

## **Dr. David Mathewson, Revelation, Session 21, Revelation 14-6—Grain/Grapes; Seven Bowls Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Mathewson, Revelation, Session 21, Revelation 14-16, Grain/Grapes, Seven Bowls, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Dave Mathewson's lecture** on Revelation 14-16 interprets the imagery of grain and grape harvests as symbolic representations of the final judgment. **The grain harvest symbolizes** the salvation of God's faithful people, while **the grape harvest depicts** the judgment of the wicked. **The lecture further analyzes the seven bowl judgments** in Revelation 15-16, connecting them to the Exodus plagues and emphasizing their theological significance rather than a literal interpretation. **The lecture concludes by discussing** the battle of Armageddon, portrayed not as a physical conflict but as a symbolic representation of the final confrontation between good and evil.

**2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 21 – Double click icon to  
play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (New Testament → Revelation).**



**Mathewson\_Revela  
tion\_Session21.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Mathewson's Lecture 21 on Revelation chapters 14-16:

#### Briefing Document: Revelation Chapters 14-16

**Overview:** This lecture focuses on Revelation chapters 14-16, exploring the themes of judgment, salvation, and the final conflict between God and the forces of evil. Dr. Mathewson analyzes the symbolic imagery used in these chapters, connecting it to Old Testament prophecies and apocalyptic literature. He emphasizes that these images convey the nature and severity of God's judgment, rather than literal, future events. The lecture highlights the importance of faithfulness and resistance against compromise for the believers.

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. Two Harvests: God's People and the Wicked

- **Grain Harvest (14:14-16):** Represents the gathering of God's people, the "first fruits," who have persevered in their faith and resisted the beast (12-13). This imagery is tied to Jeremiah 2:2-3, where Israel is referred to as the "first fruits" of God's harvest. This is not a separate group from the main people of God, but a representation of all the faithful.
- Quote: "The 144,000 are first fruits devoted to the Lord, referring to the entirety of God's people at the end of history, not a group and anticipation of a further group."
- **Grape Harvest (14:17-20):** Symbolizes the judgment of unbelieving humanity, those who have followed the beast. This is depicted as God treading the winepress of his wrath, resulting in a bloodbath. This draws from Isaiah 63:1-3, which describes God treading the winepress alone and being stained with the blood of his enemies.
- Quote: "God depicted as treading the winepress of his wrath. That is, the nations are seen in the winepress and what results is the blood that comes from them."
- **Not Literal:** Mathewson emphasizes that this imagery should not be taken literally, but rather as symbolic language depicting the severity of God's judgment. It draws on apocalyptic traditions, such as 1st Enoch and 4th Ezra, where similar imagery of blood flowing up to horses is used.

- Quote: "John is simply borrowing common imagery from the Old Testament to depict God trampling the winepress and the blood of the enemies flowing. But now he's added apocalyptic imagery... to further heighten the impression this makes on the reader of the severity and the extent and awesomeness of God's judgment."

#### 1. **Chapter 14: A Contrast of Fates**

- The images in chapter 14 explore the fates of those in chapters 12 and 13: the faithful who resisted and the compromisers who followed the beast.
- Those who endured and remained faithful are represented by the 144,000 on Mount Zion and the first fruits harvest.
- Those who compromised with the beast face God's wrath, destruction of Babylon, and the treading of the winepress.
- It is not just a division between church and world, but also a warning to those within the church who compromise.
- Quote: "So we're not to read this as exclusively the positive images for the church and the negative for the world. No, the negative images are also for those in the church who compromise and refuse to maintain their faithful witness."

#### 1. **Chapter 15: Introduction to the Bowl Judgments**

- Chapter 15 serves a dual purpose: it introduces the seven bowl judgments of God's wrath (chapter 16), and it also provides a contrasting vision of the salvation and victory of God's people.
- The chapter begins with the introduction of seven angels with the last plagues, but then is interrupted by a vision of the saints by a sea of glass.
- The sea of glass and the song of Moses connects this to the Exodus motif that is woven throughout the rest of the material.
- Quote: "The author is about ready to link or narrate the last final judgments of God before and leading up to the final outpouring of God's judgments in chapter 17 and following. Now, before he begins to narrate the pouring out of God's wrath in terms of the final seven judgments in the form of the bowl judgments, the author, in one final image, wants to depict the people of God standing before the sea..."

- The saints are depicted as having overcome the beast, and they are singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. This song draws upon other Old Testament texts and celebrates God's holiness and mighty acts of judgment and salvation.
- The sea of glass is a calmed sea of chaos, a reference to Satan's attempt to destroy God's people, showing God's sovereignty.
- Quote: "...the sea of chaos, the home of the sea monster, that which threatens God's people starting in the first Exodus. That sea has now been calmed by God's sovereignty."

## 1. **Chapter 16: The Seven Bowl Judgments**

- Chapter 16 narrates the seven bowl judgments, which are modeled after the plagues of the Exodus.
- Each plague is poured out upon the earth, intensifying the judgment upon the wicked. The plagues include sores, the turning of seas and rivers to blood, scorching heat, darkness, demonic deception, and a massive earthquake.
- The plagues are not meant to be read as literal future events, but rather, to explore the significance and certainty of God's judgment. The idea is that God will judge idolatry and those who oppose Him.
- Quote: "It's as if John is saying in the same way that God judged wicked, idolatrous, and oppressive people. Certainly, he will once again judge another and any other idolatrous, oppressive people who oppose him and set themselves up over God."
- This cycle of plagues intensifies the previous sequences of seals and trumpets, moving towards the end-time judgment.
- Quote: "...with the bulls, you are now at a closer perspective. You are now looking at the judgments that will lead immediately into the final Day of the Lord and up to the final judgment."
- Even in the face of these plagues, the wicked do not repent, mirroring the Pharaoh of the Exodus.
- The seventh bowl, which results in the destruction of Babylon, leads directly into the final judgment.

## 1. **Specific Features of the Bowl Judgments**

- **Hymn in the Third Bowl:** A hymn affirms God's justice in pouring out the plagues, specifically relating to the blood judgment. The altar also gives witness to the justice of God.
- Quote: "The function of this hymn is to draw attention to the justice of God's judgment. Note particularly, the connection with the third plague of water turning into blood."
- **Euphrates and the Kings of the East:** The drying up of the Euphrates is a metaphor for an invading army, not to be taken literally. It evokes an image of all the world's kings gathering for the end-time battle.
- Quote: "The mention of the Euphrates we suggested recalls the sort of the northern boundary of Rome itself from which their attackers, such as the Parthians, would come. But also, we find the Old Testament idea of an army from the north coming that this John is now drawing on that language to recall or to bring to mind an invading army."
- **Three Evil Spirits (Frogs):** These demonic spirits deceive the nations and gather them for the battle of Armageddon.
- **Armageddon:** Armageddon is likely a symbolic term, using a well-known battle location from the Old Testament (Megiddo) as an image of an end-time conflict, not a specific geographic place.
- Quote: "I wonder if John is not using Megiddo, a place of famous battles in the Old Testament, and now adding the term mountain of Megiddo as a place, a symbol for an end-time battle."
- **Battle of Armageddon and Other Battles:** The battle at Armageddon is not described here, but it is connected to other battles that are described in chapters 19 and 20. These all reference the same final conflict between God and the forces of evil.
- Quote: "I would suggest to you that all of these battles probably refer to the same one. In other words, we do not have three separate battles; instead, we have the exact same battle."
- **Interlude in Verse 15:** This verse provides a warning to be faithful and vigilant, drawing upon the warnings to the churches in chapters 2 and 3. This serves to remind the readers of the importance of faithfulness and resisting compromise in the face of persecution.

- Quote: "What I think is going on here is, once more, this is an indication that chapter 16 is not for the purpose of trying to determine a sequence of events in the end times, or charting the end times, or simply to satisfy our curiosity as to what's going to take place in the end."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Mathewson emphasizes that the imagery in Revelation 14-16, while drawing upon Old Testament and apocalyptic traditions, is not meant to be a literal description of future events, but rather, a powerful message about God's ultimate judgment, salvation, and the call to faithfulness for believers. The message is one of resistance to evil, compromise, and the pursuit of steadfast witness. The plagues are not just an external event, but have a spiritual impact as well. The seventh bowl judgment moves directly into the final judgment and the destruction of Babylon, which is further explained in subsequent chapters.

## 4. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 21, Revelation 14-16, Grain/Grapes, Seven Bowls

### Revelation Study Guide: Chapters 14-16

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does the imagery of "first fruits" apply to the people of God in Revelation 14, and what Old Testament passage is used to support this?
2. What is the significance of the grape harvest imagery in Revelation 14:17-20, and from which Old Testament book does it derive?
3. According to the lecture, what is the main purpose of the apocalyptic imagery of blood reaching the horse's bridle?
4. What two scenes of end-time judgment are presented in Revelation 14-20?
5. What is the twofold function of Revelation 15 in relation to chapter 16?
6. What is significant about the sea of glass mentioned in Revelation 15:2?
7. How does the song of Moses in Revelation 15 differ from the song of Moses in Exodus 15?
8. What is the purpose of the seven bowls in Revelation 16?
9. What is Armageddon, and how is it used symbolically in the book of Revelation?
10. Why does the author insert the warning in Revelation 16:15 about being like a thief?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The "first fruits" imagery in Revelation 14 applies to the entirety of God's people at the end of history, not just a select group. This is supported by Jeremiah 2:2-3, which depicts Israel as the first fruits of God's harvest.
2. The grape harvest imagery symbolizes God's judgment of unbelieving humanity who have followed the beast. This image derives from Isaiah 63, where God is depicted as treading the winepress of his wrath.
3. The apocalyptic imagery of blood reaching the horse's bridle is not meant to be taken literally, but rather serves to emphasize the severity, extent, and

awesomeness of God's judgment, drawing from stock imagery from other apocalyptic texts.

4. The two scenes of end-time judgment in Revelation 14-20 are the positive image of the grain harvest (God's people as first fruits) and the negative image of the grape harvest (God's judgment of the wicked).
5. Revelation 15 serves as both an introduction to the seven bowl judgments in chapter 16 and also depicts God's people praising the Lamb for their victory before those judgments are poured out.
6. The sea of glass is significant because it is a symbol of the sea of chaos calmed by God's sovereignty. It also connects to the Exodus narrative, with some Jewish literature describing the Red Sea as a sea of glass.
7. The song of Moses in Revelation 15 is not a close resemblance to the song in Exodus 15; John is constructing a new song that includes other Old Testament texts that celebrate God's holiness and righteous acts and is also referred to as the song of the Lamb.
8. The seven bowls in Revelation 16 represent the final outpouring of God's wrath on the earth, modeled after the Exodus plagues, and are meant to demonstrate the certainty and theological significance of God's judgment on idolatry and evil.
9. Armageddon is a symbolic place, drawing on the mountain of Megiddo, a location associated with Old Testament battles; it represents a gathering point for all the nations of the earth to do battle against God at the end of time.
10. The warning in Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I come like a thief," is a call for vigilance and faithfulness, reminding readers of the warnings in chapters 2 and 3 to maintain a faithful witness and resist compromise, in light of the impending final judgment.



## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Answer each question in essay format. Do not exceed 400 words for each response.

1. Analyze the use of Old Testament imagery in Revelation 14-16, specifically focusing on how the author uses the concepts of "first fruits," "winepress," and "Exodus plagues" to communicate theological themes of judgment and salvation.
2. Compare and contrast the depictions of God's people and their enemies in Revelation 14. How do the symbols used in this chapter portray their respective fates and ultimate positions in God's plan?
3. Discuss the significance of the interlude in Revelation 15 where the saints sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. How does this vision relate to both the preceding chapter and the bowl judgments that follow?
4. Explain the symbolic nature of the seven bowl judgments in Revelation 16. How do these plagues mirror those of the Exodus, and what theological message do they convey about God's judgment and justice?
5. Explore the concept of Armageddon, as discussed in the lecture. Is it intended as a literal place, or does it function as a symbol of a larger spiritual conflict? Explain your reasoning and supporting details.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **First Fruits:** An offering of the initial agricultural harvest to God, representing dedication and anticipation of a larger harvest; in Revelation, this term symbolizes God's people, and not just a select few, who are devoted to Him.
- **Winepress:** A tool used to crush grapes to make wine, symbolizing God's wrath and judgment, especially in the context of Revelation, where the grapes represent the wicked, and the juice is their blood.
- **Apocalyptic Literature:** A genre of literature that includes visions, symbolic language, and imagery of the end times, often using code and metaphors to convey spiritual truths.
- **144,000:** A symbolic number in Revelation representing the entirety of God's people at the end of history, those who remain faithful, and victorious.

- **Sea of Glass:** A symbolic image in Revelation representing the Red Sea calmed by God's sovereignty and victory over chaos and evil; Also, appears in the throne room vision of chapter 4 and reflects the nature of God's holiness.
- **Song of Moses:** A hymn or song originally given by Moses in Exodus 15, but in Revelation, a new song is sung by God's victorious people that blends other Old Testament texts to reflect God's justice and the salvation of His people.
- **Seven Bowls:** The final cycle of seven plagues in Revelation representing the full and complete expression of God's wrath and judgment before the end.
- **Exodus Plagues:** The ten divine judgments that God inflicted upon Egypt in the book of Exodus; these serve as archetypes and connections to the seven bowls in Revelation.
- **Armageddon:** A symbolic place, derived from the Hebrew words "Har" (mountain) and "Megiddo," representing the gathering point for the final battle between good and evil; represents the culminating spiritual battle at the end of time.
- **Babylon:** A symbolic city that represents an evil, idolatrous, and oppressive world system that is ultimately judged by God; this often represents the Roman Empire of John's day.
- **Day of the Lord:** A future time of divine judgment and intervention, often described with vivid imagery and intensity, indicating both salvation and retribution.
- **Hortatory:** A literary style intended to encourage, exhort, or urge readers to take a specific action or adopt a particular attitude, especially in response to the divine message.

## 5. FAQs on Mathewson, Revelation, Session 21, Revelation 14-16, Grain/Grapes, Seven Bowls, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions About Revelation 14-16

1. **What is the significance of the "first fruits" imagery in Revelation 14?** The "first fruits" imagery, particularly in the context of the 144,000, is not limited to a specific group within God's people. Instead, it refers to the entirety of God's faithful followers at the end of history. This is akin to the Old Testament imagery in Jeremiah 2:2-3, where Israel is called the "first fruits" of God's harvest, representing their devotion to the Lord. It signifies a group devoted to God, anticipating the full harvest of believers to come.
2. **How does the grape harvest image in Revelation 14 represent God's judgment?** The grape harvest in Revelation 14:17-20 is a powerful image depicting God's judgment on unbelieving humanity, those who have aligned themselves with the beast. Drawing from Old Testament passages like Isaiah 63:1-3, the scene portrays God treading the winepress of his wrath, resulting in the blood of his enemies. The blood flowing up to the horses' bridles symbolizes the extensive and gruesome nature of God's judgment. This imagery is not meant to be taken literally, but as a symbolic depiction of the severity and awesomeness of God's final judgment.
3. **What is the connection between the imagery in Revelation 14 and other apocalyptic texts?** The imagery in Revelation 14, particularly the graphic depictions of bloodshed, is consistent with other apocalyptic texts like 1st Enoch and 4th Ezra. These texts also describe the final judgment with similar imagery of blood reaching to the horses' chests or bellies. John utilizes this common apocalyptic motif to heighten the sense of horror, severity, and extent of God's judgment, not to depict a literal future event, but rather the spiritual impact of the final judgment.

4. **What are the two contrasting scenes of end-time judgment depicted in Revelation 14?** Revelation 14 presents two contrasting scenes of end-time judgment: one positive and one negative. The positive scene is the harvest of grain, symbolizing the gathering of God's people as "first fruits." This contrasts with the negative scene, the harvest of grapes, which represents the judgment of the wicked, particularly those who followed and worshipped the beast. These images portray the different fates awaiting those who have remained faithful to God versus those who have compromised.
5. **What is the significance of the "seven last plagues" in Revelation 15-16?** The "seven last plagues" in Revelation 15 and 16, which are poured out in the form of bowls, represent the final judgments of God. They complete God's wrath and are structured to evoke the Exodus plagues. They are not to be interpreted as literal, future plagues but as symbolic representations of the comprehensive and severe nature of God's judgment on wickedness and idolatry. These plagues act as a final warning, leading up to the ultimate Day of the Lord.
6. **How does the song of Moses and the Lamb in Revelation 15 relate to the Exodus narrative?** The song of Moses and the Lamb, sung by the victorious saints in Revelation 15, connects directly to the Exodus narrative. Just as the Israelites sang after their deliverance from the Red Sea, these saints sing after their own spiritual liberation. The sea of glass represents the calmed sea of chaos, over which God has now established his sovereignty, a reference to both the red sea being calmed and the sea of chaos from which the dragon attacked God's people. The song itself is a combination of Exodus themes and other Old Testament texts that celebrate God's holiness and his righteous acts of salvation and judgment.
7. **What is the symbolic meaning of the bowls, smoke, and the closed temple in Revelation 15?** The bowls represent priestly service and instruments of God's wrath, drawing from Old Testament imagery. The smoke filling the temple, as well as the fact no one can enter, signifies the awesome and overpowering presence of God's glory as He enacts his final judgment. This imagery is directly tied to the exodus and emphasizes God's complete and unyielding authority as He pours out his wrath upon the earth.

8. **What is the Battle of Armageddon and what is its purpose in Revelation 16?** The Battle of Armageddon is not presented as a literal battle in Revelation 16 but as a symbolic gathering point for all nations in opposition to God. Drawing upon the Old Testament battleground of Megiddo, the term symbolizes the culmination of humanity's rebellion. It is not about a specific literal place, but about the total gathering of evil forces against God, and the subsequent defeat of these forces, which is elaborated on in later chapters. It serves as a call to the reader to stay faithful and refuse to compromise.