **the glories of Heaven** and **God’s judgments on Earth** - but now John gets a glimpse of **the torments of Hell...**

Yet Hell isn’t a message we hear a lot about today. Some churches downplay the idea of a literal Hell.

AW Tozer once wrote, *“The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consequences of millions.”* This third angel tries to convince mankind that Hell is real!

John tells us people in Hell are torment *by fire, hot coals, stifling smoke*. In verse 10 the word *“brimstone”* refers to sulfur flashes. **Think of flash-pots at a rock concert. You’re bombarded with mini-explosions.**

Hell is like living in the mouth of an erupting volcano. **The heat is unbearable. Its flames blister and burn. Layers of soot cause acute suffocation.** Everybody in hell gropes for air like a person with chronic COPD!

And notice its punishment is *eternal*. *“The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever...”* Is it any wonder Hell’s residents *“have no rest day or night...”*

Hell is like a hemorrhoid attack in a world without Preparation H. Everybody is restless and stressed.

Everyone in hell will be restless with remorse. It's said, "One of the horrors of hell is the undying memory of a misspent life..." And Hell is void of any hope. Your status never changes. In Dante's "Inferno," a sign over Hell reads, "He who enters abandons all hope."

And the worst of Hell's torments is that it all occurs, *"in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb..."*

I interpret that to mean that while folks agonize in hell they're aware of what's happening in heaven. It's like a one-way glass. Residents of Hell see into Heaven, but Heaven doesn't see into Hell. Imagine, being in torment, while gawking at pleasures you'll never enjoy.

This third angel warns the world of a literal Hell.

Verse 12, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." There is no rest in Hell, but Heaven is like a hammock! Believe in Jesus and you'll rest forever.

We have all eternity to rest, but only a few short hours left to do God's will. If we believe in a literal hell, *how can we be nonchalant about people going there?*

Verse 14, “Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.” Here’s King Jesus... carrying a swing blade.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

Verse 16, “So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.”

This is the final harvest. Just before the last battle, one final surge of souls will give their lives to Jesus.

The first thrust of the sickle is a harvest, but the second is an act of judgment. “Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.” Call this angel **the grim reaper**.

And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” Spiritually speaking sin is like fruit. Let it hang around, and it ripens for judgment.

Verse 19, “So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” In the winepress, the grapes are crushed, squished, stomped. “*The great winepress*” is an idiom for God’s judgment.

Verse 20, “And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.”

Notice, it's not wine that results from this pressing, it's blood. Jesus crushes the rebels who defy His rule.

This is all leading to a final judgment that's called, [the Battle of Armageddon](#), where the blood of evil men will fill up a valley 1,600 furlongs, or 200 miles long. In steep places, the blood will rise to the horse's bridle.

It's interesting, 200 miles is the approximate length of the Holy Land - *from the Golan Heights to the Dead Sea*. John foresees the day when the valleys of Israel and Judah will become a blood-stained battlefield.