

This angel comes from the presence of God in the glory of the temple. God looks at the angel and says, “It’s time. The harvest is fully ripe.” The long night of earth is over.

Another Harvest

2. Describe the second harvest. (Revelation 14:17–20)

“And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire” (Revelation 14:18). Here is the angel who commands the fires of God’s final judgment. The harvest is ripe. Sin has reached its limits. Rebellion has crossed the line of God’s mercy. A loving God has done everything He can do. There is nothing more grace can do to redeem those who have repeatedly rejected the claims of His Holy Spirit.

Throughout Scripture, God’s wrath is His judgment on sin. The time has come to execute God’s final judgment on sin and make an utter end of rebellion.

Sowing and Reaping

In the last days, the seeds of righteousness and of wickedness will be fully ripe. Every one of us is sowing and growing seed in the choices we make day by day. What seeds are you sowing? The fruit we produce in our lives is the result of the seed we sow in our lives.

Our Heavenly Father is working in our lives today to prompt us to make positive choices. Jesus is wooing us—drawing us to Himself—to make the best positive decisions for time and eternity. And all the while, the Holy Spirit is empowering us to carry out the desire He has placed in our hearts to make right choices.

It is harvest time.

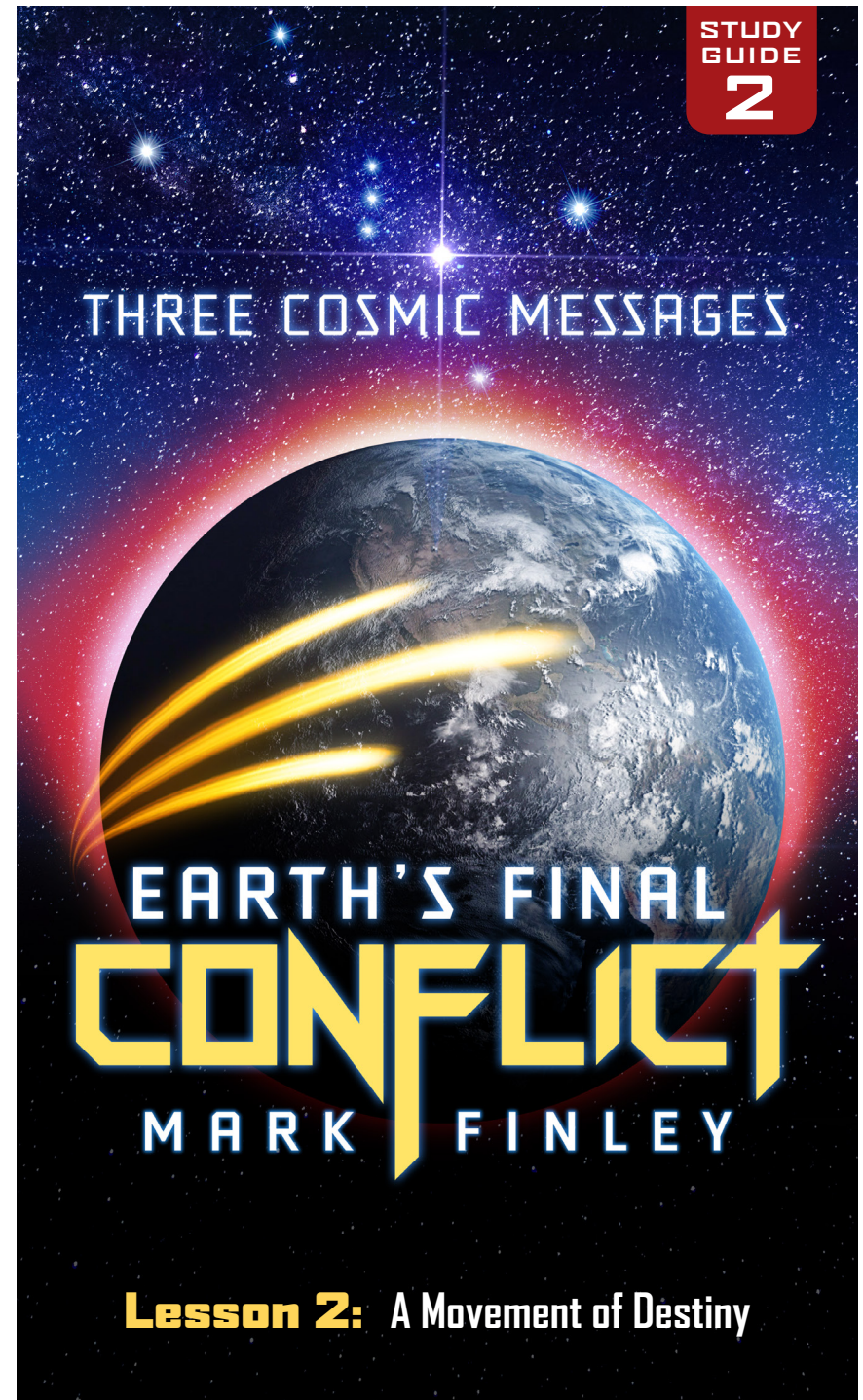
Every seed is going to result in harvest.

Seeds of righteousness and seeds of wickedness.

Seeds of good and seeds of evil.

Echoing down the centuries come the words of Scripture:

“[C]hoose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).



WESTERN SOCIETY IS AT A CROSSROADS; WE ARE AT A MOMENT OF DESTINY.

Moral values are waning. Honesty, integrity, and purity are in short supply.

A Society in Trouble

- ▶ When popularity overpowers purity, a nation is in trouble.
- ▶ When money overpowers morality, a nation is in trouble.
- ▶ When entertainment overpowers ethics, a nation is in trouble.
- ▶ When pleasure overpowers prayer, a nation is in trouble.
- ▶ When there is a confusion of sexual roles and sexual orientation and God's original plan of one man married to one woman for a lifetime is flagrantly violated, a nation is in trouble.
- ▶ When crime is rampant in the streets and Christ is mocked in the schools, a nation is in trouble.

The ancient prophets speak to this generation in trumpet tones. Their messages resonate with a twenty-first-century generation seeking answers to the deepest questions of life. The wise man declares in Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalts a nation, / But sin is a reproach to any people."

Nations are great because nations are good. When a nation ceases to be good, it soon ceases to be great. There is a direct correlation between the erosion of moral values and the collapse of the social structures in society.

Parallels with Rome's Collapse

Distinct parallels exist between the fall of the Roman Empire and the state of Western society today. In 1787, after twenty years of labor, Edward Gibbon completed his book *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In it he attributed the fall of the empire to:

1. The rapid increase of divorce and the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home—the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and increasing national debt with public monies used to provide free bread (creating a welfare state) and entertainment.
3. The mad craze for pleasure with sports becoming more exciting and more brutal every year.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was in the decadence of the people, resulting in an overextended, lavishly-funded army.
5. The decay of religion, with faith fading into mere form that lacked relevance to life and that was impotent in serving as a warning or guide for living.

Revelation's Last-Day Message Leads to Eternal Choices

Revelation 14 is at the very heart of that final book's last-day message. It reveals God's message to His people living at the close of this earth's history.

The chapter is divided into three parts. Revelation 14:1–5 depicts a group of people called the 144,000—the redeemed—standing with Christ in heaven. In Revelation 14:6–12, we discover Christ's last-day message for humanity. In Revelation 14:14–20, we discover God's final harvest. In those passages, six angels are mentioned. The first three angels announce the final judgment. The first angel announces that the hour of God's judgment has come. The second angel announces judgment on Babylon, which represents the apostate religious powers of our day. The third angel announces judgment on the beast who oppresses, persecutes, and declares war on the people of God.

The last three angels execute the judgment announced by the first three angels. The Son of Man stands in the center of these six angels, in triumph over the powers of hell, to deliver His people.

Let's focus now on the last part of Revelation 14:14–20, which describes the execution of heaven's final judgment.

1. What imagery is used to describe Jesus? What is upon His head and in His hand? (Revelation 14:14)

Jesus is the "Son of Man." This was His favorite title for Himself. It is used 82 times in the gospels alone. Matthew uses it 30 times. It is often used in connection with the second coming of Christ. (Consider, for instance, Matthew 16:27; Matthew 24:27, 30; and Matthew 25:31.)

The Victor's Crown

John describes Jesus as the "One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle" (Revelation 14:14). The word for crown is *stephanos*. It is a crown of honor and glory. It symbolizes victory.

Jesus once wore the crown of thorns, symbolizing shame and mockery. He was once despised and rejected of men. He was reviled, ridiculed, spat upon, beaten, and whipped, but now He wears the crown of glory. He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords. Notice what the angel says:

"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in your sickle and reap, for the time has come for you to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe' (Revelation 14:15).