

The Harvest of the Earth

Scripture Reading — Revelation 14:14-20

Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. — Revelation 14:15

Though the harvest represents the climax of a season's labor, it can also be a messy business. Grain must be separated from the stalks on which it grows. Fruit is gathered, washed, and separated—and to make juice for human consumption it is pressed and strained, and the peels and seeds are cast aside.

The Bible often uses the harvest as an image of God's judgment on both God's people and his enemies. At the end of time, God will gather up our life's work and measure its eternal value. Judgment may be favorable, for a crop worth preserving. Or it may involve destruction.

Judgment does not sit easily with us today because we often operate with an "I'm OK, you're OK" mentality. But the Bible reminds us that God is a holy God and that evil has no place in his presence. Does the abuse, violence, manipulation, and hurt in the world trouble you? There will come a time when all that has been inflicted on us—and what we inflict on others—will be strained and cast out of God's presence. Only the good will remain.

All of us deserve judgment. But those who trust in Jesus have the assurance that he has already endured the "winepress of God's wrath" for them.

Praise God for this harvest hope, which is the only hope to which we can cling.

Prayer

Righteous and just God, we know that judgment is a serious thing, because sin is serious. Thank you for the work of Jesus, which gives us a firm place to stand. We pray in his name. Amen.

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