

Earth's Last War 8 of 12

Two Harvests—Grain / Grapes

#0293

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 1960

Our opening text this morning is Revelation 14, beginning with the 14th verse. We are studying this morning, as we continue this series on “Earth’s Last War,” as foretold in the Revelation, the subject of the two harvests:

“...I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 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. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” Revelation 14:14–16.

That’s the first harvest. Now look at the second harvest:

“And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 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 14:17–20.

What a harvest, my friends.

Now, there you have the two harvests: golden grain and gory grapes. You and I will be a part of that picture. We’ll be a part of that harvest gathered into the garner of God, or we’ll be a part of those grapes which are thrown into the winepress, trodden, without the city. What vivid imagery God uses to impress truth upon us.

Let us look at this first harvest. You will recognize, of course, that this is a picture of the end of the world. Jesus says in Matthew 13:39, the harvest is the end

of the world.

You will remember that immediately preceding the verses I have read, we have the great threefold message of Revelation 14. It is the preaching of this message that brings earth's multitudes to the final issue. As they either accept or reject the message, they become fully ripe, ripe for Heaven, or ripe for hell. I repeat, it is the preaching of this message which brings the earth to the final issue. To accept this message fully means to become fully ripe for God. And to reject it fully means to be fully ripe for destruction. And everybody in the world will soon be one way or the other. There will be no middle class. That's the great message of the book of Revelation. Just two classes as we come to earth's harvest.

Let's look at this a little closer. As we've just mentioned in Matthew 13:39, Jesus says the harvest is the end of the world. In Matthew 13:38, He says the good seed are the children of the kingdom. So this wheat that is gathered for the garner of God, this golden grain, represents what? The children of the kingdom, God's children.

You will remember that in Revelation 12:17, which we've been studying, the people of God are called the remnant of the seed of the woman. They're the seed of the woman. They're the seed of Christ. Christ is the great original seed. In Genesis 3:15, the prophecy was that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. In Galatians 3:16 the apostle plainly says that the seed, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham is Christ. He's the seed. But the apostle also says:

“...if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” Galatians 3:29.

You see, it's just like it is out on the farm. We sow wheat and by and by we get back what? Wheat. Is that right? We put in corn and by and by we get back corn. Does it always work that way? Yes. And the harvest is the completion of that cycle. We put the wheat in, and it grows over a period. The rain comes. The sunshine is there. And by and by the harvest comes, and then we get back what we put in. Of course, we expect to get back many times what we put in, don't we?

And that's just what Jesus expects, friends. That's exactly what He expects. He gave Himself for us. He was that grain of wheat cast into the ground to die, that from His life poured out there might come an abundant harvest. And what is the harvest? Oh, men and women like Him in character. The seed that is reaped must be like the seed that went in. And until it is, it isn't ready to harvest, friends. That's the point that I want you to see. Therefore Jesus can never come until His children are like Him and reflect His image fully. That's the meaning of the harvest.

Now, you see here in *Early Writings*, how that is stated:

“Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully” *Early Writings*, page 71.

That's the point. We must reflect the image of Jesus, how? Fully. How does John put it in 1 John?

“...when he shall appear, we shall be like him...”
1 John 3:2.

Oh, won't it be a wonderful thing, for Christ to look into the faces of His people and see reflected there His own image? Won't that be a wonderful thing for Jesus? Then, truly, He'll see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

In that beautiful little chapter in *Christ's Object Lessons*, on the parable of the growing seed, where the messenger of the Lord speaks: first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear, this statement is made:

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own” *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69.

That's the harvest, friends. As soon as the harvest is ripe, the Harvester will come. When the grain is ready, the sickle will be put in. Oh, if we can sense that, we'll be most interested in that which will get us ready. Do you agree with me, friends?

Now let's, for a moment, look at the other side of the picture—this other harvest. The wicked are represented by grapes. I suppose that's to carry out the figure of the grapes being put into the winepress and being trodden, and the juice, like blood issuing forth.

You know over there in Palestine, at the time the Bible was written (and I guess there are certain parts of the Near East where it's still done), when it is harvest time for the grapes, the grapes are gathered. The great bunches are brought in baskets, and they are dumped into a stone winepress. Then the people of the village get in there with their bare feet and tramp that out. They just keep tramping on that until those grapes are all crushed, and the juice runs out an opening on the side into a vat. That's the picture, and that's where we get the imagery:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

The wicked, friends, are going to be cast into the winepress of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues. And before that time of trouble is over, my friends, their life will be crushed out. And you'll remember the picture here in the last verse:

“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.

That's the end of earth's last war. That is the harvest of the wicked of this world. Oh, what an awful picture, friends, as in that winepress of God's wrath, the life of the wicked goes out. The picture is that of a streaming torrent of blood, a river of blood. Oh, what an end to wickedness.

Are the grapes of earth getting ripe today? Ah, when I think of the way crime is taking over in our great cities, when I think of how, all over this world, men and women are getting so far from God that there is no respect for His law at all, when I realize, friends, that soon all the world will be united with the Devil, I have to say, Yes, the harvest of the grapes of sin is indeed getting ripe fast.

Jesus in John 8:44, he told those who rejected Him plainly, that they were of their father who? the Devil. It's a terrible thing, friends, to be of the seed of the serpent, isn't it—instead of the seed of the woman? It's a terrible thing to be a child of the Devil instead of the son of God.

I want to read a statement here from *Testimonies to Ministers*:

"...every soul that is not fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power, will form an alliance with Satan against heaven, and join in battle against the Ruler of the universe" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 465.

Every soul is going to do that, every soul, except those that are kept by divine power.

In a statement which the messenger of the Lord wrote in the *Review and Herald* of April 14, 1896, we find this thought expressed, that in the closing up of human history, that in an apostate race, Satan sees his masterpiece of evil, men who reflect his own image.

What will it be, friends, to live in a world where, not only has Satan come down and walked visibly among men, and his evil angels have taken the form of men and appeared, but also men themselves have become devils? All the world filled with devils and men acting like devils, looking like devils, thinking like devils, Satan incarnate.

Ah, that's what's ahead of this world. And the fury of that satanic mob is going to be turned loose on the remnant people of God. But, ah, friends, there's a spectacle that fills my soul with a fear and a foreboding far worse than any thought of that angry mob being turned loose on us. It's this. The thought, the terrible thought that we might be among them.

What did I read here?

“...every soul that is not fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power, will form an alliance with Satan against heaven, and join in battle against the Ruler of the universe” *Ibid.*

Ah friends, I say, that if we could be gripped by that thought, our petty problems would soon be laid aside and we'd join in earnest intercession over the real problem, the problem of getting rid of self and sin and becoming like Jesus fully, for we're in the harvest time and in the harvest time every plant goes to seed.

Now, I want you to notice a very simple and important fact of nature. The same sunshine and rain that ripen the wheat ripen the tares. The same sunshine and rain that ripen the good fruit, ripen the bitter fruit. The same sunshine and rain that give us golden grain for the garner of God, gives us these gory grapes for the winepress of wrath. The same opportunities and privileges accepted that bring the glorious character of God, those same opportunities and privileges rejected, or neglected, bring a character like Satan.

Look back, if you will, 6,000 years. Where did sin begin? It didn't begin in hell, friends. It didn't begin in this world. It began in Heaven, in the brightest, most glorious, most wonderful place in this universe. And never think that being in a good environment is going to automatically place you in the kingdom of God. Never think that having your name on the church books, important as that is, is going to ensure you a place in Heaven. Ah no, friends, the greater our light and privileges, the greater will be our damnation unless we take advantage of the privileges and opportunities that God has given us.

Now, I want you to notice, carrying out the figure of the harvest, what it is that prepares for the harvest. It is the Latter Rain. That's what gets the harvest ready. You remember, in the second chapter of Joel, writing to those people with their agricultural background, God speaks of the outpouring of His Spirit as a great rain. And as the result, He foretells an abundant harvest. That's the message of Joel 2.

In Joel 2, we have a very interesting verse:

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the Latter Rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil” Joel 2: 23–24.

An abundant harvest because of abundant rain; of what rain does he speak, here? The early rain and the Latter Rain (the former rain and early rain are synonymous). In *Testimonies to Ministers*, we have a most wonderful chapter on the early and the Latter Rains. I suggest that you study it. We're told:

“In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is

necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up” *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 506.

What is it that gets the seed to germinate? The early rain. What is it then that begins the Christian life? The early rain. That’s the work of the Holy Spirit in causing conversion:

“The Latter Rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle” *Ibid*.

What’s the last work of the Spirit of God likened to? The Latter Rain:

“The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God’s grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ” *Ibid*.

When the grain is fully ripe, then ready for the sickle, it is because of what work? The Latter Rain. We must have the Latter Rain, then, before we come to the harvest. Is that what is delaying us? Exactly so:

“The Latter Rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man” *Ibid*.

So just before the close of probation, the church expects that marvelous outpouring of the Latter Rain. And we studied yesterday the effect of that in the Loud Cry. We studied the wonderful things which are to happen in and through the church as the result of that great outpouring, the baptism of the Spirit. But this morning, I want you to notice what it does for the individual Christian. It ripens his character. It perfects it. It fits him to go through the great ordeal of the time of trouble, and to be translated when Jesus comes. And so we read:

“Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive

What?

“...The Latter Rain” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 187.

Oh, I thank God for that. Don’t you? Yes.

Now, I want you to notice the next sentence here in *Testimonies to Ministers*:

“But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the Latter Rain can bring no seed to perfection” *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 506.

Some of you remember the drought that came over large areas of the country a few years back. And some of you remember that after weeks and weeks and weeks of dry weather, at last the rain came. But in some areas, how much good did it do? Not a bit of good as far as any harvest is concerned. Why not? Because the crop has to be brought up to a certain place by former rain in order for latter rain to do any good. There has to be something there already growing. That’s the point that I want you to see. There has to be something there already growing.

We’re told, friends:

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight” *Early Writings*, page 71.

What were they expecting? The Latter Rain to fit them up.

“Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God” *Ibid.*

Then it speaks of our need of being hewed by the prophets so that we will be all squared for the building. In other words, friends, there’s a work of preparation that has to go on in order for us to receive the Latter Rain. And that’s the work of the early rain, the work of the Holy Spirit, in teaching us how to get the victory over sin, through faith in Jesus Christ as our righteousness.

You notice here in Joel 2:23, which we’re studying at the moment that under that expression, “the former rain,” the margin says “a teacher of righteousness,” and the following expression, “according to righteousness.” It’s the work of the early rain to teach us righteousness by faith; that is, to teach us how to give up our sins, trust in Jesus to give us the victory over those sins. And you remember that here in *Early Writings*, that we are told that those who receive the Latter Rain will be those that get the victory. Watch:

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action” *Ibid.*

Watch, then. When the Latter Rain falls upon an individual, does it come to give him victory over his sins? No. What rain is that that gives him the victory over sin? The early rain or the former rain. Which comes first? Well naturally, the early rain or the former. So right now, friends, your job and mine is to seek God day by day, with all our hearts, to get the victory over our sins. And when that part of the work is complete, then the Latter Rain will fall upon us to ripen us up fully, fill out the grain, and get us ready for the final harvest. Oh, I thank God that we're in that time. Don't you?

I want you to notice, now, this last sentence on the page, how this figure of the early and latter rain and getting ready for it is linked with this battle ahead:

"We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord... God is holy and... none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence" *Ibid*.

So there we have it: The harvest time and the battle that's the same time. Different figures to teach us the same lesson. The only way to be ready is to get ready and stay ready, friends.

Our Father in Heaven, we pray that Thou will seal to our hearts the precious lessons that Thy word has taught us this early morning hour. And grant that in each of our hearts the early rain shall be so welcomed, and Thy work of righteousness accomplished, that we shall be ready for the wonderful showers of the Latter Rain just ahead. Oh, grant that when that latter rain falls, we shall be grain and not grapes. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org