

Exciting Prophecies of Christ's Coming

The Olivet Story

Following a dramatic public rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees, Christ and His disciples exited the precincts of Jerusalem's temple. Jesus told these men that there would be no stone left upon another of that magnificent structure. Four of the disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3), shortly accompanied Jesus to the Mount of Olives. Curious, they questioned when that would happen and, seemingly, made interesting assumptions that:

1. It must be at the time of His next coming to this earth.
2. That must be at the end of the world.

Christ told them that His Second Coming (*parousia*) would occur **after** (1) the time of a **great tribulation** (Matthew 24:21, 27) and (2) its terminal celestial signs (Matthew 24:29-30).¹

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken ... then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” (Matthew 24:29-30a).

Luke's focus is on the celestial events: ***“The powers of heaven shall be shaken”*** (21:26).

- This stunning drama is also described following the breaking of the sixth seal, accompanied by major earthquake activity: ***“The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place”*** (Revelation 6:14 – NIV).
- This shaking of the heavens is repeated at the seventh trumpet (11:13,19) and the seventh bowl plague (Revelation 16:18-21).

They all reference identical prophecies. These episodes bring wicked humanity into a state of panic: ***“People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken”*** (Luke 21:26 – NET).

Imagine: “If the soldiers at the sepulcher were so filled with terror at the appearance of one angel clothed with heavenly light and strength, that they fell as dead men to the ground, how will his enemies stand before the Son of God, when he comes in power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels from the courts of Heaven? Then the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage. The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.”²

¹ Keener, Craig S.; *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 583.

² Pamphlet: *Redemption*, vol. 6, p. 12, 1877.

To these inquiring disciples, Christ added:

- ***“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the **clouds** of heaven, with power and great glory”*** (Matthew 24:30 – NIV).
- Matthew records that premier description of Christ’s Second Advent. It includes events from Jeremiah 4:13, Daniel 7:13-14, and Zechariah 12:10-12.³

In many of the Second Coming illustrations, Christ is on or in a heavenly cloud. This cloud is the final “*sign*” of Christ’s return. Without a detailed description, His coming is perceived with **power** and **great glory**. This will become a major sensory experience. Something unique, awesome, and even mesmerizing, is associated with **power and glory of His divine presence!**

There is an unknown spiritual essence – a mysterious “divinity” – a power beyond human understanding – that is an element of God’s glory! At His Second Coming (implied), we are informed that:

- The wicked of the earth at His appearance ***“said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb”*** (Revelation 6:16).
- Paul said of the destruction of the antichrist at that time: ***“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall **destroy with the brightness of his coming**”*** (II Thessalonians 2:8).

The wicked react negatively to His power and glory. When Jesus comes again, the earth’s lost will quail at His glorious, divine “light”!

- They mourn, they are terrified (cf. Zechariah 12:10-14).
- They are filled with grief as to what this will personally mean.⁴

Expositor White captured that moment: “No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever,—eternal life. Men whom the world has worshiped for their talents and eloquence now see these things in their true light. They realize what they have forfeited by transgression, and they fall at the feet of those whose fidelity they have despised and derided, and confess that God has loved them.”⁵ (cf. Revelation 3:9)

The drama doesn’t stop there. For the saints, God’s loyalists.

- Christ now ***“will send his angels with **a loud trumpet call**, and they will **gather his elect from the **four winds**, from one end of the heavens to the other”***** (Matthew 24:31 – NIV).
- Two groups are described at the time of Christ’s return:

³ Turner, David L.; *Matthew* (Baker Academic; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 582.

⁴ Nolland, John; *NIGTC, The Gospel of Matthew* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, MI; 2005), p. 984.

⁵ *The Great Controversy*, p. 655.

1. Those who mourn – the wicked who recoil from that glory.
2. Those identified by God as His “*elect*” – the saved. They will be elated – and have unlimited exaltation.

The “*four winds*,” alluding to the whole world (its four key directions), represent the universality of those angels’ charge.

- The eschatological trumpet sounds at the descent of Christ: “*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the **trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first***” (I Thessalonians 4:16).
- And then at that resurrection: “*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed***” (I Corinthians 15:52).⁶

Immediately preceding His coming: “*the seventh [trump] angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*” (Revelation 11:15). Even the “*heavenly host*” share in this time of elation.

“At His coming the righteous dead will be raised, and the righteous living will be changed. ‘We shall not all sleep,’ says Paul, ‘but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.’ 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. And in his letter to the Thessalonians, after describing the coming of the Lord, he says: ‘The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to **meet the Lord in the air**: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.”⁷

Second Coming Parable – Verdicts Completed

The final section of Christ’s Olivet discourse is a judgment scene parable.⁸ In Matthew 24:30-31 two groups are noted. This time Christ is not on a cloud but on a glorious throne (cf. Matthew 19:28, Revelation 3:21). This is not a trial but the **outcome** of a judicial verdict.

- “***When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats***” (Matthew 25:31-32 – NET).
- That separation is done from all the “nations” – a global move that reveals their eternal destiny has been fixed.⁹

⁶ Hagner, Donald A.; *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nelson Reference & Electronic, Division of Thomas Nelson Publishers), vol. 33, p. 714.

⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 322.

⁸ Hagner, *op. cit.*, p. 740.

⁹ Keener, Craig S.; *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 604.

For the “sheep” (those saved), Jesus says: “*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*” (Matthew 25:34) (a kingdom planned long ago – now implemented). The ultimate joy being identified by God as “blessed.”

For the goats (those lost), Jesus says: “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41). The ultimate terror – their destruction.

White beautifully notes: “Christ would have all understand the events of his second appearing.... ***in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and his law will stand forth as ‘holy, and just, and good.’*** Then every case will be decided, and sentence will be passed upon all. Sin will not then appear attractive but will be seen in all its hideous magnitude. All will see the relation in which they stand to God and to one another.

“Let us mark the partition made between the sheep and the goats, and listen to his words to each: ‘When God’s people are clothed with white robes, and crowned as true subjects of his kingdom, those who have been disloyal will see the inconsistency of their uniting with the loyal to honor and magnify the law of God, which they have educated themselves to disregard. They have regarded the law of God as null and void, and should they be trusted to come through the gates into the city? They then find that they have no passport, nothing in them that can change their life sentiments. They have made their choice of false sentiments in the place of truth, and holiness, and righteousness, and they can not change them. Every man who, by his actions, has declared, I will not have this Man to reign over me, will no longer have the privilege of being under that rule.

In Christ’s detailed Olivet discourse, the ***advent prophecies*** move from “*lightning*” drama from the east (Matthew 24:27) to the time the saints will be “harvested” to the discovery that being saved or lost ultimately relates to the individual!

Second Coming Drama

Before Christ moved into the body of those Olivet prophecies, He said, almost parenthetically:

- “*For just like the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be*” (Matthew 24:27 – NET).
- Jesus’ appearance will not be some obscure or secret event. It will be as unmistakable as lightning that flashes across the sky.¹⁰ Every eye shall see him (Revelation 1:7).

The direction noted for this lightning suggests that Christ may enter earth’s precincts from the east (cf. Ezekiel 43:2). This is the direction symbolizing “*deliverance.*” Stunning!

Paul Adds to this Drama

The apostle had been sharing resurrection concepts with the Corinthian believers (I Corinthians 15). Then, as some scholars conclude, there is an abrupt announcement:

¹⁰ Turner, David L.; *Matthew* (Baker Academic; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 579.

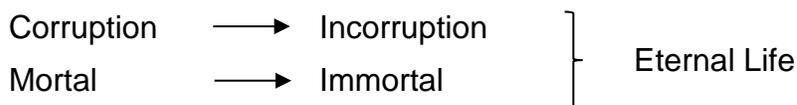
- *“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption”* (I Corinthians 15:50 – NET).
- Bodily change from flesh and blood (corrupt) to incorruption is necessary to inherit the kingdom. Some “creative change” has to take place at Christ’s coming!

This process is stated as a mystery – a spiritual secret. This happens at the “*last trump*” – the trumpet sound previously noted (Revelation 11:15).

- *“Listen, I will tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – **in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet.** For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.”* (I Corinthians 15:51-53 – NET).
- The Second Coming will break into history, altering the order of everything! The very nature of saved mankind will be recreated in an instant! Amazing, exciting, a mystery – be ready!

Both the resurrected and those saints remaining alive will be gifted with this transformation. The rapidity of this change alludes to the smallest conceivable moment.¹¹

Not one of God’s people will be neglected.¹²



When this change occurs, death with its sadness is forever gone. With it is the end of sin and being at variance with God’s law. Redemptive history has come to an end. For God’s people, everything becomes new, including that gift of eternal life.

- Paul’s wonderful conclusion: *“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”* (I Corinthians 15:54-55).
- Paul’s rendition introduces the genesis of a glorious future for God’s people. Death will never occur again.

The Second Advent storyline broadens – the reason for Christ’s return deepens. Paul had more to say about those who died when writing to the Thessalonians.

“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope” (I Thessalonians 4:13 – NIV).

¹¹ Garland, David E.; *I Corinthians* (Baker Academic; Grand Rapids, Michigan), pp. 740-743.

¹² Kistemaker, Simon J.; *I Corinthians*, p. 582.

The next verse has brought deep scholarly debate. This is the NIV: *“For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring [back to life¹³] with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him”* (I Thessalonians 4:14).

- Many scholars (Bruce, Roberts, White) note that the Greek means the dead saints will be raised when He comes, just as Jesus was raised from the dead.
- Simply, they will be resurrected at His coming.

“For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep” (I Thessalonians 4:15 – NET).

- Here, the word for “coming” is, again, “*parousia*,” which links it directly to Matthew 25:31.
- It is at His next return to planet earth that the very last trumpet-associated event occurs – the resurrection of the righteous dead.

*“For the Lord himself will **come down from heaven**, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the **trumpet call** of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**”* (I Thessalonians 4:16 – NIV).

- One can imagine that at that time the earth will be covered with the righteous and perhaps billions of resurrected saints from Adam and Eve’s day to this time!
- How long this massive number of people “wait to lose gravity” is not revealed. But seeing Christ in all His glory, meeting friends and relatives long lost to the grave, the ecstasy of a new mind and body is there for our imagination to feast on. The word “glorious” seems fitting for this time!

Then comes a text that has often been neglected but is so astounding:

*“After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord **in the air**. And so we will be with the Lord forever”* (I Thessalonians 4:17 – NIV). Scholars William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker give insightful commentary on this verse:

- The Lord will return in/on the clouds – **the saints rise and join Him in the clouds to meet Him in the air**.
- The elevation is not given but above the earth is fully implied.¹⁴

Ponder this companion thought from Christ to John: “Thus will be fulfilled Christ’s promise to His disciples, ‘I will come again, and **receive you** unto Myself.’ John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be **caught up**

¹³ Bruce, F. F.; *Word Biblical Commentary, 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, #45 (William B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, MI, p. 97.

¹⁴ Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary, Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, pp. 115-119.

with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, **Your warfare is accomplished.** ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34.”¹⁵

“Therefore encourage one another with these words” (I Thessalonians 4:18 – NIV).

The Apocalypse and His Return

As the stunning Book of Revelation begins, several dramatic eschatological truths are presented. It is as though God is saying, “As you study this book, keep these points clearly in mind!”

1. The whole message is a Revelation from Jesus that was “given to him of God” (1:1).
2. The events described will “shortly come to pass” (1:1).
3. A blessing comes to those who study Revelation (1:2).
4. The time is near (1:3).

In the nearly limitless messages, concepts, events, and warnings, these timing thoughts could get lost in evaluating this book. But Jesus cuts short that concern. **What is about to occur?**

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7).

A short verse – new concepts:

- Every human being alive will see Him coming.
- Those who participated in His crucifixion will be there to witness it.

That could be a dilemma to understand, except that Daniel explains: *“Many of those who sleep in the dusty ground will awake – some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting abhorrence”* (Daniel 12:2 – NET).

- It appears that at the resurrection of the saints, some wicked are raised also.
- That would account for this unique advent message (Revelation 1:7).

“The sound of music is heard, and as the cloud nears, the graves are opened and the dead are raised, and there are thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand of angels that compose that glory and encircle the Son of man. **Those who have acted the most prominent part in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ come forth to see Him as He is,** ... and it is at that time that the saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and are caught up to meet their Lord in the air.”¹⁶

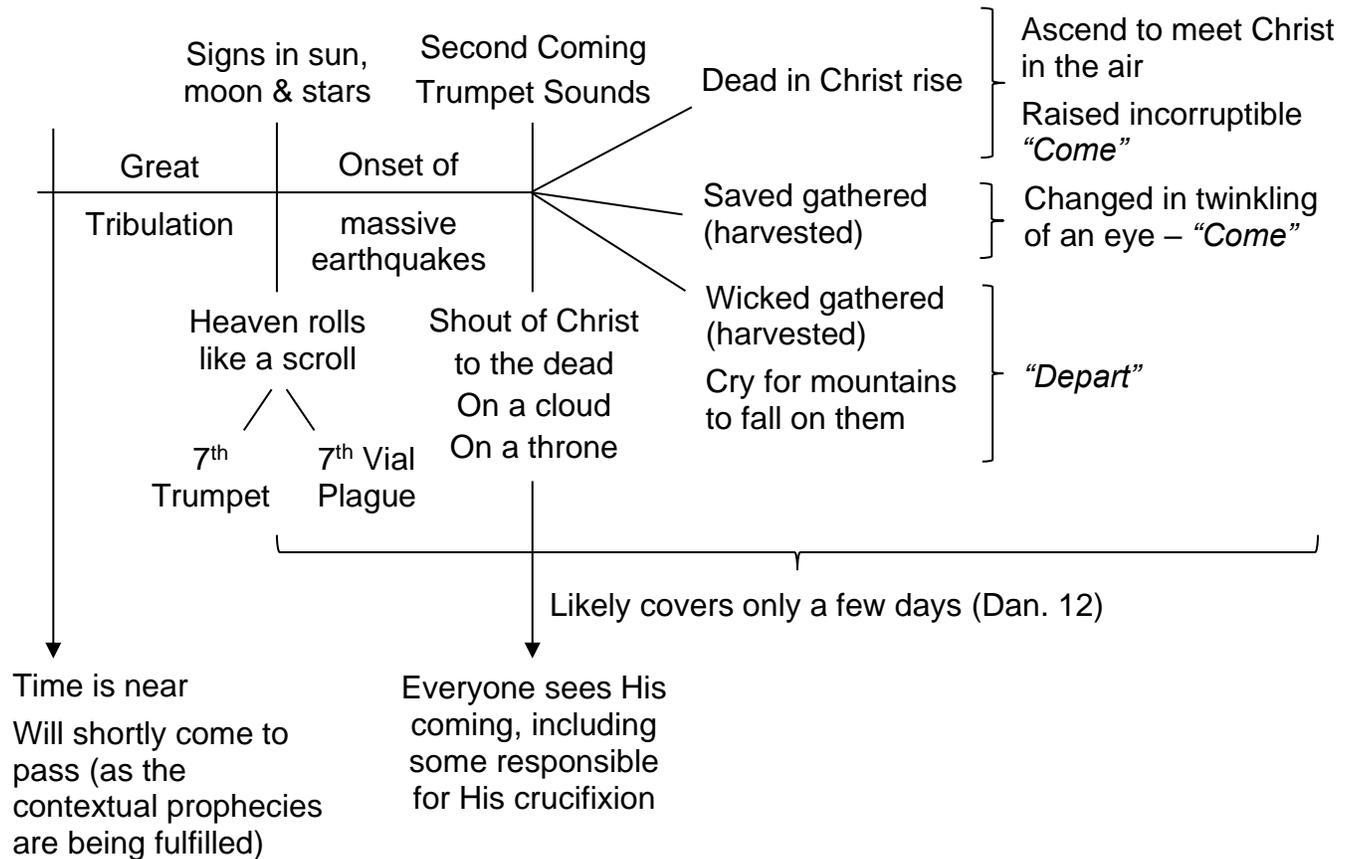
¹⁵ *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

¹⁶ *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 49.

This text highlights Christ, His crucifixion, His justice, and the horrors of being lost (already addressed in Matthew 24:30).

- John calls his readers to the reality of His coming when he says, “Behold” (“Look”).
- His visible coming is dramatic and **visually apparent globally**.

Revelation gives no indication that Christ’s enemies come to repentance at this time. They mourn because there is now no turning back.¹⁷



God’s Executive Actions at the Second Coming

The most dramatic picture of God’s wrath is recorded in Revelation 14:9-11. It is a judicial statement of His anticipated **sentence** against anyone who worships the beast, its image (its sign of authority) or has the mark of that beast (adhering to changes in God’s laws the beast or antichrist has made).

- “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (Revelation 1:10).
- This contrasts with the saints’ description in verse 12. They keep His commandments and have a testimony for/about Jesus.

Contextually, John is quickly introduced to the final execution of God’s will regarding all of earth’s inhabitants at Christ’s coming.

¹⁷ Kistemaker, Simon J.; *Revelation*, p. 86.

First:

"I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand" (Revelation 14:14 – NIV).

- This picture replicates Daniel 7:13 and Matthew 24:30 **with the words** "Son of man" and "clouds" – the latter associates Jesus in Revelation 1:7.
- This imagery depicts a judicial reward of those heeding the warning messages coming from the three angels (14:6-11). A final harvest of "grain," seen by the sickle symbol, represents the saints.¹⁸

The golden crown is Christ's crown of "victory." He has the authority to harvest because He overcame the world and Satan. Intriguingly, the twenty-four elders also wear golden crowns of victory (Revelation 4:4). They share with Him the victory and then rulership of His kingdom. This rulership becomes complete after the antichrist is destroyed.

- *"I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11; cf. 7:26).*
- *"Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him" (Daniel 7:27 – NIV).*

This sequence continues in Revelation 14:

- *"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" (Revelation 14:15). That's at His Second Coming!*
- This is a messenger from **God's throne** within the heavenly temple (7:15). In 11:19 a "storm theophany" comes out of the temple; in 15:5-8 the angels with the seven plagues also come out of the temple; and in 16:1, 17 the command to pour out the plagues comes from the temple.
- The loud voice marks another imperative from heaven's throne room:
 1. Loud voice: *"It is done"* (Revelation 16:17).
 2. Loud voice: Time to harvest – gather the saints (Revelation 14:15).

"Jesus has finished his priestly office in the Heavenly Sanctuary, and lays off his priestly attire, and puts on his most kingly robes, and crown, to ride forth on the cloudy chariot, to 'thresh the heathen in anger,' and deliver his people."¹⁹

- This heavenly saga is interesting.

¹⁸ Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), pp. 550-551.

¹⁹ *Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12.

- Christ is fully prepared to reap the vast harvest of the saints. He, however, awaits the “green light” from God’s throne via a “messenger angel”! The angel says that that time has come.

“The Lord has a **time appointed** when He will bind off the work; ... then shall the end come.”²⁰ This “reaping” is of believers for God’s kingdom.²¹

John continues: “*And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped*” (Revelation 14:16 – NIV).

The sickle noted is “*sharp*” (vs 14). The harvest will be complete, without a flaw. No one will be left behind. Intriguingly, in 14:4 the 144,000 are called the firstfruits of that harvest!

- The gathering of the elect is alluded to in Isaiah 21:12, Matthew 9:37-38, Luke 10:2, and John 4:35-38.
- It is fascinating to note that the one who was seated on the cloud thrust in the sickle. Seated means He has judicial authority to act.²²

Nothing is said in this rendition as to what is done to this grain harvest. All scholars, however, conclude that they are the ones saved (especially contrasted with what follows).²³

Second:

Contrasting this **grain harvest** is a **grape harvest** in the next few verses:

1. Verse 17: Another angel (assumed not a divine being) comes out of the temple with a sharp sickle.
2. Verse 18: Then another “*angel*” comes from the altar (where the prayers of the saints and martyrs are received). [Many see this “angel” as Christ (cf. Revelation 8:3-5)].
 - a. This latter “*angel*” has charge of fire (final judgment).
 - b. He orders the above angel with a sickle in a **loud voice** to harvest the clusters of grapes (wicked) for they, too, are ripe.

The cry, especially of the martyrs of the fifth seal, was, How long, God, until you act? (Revelation 6:10). This now is God’s ultimate answer:

²⁰ *The Publishing ministry*, pp. 389-390 (emphasis added); Lt 83, 1896.

²¹ Kistemaker, *op. cit.* p. 417.

²² Roloff, Jurgen; *The Revelation of John – A Continental Commentary*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN), p. 173.

²³ Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Dallas, Texas), 1997, pp. 844-845.



The grapes are symbolically “crushed,” apparently by Christ (Isaiah 63:2-3, Revelation 19:15).

1. “*Outside the city*” is not fully understood.
2. The wicked are not saved; they are destroyed “*outside the city.*”²⁴

“*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*” (Revelation 14:20).

Christ’s blood bought redemption of the saints (celebrated by communion service – I Corinthians 11:25). Here God’s wrath is symbolized; the blood of the wicked is now shed. The distance (180 miles) and depth appear to be **metaphorical expressions** of how intense God’s wrath will be – prophesied in the third angel’s message (14:9-11). A literal interpretation detracts from the deeper spiritual message.

“The wrath of God has long slumbered, but soon, with terrible justice and crushing weight, will his wrath fall upon the transgressor. And that arm that has been stretched forth in rebellion against God’s law and would sever the golden link binding earth to Heaven and man to God, will wither while the transgressor shall stand upon his feet. That tongue that has boastfully and proudly spoken against God’s law, and made the fourth commandment of none effect, will consume in his mouth while he stands upon his feet. Terrible will be the fate of those who transgress God’s law, and lead others in the same Heaven-daring path of rebellion.”²⁵

The eternal promises for those loyal to heaven remain a silver thread of hope through these advent prophecies. The warnings of rebellion are a progressive apocalyptic theme, with growing intensity and alarm, urgently stimulating one’s imagination: “Be on God’s side!”

²⁴ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 555.

²⁵ *Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White*, pp. 340-341.

Finally, God has one other eschatological warning that ***follows the storyline*** of Babylon's fall (apostate Christianity's fall) (Revelation 17–18).

Christ's Military Arrival

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war" (Revelation 19:11 – NIV).

John saw heaven open in 4:1, 11:19, and 15:5 (cf. Ezekiel 1:1). It is interesting that heaven is already departed or rolled back as a scroll in the sixth seal (Revelation 6:14a). That references the same period of time.

- The white horse and rider previously symbolized going out to battle (first seal – Revelation 6:2), represented Christ leading forward the 144,000 in their conquering "gospel mission."
- "White" means purity, holiness.
- The rider here is called "*faithful and true*" – the contextual name. Previously, Jesus was called a "*faithful witness*" (1:5). It is Him.
- The "*war*" now implied is not a literal battle but a judicial/legal one based on the holiness of God's reaction to evil.²⁶ This is when Christ enters the Armageddon "war."

Some scholars see this also as another graphic depiction of Christ's Second Coming. This imagery appears to culminate a ***period of time***, beginning with a white horse of the first seal (6:2).

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (Revelation 19:12).

The fiery eyes were previously described (Revelation 1:14, 2:18; cf. Daniel 10:6). Nothing passes His gaze. He reads the intent of the heart. He judges.

The many crowns here are diadems. He is now portrayed as a King! He is then called King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). This Being, this Rider, is coming to "*make war*" on the wicked.²⁷

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13).

Since an actual battle doesn't occur, this blood represents His own. This gives Him authority to mete out a final judgment.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Revelation 19:14).

The armies of heaven likely include:

²⁶ Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), pp. 950-951.

²⁷ Osborne, *op. cit.*, pp. 679-680.

1. **Angels** – when He comes, the angels gather the elect or saints (Matthew 24:30; cf. Matthew 13:41, 16:27, 25:31; I Thessalonians 3:13; II Thessalonians 1:7; Jude 14). They may wear white garments (15:6).
2. **Saints** – They would be currently resurrected saints now in heaven who arose with Jesus at His resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53). “This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people’ (Ephesians 4:8 – NIV). Believers also wear white (Revelation 3:4-5; 6:11, 7:9, 13-14; 19:8).²⁸ John said that they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, which made them white (7:14).

Though an anticipated war is seemingly apparent, especially with the antichrist and the leaders of the world preparing for a conflagration (Revelation 19:19), no battle is ever described.

“Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty” (Revelation 19:15 – NIV).

The only weapon is a sword (the Word of God) that comes out of Christ’s mouth – first noted in 1:16 (cf. Isaiah 49:2). It is a spiritual battle. Christ “fights” with His word or breath and heaven’s truth (II Thessalonians 2:8).²⁹ He wins – and He rewards!

The Second Advent is pending. At that time, the whole world will be divided into two groups – a forever “sentencing” by heaven. Ponder: Which group will you be in?

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²⁸ *Our High Calling*, p. 367. Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 684.

²⁹ Kistemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 523 (cf. Isaiah 11:4).