

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

REVELATION 13-14

We've come to Revelation 13, and the infamous mark of the beast. And here's a thought: *If 666 is the number of the beast - then 1-666 is the beast's area code... 00666 is the beast's zip code... 666-66-6666 is his social security number... 1-800-666-0666 is his toll-free hotline... Route 666 is highway of the beast... And 667 is the street address of his next-door neighbor.*

Well, that's a light-hearted start to a serious subject. Revelation 13 describes the much-speculated upon "*mark of the beast,*" *but it speaks of so much more...*

My favorite subject is **Jesus Christ**, but today, in Revelation 13 we're forced to talk about **Antichrist**.

Chapter 13 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 rise out of it onto the 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 Jesus is the King of the Jungle! 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, we discussed in Chapter 12. His seven heads are "*mountains*" according to 17:9, and identify him with the city of Rome. His ten horns represent ten nations or regions - sectors of his political power block.

Verse 2, "*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.*" This beast is ferocious... In Daniel 7 the prophet is shown

2500 years of Gentile world domination. He sees the lion of Babylon, the bear of Persia, and leopard of Greece. Daniel also sees a final Gentile kingdom, “a beast dreadful and terrible.” This speaks of Rome, and its future revival. It has ten horns and a little horn among them. The little horn is its leader who defies God.

So **the Beast** of Revelation 13 is Daniel 7’s **little horn**. With *Babylon’s swagger, Persia’s strength, and Greece’s speed* he’s the king over a last days kingdom.

And he rules a revival of ancient Rome, a European superstate... *Today, for the first time in 1400 years we have such an entity...* Rent a car in Madrid and you can drive to Rome, then Paris, then Berlin, then Prague, then Budapest. You don’t have to stop at a border. 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.

Ironically, our Lord Jesus has faithfully knocked on the door of every human heart for 2000 years. He has timeless, eternal answers - not temporary patches. But most folks have kept 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 President Kennedy walked out of Parkland Hospital in Dallas, *surviving a bullet to his brain?* He’d be hailed a miracle man. That’s 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 lost far more for us. And the wounds from His crucifixion were no illusion! Yet the world has and will ignore Jesus’ 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've seen in the last two chapters - 42 months, 1,260 days, 3.5 years.

Recall, Revelation 6-19 records God's judgments on the rebel planet over a final **seven years** called "**Great Tribulation.**" There're three series of seven judgments: **seals, trumpets, bowls.** In between are interludes. And in Chapters 10-14 the emphasis is on people and events prominent at the midpoint of these seven years.

Up until this halftime Antichrist will have preached tolerance. He's united a divided world. Religions are cooperating. It could be Jews and Muslims are living in harmony - 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 at this midpoint **the Beast** pares his fangs. He's not the man of peace he claims to be, but instead murders God's witnesses. He sets himself up as god in the Temple and requires mankind to worship Him. In Matthew 24 this betrayal is called "**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.

American Revolutionary War leader, William Penn, once famously said, "**Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants.**" Never in history will 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, God's Temple in Jerusalem, and he'll even look to heaven and ridicule the Church.

And the Tribulation saints - those who followed Jesus after the rapture of the Church - will find themselves in his evil crosshairs. Verse 7, "**It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.**"

And here's a great proof-text for the Pre-Tribulation rapture. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says, "**I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**" The term "**prevail**" in Matthew 16 is the same Greek word as "**overcome**" here. Thus, the Antichrist cannot *prevail against* those Jesus says the gates of Hades will *never prevail against*. This means "**the saints**" in verse 6 can't be members of the Church.

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

Verse 7, “**And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.**” The Beast will rule the world. What Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, the Caesars, Genghis Kahn, Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin failed to accomplish - *global dictatorship* - this ruler achieves...

Remember 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. He 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 idea of a UN is not inherently evil. But when the effort is 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.” As the world worships the beast, life will get very hard for those who refuse. 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. Here is 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 given the title “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 replicates biblical miracles. Malachi 4 predicts Elijah will appear “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” This is why this Beast calls down fire. He’s an *Elijah-impersonator*. Malachi predicts Elijah will precede the Messiah, and this fellow will falsely claim 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.”

Now here’s where the plot thickens... When we think of idolatry we think of a statue or trinket on a mantle, but here’s an animated idol - the “*image of the beast*.” It has “*breath*” (or seems to live). It speaks. It discerns worship. It enforces allegiance. It executes people who don’t bow to *the Beast*. *Here’s idolatry gone high-tech!... So what is this third Beastie Boy?*

Well, we’re not sure. But modern technology provides all kinds of possibilities... This could be a *touch screen*, or a *computer-generated hologram*? Or perhaps a *robot with artificial intelligence*? It’s obviously **A.I...** It’s **actual idolatry**. Imagine, billions of smart phone users and computer users on the web, interacting with this image. Idolatry is going 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’ve made little sense, *but not today!* In our modern world this is commonplace. Data and money are constantly passed electronically and digitally. Cash is nearly a relic of the past. Transactions now occur via computer chip, or bluetooth, or online. More and more, buying or selling is done automatically.

A few years ago, I participated in “*Run the Reagan*,” Snellville’s 5K road race, and a microchip in my shoe recorded my time. Soon we’ll be injecting silicon chips under our baby’s skin to track the child... *And if you’ve ever momentarily lost a child in a crowded store you know the upside.* Such a tool can make good sense.

But this technology is what Antichrist commandeers to blackmail the world into worshipping him. To receive the mark you'll have to pledge your allegiance to *the Beast*. And without this mark you won't be able to buy gas, groceries, medicines. This will force excruciating choices. *Bow to the beast or 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, I'd have to go with Revelation 13:18.

Everyone from *Nero* to *Hitler* to *Kennedy* to *Kissinger* to *Gorbachev* to *Clinton* to *Tony Blair* to *Barak Obama* have in some fashion 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. The Hebrew king 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 Solomon's throne you saw *six lions* to the left, *six steps* in the center, and *six lions* on the right, or *“6-6-6.”* Here's an idea. When you think of 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 the Temple-builder... And that's how *the Beast* begins. He constructs a false peace and rebuilds the Temple. *Both men are admired for their wisdom...*

Both start out as God-fearing leaders, but eventually lead people into idolatry... Both amass great fortunes...

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

And the Antichrist will be further proof that humanity apart from God - *even at his wisest and most refined* is still corrupt to the core and brazenly rebellious. In the end the great human hope will turn beastly. Revelation 13 closes with the evil Antichrist, the Beast, 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 get the *action* - but you could never identify the *players*. These chapters are "a roster of the end times."

The Rebel forces include the dragon, the beast, and his accomplice (*the false prophet*)... Whereas God's troops include the armies of heaven, 144,000 Jews, two Jewish witnesses, three angelic messengers, and one like the Son of Man who carries a sharp sickle.

Chapter 13 focuses on the bad guys, the Beastie Boys. And like any good roster it lists a jersey number, 666... Chapter 14 lists God's team. And its 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 Christ... *not the revelation of the Beast, or seals, or trumpets, or 666*. Too often we get caught up in the peripherals and miss Jesus. This book is about the risen and exalted Savior! He's no longer the humble Galilean preacher who walked dusty trails in first century Israel. He is now "King of kings and Lord of lords." Forever, all creation will be under His feet.

And here, Jesus is the Lamb - but notice *His posture* and *His place*... He's "standing on Mount Zion."

That Jesus is "standing" tells us much. In Hebrews 1:13 the Father God says to His Son, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." For nearly 2000 years this where Jesus has been, *sitting at God's right hand*. But now He "stands to His feet!" It's time for Jesus to take a stand against this evil world.

And notice *where* Jesus stands? He's "on Mount Zion." Zion is a hill in Jerusalem. Over time it became the name for the entire city. John sees the Lamb standing in Jerusalem, *the place of kings*. His intent is to rule. Here, He's returned to the scene of the crime. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. And this is God's issue with our planet. The world 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, blood, and judgment. *What would you design if you sacrificed your only son for somebody; who then 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... And where Jesus once showed mercy, He'll now 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 the risen Lord Jesus in all His regal glory, standing on Mount Zion, ready to put His foot down in judgment.

Yet before this judgment, our merciful God sends out one last call to repent. Chapter 14 is **"the last chance chapter."** *It's God's "last call..."* 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, the # 666... *But there's a godly antithesis.* God's witnesses are dearer to Him, than Satan's followers 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?*

It seems these are the Tribulation saints martyred for their faith. The 144,000 witnesses know their song since they've tasted similar persecution. 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-after 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 144,000 Jews will be men on a mission. They lack the time for marriage, or a family. *How can you celebrate an anniversary or coach Little League when God is issuing a last call to a wicked world?* The eternal destiny of men hang in the balance. These witnesses need to be single-minded. Pledged to preach, not play! This will be a *different kind of day...*

John adds a word about these witnesses, “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” These 144,000 believing Jews will live at a different time and minister under different conditions, **but this is something that should be true of us all! All Christians need to follow the Lamb wherever He goes!**

“These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.” These 144,000 Jews were saved at the beginning of the final seven years. They were the first fruits of the final harvest. Now they lead others to Jesus. “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*. **God’s last call** is heard crystal clear.

But the 144,000 Jewish witnesses are not God’s only method of last days’ evangelism. As the clock winds down 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.” This should speak volumes to us...

One day God will use angels to proclaim the good news. Angels are never *too scared* or *too busy* to share their faith. They’re far more efficient than you and me. 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 sends out angels. Like an airplane pulling a banner 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 angel warns of **the rebel's destination**. He's "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 this damning mark is *a credit card, a barcode, a microchip, a vein scan, an infrared tattoo, or a technology not yet invented*, this is certainly more than just convenient commerce. To "receive his mark" is an act of worship. Rather than trust Jesus Christ, people will put their faith in "Anti-Christ." This is their final rejection of the offering of God's love and 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 gives us a glimpse of **the torments of Hell...**

And 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 attempts to convince mankind Hell is real!

John tells us people in Hell are tormented *by fire, hot coals, stifling smoke*. In verse 10 the word "**brimstone**" refers to sulphur flashes. Think of flash-pots at a rock concert. In hell you're bombarded with mini-explosions. Hell is like living in the mouth of an erupting volcano. The heat is unbearable. It's 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 agitated.

Everyone in hell will be stressed 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 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, while 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**, whereas heaven is a hammock. Hey, we'll rest in Heaven forever. But right now we need to remember, we have only a few short hours left to do God's will. If we believe in a literal hell, *how can we be nonchalant about folks 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. So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped." Just before the last battle, one final surge of lost souls will give their lives to Jesus.

The sickle's first thrust is a harvest of salvation, but it's 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 a winepress grapes are crushed and stomped. “*The great winepress of the wrath of God*” is His 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.”

Note, when these grapes are pressed it's not wine that results, but blood. Jesus crushes the rebels who defy His rule. This all leads to a final judgment 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 ravines the blood will rise to the horse's bridle.

It's interesting, 200 miles is the approximate length of the Holy Land - *from north to south - from the Golan to the Dead Sea*. John foresees the day when Israel's valleys will all become a blood-stained battlefield. And we'll talk more about that in the coming chapters...