

*koptō* means to strike or beat the beast in grief. When it is used in the sense of labor it always entails drudgery, and weariness of the soul (or sorrow). The Spirit promised rest from weariness "for their works (*erga* - physical labor) follows with them." God promises to bless those who die in Christ with victory; give meaning to their suffering, and assures them that their work for Christ's kingdom is not in vain.

## SECTION 45

Text 14:14-20

14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the alter, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Initial Questions 14:14-20

1. What is the imagery of vs. 14?
2. Will any escape the heavenly harvest according to vs. 15?
3. Who is the one "that sat on the cloud" - vs. 16?
4. What national song finds some of its imagery in vs. 17-20?
5. How far is a "thousand six hundred furlongs" - vs. 20?

Vision of the Harvest and Vintage of the Earth  
Chapter 14:14-20

Verse 14

The remaining section of this chapter is concerned primarily with the judgment of God. John saw "a white cloud" and

one like a son of man was sitting majestically with a crown of sovereign authority on his head, and a sharp sickle for reaping in his hand. The symbols are vitally related. The kingly crown authorizes him to cast the sickle of judgment upon the whole earth.

Though the phrase "son of man" is without question a messianic title, we must note the Greek word *homoian* which means like, which makes the phrase a simile - "one sitting like a (no article here) son of man." The Jehovah's Witnesses completely distort this phrase into the claim that Jesus is nothing but a created angel. This claim is repudiated by the entire scope of the biblical doctrine of Christ.

#### Verse 15

That the "one sitting" on a white cloud was an angel is implied by the term (*allos*) another angel. This new angelic character was continually crying out (*krazōn* - present participle) "to the one sitting on the cloud, send (*pempson* - 1st aor. act. imp. mood - thrust or cast - immediately in a single act. There is to be no extended process of judgment; it will be swift, severe, certain). Why did the angel cry with such diligence in order to bring judgment upon the earth? The answer is forth coming - "because the hour came to reap; because (*hoti* - is causal same as above) the harvest of the earth was dried (*exeranthē* - 1st aor. passive voice - ind. mood; the word means over ripe - thus dried up, and the aor. passive means that some one (God) prepared the earth in a single, momentary act for judgment).

#### Verse 16

The one "like a son of man" responded to the dry" and thrust (*ebalen* - 2nd aor. ind. active voice - cast with a single throw) his sickle over the extent (*epi* - on, or extent of the earth); and the earth was reaped (*etheristhē* - 1st aor. passive voice - ind. case). The harvest of the world is now gathered. The harvest of the souls of men shall either be gathered through evangelism to Christ, or through judgment to condemnation. The harvest of men is eloquently depicted by Christ in John 4:35. . . "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." Now, we have the two possible harvests, the harvest of judgment, or the harvest of evangelism'. Which shall it be?

*Verse 17*

Still another angel went forth out of the sanctuary in heaven." The physical temple at Jerusalem had long been destroyed (in the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D.). This angel also had a sharp sickle for reaping. This is the same place (the sanctuary) from which the prayers of the saints went forth (study chps. 6 & 8.) The imagery of judgment continues also in this verse. "Another angel, . . . the one having authority over the fire" cried out "to the one having the sharp sickle." He was commanded to gather the clusters of over ripe grapes.

*Verse 19*

The clusters of over ripe grapes were gathered and "cast (*ebalen* - 2nd aor. ind. - active voice - same form and meaning as in vs. 16) into the winepress of God's great anger." The imagery of the wine press is a very dramatic way of showing that none shall escape the wrath of God. Some men deny that God's wrath (*orge*) will condemn those who are out of Christ. We are now witnessing a resurgence of universalism in the so-called Christian world, but this section of scripture, along with many others, repudiate the claims of universalism. (See the *Special Study on The Gospel, Guilt, and Resurgent Universalism.*)

*Verse 20*

The judgment which was inflicted upon the earth was so terrible that blood (*haima* - blood - note the change in imagery from the fruit of the grapes to blood) went out of the winepress as far as the bridles of the horses, from 1500 hundred furlong." A furlong (*stadiōn*) is a little over 606 feet, therefore, the blood was running over four feet deep over the total geographical extent of Palestine. In fact, 1600 hundred furlong (approximately 200 miles) would have run over the boundries of the Palestine of the N.T. period.

The two preceding images of judgment have been extracted from Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6. The imagery of Palestine is here used for the whole earth, just as earthly Jerusalem is taken as the whole earth in 11:8.

Much of the imagery of one of our national songs - *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* is taken from the Joel, Isaiah, and Revelation 14:14-20.

This chapter was inserted between two great series of God's judgment to insure the suffering Christians of ultimate

victory over sin, hell, and the grave, even if physical death was inflicted upon them as the results of persecution. Note how chapter 7 was also an insertion between the events of opening of the 6th and 7th seals.

### Discussion Questions Chapter 14

1. Compare the teaching of chp. 13 with chp. 14 - regarding the persons involved, the marks, the significance of the marks.
2. Compare and discuss chps. 7 and 14 with respect to the 144,000 saints.
3. Discuss some spiritual requirements of worshipful singing in view of vs. 3.
4. Discuss the Roman Catholic claim that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than a married one in light of vs. 4.
5. What three things were required of mankind according to vs. 7?
6. What was the message of the third angel - vs. 9?
7. What implications are there in John's use of the imagery of undiluted wine for God's wrath in vs. 10?
8. Are the tormented ones conscious of their punishment according to vs. 11?
9. What assurance does God give the persecuted Christians in vs. 13?
10. Discuss God's judgment according to vs. 15
11. Compare the harvest imagery of vs. 16 with Jesus' use of the imagery in John 4:35.
12. What does vs. 19 have to tell us regarding universalism (i.e., that everyone will ultimately be saved?)
13. Read Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6 and discuss the judgment imagery of this section of scripture.

### *Special Study*

#### Yes, There Is a Hell!

Many people in the contemporary religious world deny the existence of hell. The denial stems from many supposed reasons. Some contend that the doctrine of hell is barbaric superstition; others hold that the doctrine is in diametric opposition