

# Revelation 14: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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Jesús Jesús Jesús crucifixion. The 144,000 are trampled underfoot, as we saw earlier. But whereas we saw earlier their being trampled underfoot was a sign of the dominance of their enemies, here they are being trampled underfoot in order to be made into wine. What seems from one vantage point to be a power given to their adversaries is here presented as the means by which their enemies are unwittingly rendering them effective agents of God's wrath to themselves. They are making wine, and they will have to drink this wine at some point in the future, wine that will bring the wrath of God down upon them. The church, symbolically suffering in the same place where Christ suffered, outside of the city, is being conformed to Christ and his sufferings. Thinking back to the images that we have of the beasts and also of the lamb, we should think of their composite character. They include many different things. They have horns that represent different powers and kings. They can have a number of heads and diadems. They are composite creatures that hold together many different things within themselves.

They represent a number of different rulers. They represent empires stretched over time. They represent a large company of people. And the lamb is the same. Christ gathers many peoples within himself.

[ 1 4 : 1 5 ]    And once we recognise this, it will become clearer that the gathering of the people within Christ is part of the means by which Christ himself is raised up. Christ can't fully be glorified if his body, the church, is not fully glorified. Israel is God's field of grain. Israel is also God's vine or vineyard, as we see in Psalm 80 or Isaiah chapter 5. And now the blood flows from the winepress for 1600 stadia. This is the entire length of Israel from north to south, and is flowing up to the height of a horse's bridle. That might be an allusion back to Zechariah chapter 14 verse 20. Images of winepressing can be used as images of judgment in places like Joel chapter 3. Here, however, the image seems to be used in a more complicated way. It is an image that seems to be one of judgment. The people of God are being trampled underfoot, but yet they are being prepared to be made into wine. And in the chapters that follow, it will be the wine of the blood of the saints that brings down God's wrath upon the poor and those who are associated with her. 1600 stadia, besides being roughly the length of the land of Israel, is also a square number. It is the number 40 squared. As a square number, it should recall the number 144,000, which is itself connected with the square of 12 as 144.

A question to consider. Within this chapter we see events that we have seen earlier from one perspective, presented to us from another perspective. Where else can we see this happening in the book of Revelation? How might these differing perspectives upon the same situation help us better to understand the situations within which we find ourselves?

