

Does The Winepress of Revelation 14 Tell Us When The Rapture Occurs?

Lesson 11

Revelation's Winepress

- ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia. (Revelation 14:19-20)
- Some questions immediately arise to understand the meaning
 - What is the sickle?
 - What or who is the grape harvest of the earth?
 - What is the great winepress of the wrath of God.
 - The winepress is trodden outside of the city...
 - Blood flows out of the winepress some 4 or 5 feet high and for approx. 185 miles.
 - Where does the blood go?
 - What does all of this mean?

What Is The Winepress?

- The winepress of God's wrath is the second most horrifying description in the Bible besides hell.
- God has a habit of using *natural* means to destroy wicked people.
 - To destroy the old world He used a flood.
 - To destroy Sodom and Gomorrah He used fire and brimstone.
- I believe the end-time destruction is no exception. He will use natural means. So we ask the question, "Where do the vultures gather?"

Who Is Trampled

- In [Luke 17:36-37a](#), we learned that at the “Day of the Lord”, certain people will be taken and the rest left on earth. The Disciples asked to where ...
 - Jesus responded: “Where the corpse is there the vultures will gather”
- [Revelation 19:15b-19](#):
- The figure of the sickle stands for reaping men. The figure of the vine stands for unbelieving men.

Treading

- When Christ treads the winepress will He literally stomp on men's bodies as a treader of grapes? ([Isa 63:1-6](#))
- The Bible does preview methods of destruction He will use.
 - He will use a sword, probably not a sword of metal because this sword comes out of His mouth instead of being held in His hand: ([Revelation 19:15](#), [Isa 34:5-6](#))
- Read these verses
 - [Psa 50:3](#) [Psa 97:3-5](#) [Is 66:15-17](#) [Revelation 16:21](#) [Revelation 16:17-21](#)
- How does 'hail' get into the winepress?
 - Read [Revelation 15:1](#)
 - If all seven vials were completed *during* the tribulation, and if the seven vials "fill up" the wrath of God, then how can there be any more wrath in the winepress which follows? You see, if the wrath of God is "filled up" in the seven vials, then part of the seventh vial has to include the winepress. This is how hail gets into the winepress.
- Placing the return of Christ *during* the seventh vial, instead of after it, harmonizes with the rest of Revelation. We have already seen that ...
 - Christ returns *during* the sixth seal ([Revelation 6:12-17](#); compare [Matthew 24:29](#)).
 - Likewise, Christ returns *during* the seventh trumpet, because during the seventh trumpet "it is done" ([Revelation 16:17](#)).
 - Whether it is seals, trumpets, or vials, it is the last one in each series during which Christ returns

Where Is The Winepress?

- [Zechariah 12:2, 9](#) It is in the vicinity of Jerusalem.
- The armies are there with their kings and captains, and the birds will feast on their flesh, but more than that, the birds will feast on the flesh of *all men*. This is the place they are taken to. This is the winepress. (Also see [Isaiah 34:15](#) and context.)
- A single passage ([Rev 14:19-20](#)) combines the taking, the casting, and the location. At Christ's return, all unbelievers from all over the globe are taken and cast into the winepress just outside Jerusalem.
- If the winepress begins outside Jerusalem, which direction does it extend? North to Armageddon? No, the distance from Jerusalem to Armageddon falls far short of 200 miles. Apparently, Armageddon is a place for the assembling of armies, not for the battle itself. After the armies assemble, they converge on Jerusalem according to [Zechariah 12:2, 9](#).
- Does the winepress extend to the west? No, the Mediterranean Sea is in the way.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat

- How about east? Read [Zechariah 14:4-5](#)
- When the mountain splits in two what do we have? We have a newly-formed valley running eastward outside Jerusalem. Does this mean that blood runs out of the winepress for 200 miles going straight east?
- The valley of the mountains (formed by the east-west splitting of the Mount of Olives as Christ sets foot on it) would form a suitable winepress where the Son of man could vent His fury upon those who blasphemed His name.
- There is another valley, however, which should be considered: ([Joel 3:2](#), [12-14](#))
- "Jehoshaphat" in Hebrew means "Jehovah judges." The valley of Jehoshaphat is where the Lord judges. That is why it is also called the valley of decision (the Lord's decision to punish the wicked).
- Where is this valley of Jehoshaphat? No one knows for sure, but it seems to be close to Jerusalem. Church tradition says it is the valley of Kidron east of Jerusalem. Maybe it is the valley which will be formed by the splitting of the Mount of Olives, and maybe not. At any rate, these two valleys, the valley of the mountains and the valley of Jehoshaphat, should be considered as likely sites for the winepress.
- Apparently the bloody winepress will be cleansed later by the river from the sanctuary in Jerusalem. See [Zechariah 14:8](#) and [Ezekiel 47:1-5](#).)

Timing The Winepress Supper Revelation 6:12-17

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

[Matthew 24:29](#) places these signs after the tribulation.

¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

This may be the point of Christ's return.

¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave^[a] and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,

Every man, not just the armies, are here because they were "taken" and cast into this place.

¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

This has to be after Christ's return, because before Christ's return people are peacefully working or sleeping ([Luke 17:34-36](#)).

Judgment And The Winepress

- Gundry says pre-tribs face a dilemma because we apparently leave no "goats" for the sheep-goats judgment. We believe all the wicked shall be taken away after the tribulation ([Luke 17:34–36](#)). If this is true, then where do the "goats" come from as mentioned in [Matt 25:31-33](#):
- How can any wicked remain to face this judgment if they have all been taken away previously? A possible answer is simply this: the taking and casting into the winepress is the result of the judgment. This solves the problem logically, but is there Scripture to back it up? ([Joel 3:2](#), [12-14](#))
- According to Joel the nations are gathered into the valley of Jehoshaphat for two reasons, to be judged and to be trampled. Notice that Joel describes the Lord as *sitting* while He judges:
- This places the time of the sheep-goats judgment *at* the Battle of Armageddon not sometime after it as a separate event.
 - First, the armies gather at Armageddon;
 - then they descend upon Jerusalem where the winepress is located,
 - then the angels gather the rest of the wicked ("all men" in [Revelation 19:18](#)) and cast them into the winepress.

The Judge Judges

Sheep-Goats Judgment	Winepress
passing sentence (Joel 3:12) reaping (Rev. 14:14-16) as Christ returns	executing sentence (Joel 3:13) casting (Rev. 14:17-20) after Christ returns

Also, [Revelation 14:14](#) says the Son of man "sat" on a white cloud just before treading the winepress. He sits on the cloud, which serves as His throne of glory, to judge between the sheep and the goats, and immediately He swoops down from the cloud to trample the goats which He has judged.

Gundry's own view of the sheep-goats judgment has a possibility of being correct. He places this judgment, not at the end of the tribulation, but at the end of the millennium, 1000 years later.

The River of Blood

- Refer to [Revelation 14:20](#). If blood flows out of the winepress beginning at Jerusalem for 200 miles, to where does the 200 miles extend?
- With that much blood flowing out of the winepress, where does it empty out?
- Even if you were to pack the Armageddon armies together like sardines, you still could not drain enough blood from them to reach the horse bridles for a distance of 200 miles. Their bodies alone would hardly fill that distance. It would take more than the armies. It would take every unbelieving body in the whole world to be cast into one place, like grapes piled into a winepress, in order to have a source for that much blood.
- In this way we are free to interpret Scripture *literally*. There remains no need to say this blood is figurative or an exaggeration. It is real

The Red Sea

- If you are checking your map closely you are noticing that Bozrah is not 200 miles from Jerusalem. It is less. Remember, [Revelation 14:20](#) says, "Blood came out of the winepress ... by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [184 miles]."
- Even if Bozrah is less than 200 miles from Jerusalem, the geography has given us a clue to pursue. If you were to continue drawing the line southward from Bozrah, where would you end up? The Red Sea! How far is that from Jerusalem? Two hundred miles!
- This provides a most satisfying answer to the question, "Where does all the blood drain out?" The Red Sea has a continuous current, the top waters flowing in and the undercurrent flowing out. A most logical place.
- But is there any Scripture to support it? [Jeremiah 49:7-22](#) tells the story of Edom's destruction. The destruction begins when the Lord "shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan" ([verse 19](#)). After He crosses Jordan He curves southward to Bozrah ([verse 22](#)). Finally, "the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea" ([verse 21](#))!

Conclusion

- The winepress is about God's wrath poured upon unbelievers following their judgment by our Lord Jesus Christ on The Day of The Lord.
- It provides no support for any timing of the rapture.
- Numerous arguments have been proposed based upon Scripture describing the winepress, those taken to the winepress, etc...
- This is unfortunate as a true understanding of God's word yields the above conclusion.