

Pursuing Resilience in Revelation

The Two-Fold Harvest of Christ

Revelation 14:14-20

Intro

In his classic book *A Tale of Two Cities* Charles Dickens shows us a picture of a world in which the outcome of society is very different depending on who is in charge. The French chose godless atheism and it threw their society into an anxiety riddled cesspool of chaos. The British chose a God-centered constitutional monarchy and they experienced great peace.

The classical examples from Dickens of the differences between London and Paris are not all too dissimilar from the comparison of the city of God with the city of man. The city of man, ruled by Satan through his corruption of Adam's children is a world of hatred, anxiety, and chaos. The city of God ruled by the God-man Jesus is a place of peace and joy where our God was willing to be crushed in our place in order to restore us to Himself. These two places could not be more different, and depending upon who you crown as king over your life, your outcome could not be more dissimilar.

Today we will explore the vast difference between the futures of those who have set Christ as king over their lives and those who have set Satan as king over their lives.

Discover

In this passage John gives us an exploded view of a statement Jesus made in John 5:25-29. Indeed, there will be two harvests leading to two resurrections which will lead to very different outcomes for two types of people.

As I said last week, C.S. Lewis keenly observes that there will only be two types of people in the end. There will be those who say to God, "thy will be done" and there will be those to whom God will say "thy will be done." The difference between heaven and hell is whether or not a person is willing to repent of sin and yield his or herself to God or not. Hell is a place for those who are forever bent against God, who are firmly resolved on hating Him and living in rebellion against Him. No one who wants heaven will be denied it.

The real problem the world faces is that it is filled with people who would rather die than admit that they need a savior. Yet only by admitting that we are sinful and in need of a savior can we have true and abundant life.

I. The first harvest (14-16)

A. One like a son of man

1. Every indication here points to this person being Christ Himself.
 - a) He sits on a cloud, and if we remember coming on the clouds is a biblical phrase meaning coming in pure judgement.
 - b) He's like a son of man, the Son of Man being one of the titles Jesus took for Himself. It relates back to Daniel and the coming Messiah who comes out of and rules over humanity.
 - c) He has a golden crown which represents His kingship over the world.
 - d) He carries a sharp sickle which indicates His intention and ability to reap His harvest out of the world.

B. Another angel

1. Possibly the Holy Spirit in an angelic form who is sent by the Father to tell the Son that the time for reaping is here (angel literally means one sent by God).
 - a) Mark 13:32
2. This could also be a literal angel. Either way, it is clear that this figure carries the message to the Son from the Father that the end is here.

C. The harvest is ripe

1. By the time the Father gives the word for the Son to return and harvest His people, everyone who is going to be saved will have been saved.
2. At this point, the door to the ark will be closed. There will be no rapture and then a second chance for people who are left behind. Jesus is clear about this. He will return, all will rise and receive their proper reward.
3. Those who have done the good deeds will receive the resurrection of life at this time.
 - a) Those who have done the good deeds are those who have rejected sin and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They alone will receive eternal life in Christ as their reward.

II. The second harvest (17-19)

A. Yet another angel

1. This angel comes out of the temple and like Jesus, carries a sharp sickle.
 - a) This sickle isn't meant for the redeemed though. This is meant for the rebels against God who have counted themselves as unworthy of eternal life by rejecting Christ's substitution as a sacrifice in their place.

B. Yet again another angel

1. This angel has power over fire, which may tell us that this angel has some specific responsibility regarding tending the fire of God's holy altar in the heavenly temple.
 - a) The fire imagery is significant because the same fire which purifies the saints of Christ will utterly burn and destroy the sons of this world.
 - b) The ultimate destination for those who are under the wrath of God is a lake of unquenchable fire. This is not a place which was prepared for people initially, but because people followed Satan they will follow him to his destination.
- C. The great wine press
1. The wicked who are harvested out of this world will be thrown into a great wine press because they are grapes of God's wrath by their own choosing.
 - a) This is the resurrection of judgement which Jesus describes in John 5. The wicked will receive the wages of sin which they have earned well for themselves and there will be no mercy because they have rejected Christ who offered Himself for them.
 - b) The time for mercy is now! Don't wait, repent and believe today because you don't know what tomorrow might bring.
 2. Christ has already been pressed in this wine press for the sake of His saints. All who drink of Him will be spared from this wine press ourselves. This is the beauty of the gospel! We who deserve to be crushed have had a perfect and beautiful Savior step in to be crushed in our place. All we must do is turn from our vanity by confessing our sins and believing in Christ.
 3. Either Christ will be the grape of God's wrath in our place, or we will be grapes of God's wrath ourselves. There is no in-between.

III. Outside the city (20)

- A. The city here is likely referring to the new Jerusalem.
- B. This bloodbath will take place outside of the city where all unclean actions are undertaken.
 1. It's clear that there will be a great multitude who are pressed out that day, but this does not have to be your future. The fact that Christ died and rose in your place means that God wants to save you from yourself.

Nurture

Who is God? He is the Lord of the harvest.

What has God done? He has sent His son Jesus to turn bad grapes into good grapes by His bloody cross and empty tomb.

Who are we? We are those who by faith will be a part of Christ's good harvest and who will rise to eternal reward in Him.

What are we being called to do? We are called to join Jesus, His angels, and His church in proclaiming the truth of the two harvests, pleading with weeds to repent and become wheat so that they may avoid the winepress of God's wrath.

Act

Hebrews 2:1-4

For those who receive Christ there is nothing but escape from God's wrath. For those who refuse to accept Christ as their substitute sacrifice, there is no escape. So who will you follow?

Who in your life needs to hear that they don't have to remain as a weed, but can become wheat in Christ?

Let us live as the good grapes which Jesus has made us in Him. May we walk by His Spirit. May we bring others with us into His kingdom.