

The Grapes of Wrath

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2 Gala: next Saturday. To support Destiny Rescue.

II. Slide3 **Intro:** *The Grapes of Wrath*

A. Slide4 In 1976 *Blue Oyster Cults* biggest hit was *Don't Fear The Reaper*.

1. **The Reaper**, the personification of death is depicted many different ways depending on the culture.
2. In some cultures this personage is dressed in **white**, sometimes in **black**. In Germanic/English folklore he is **male**, in Latin folklore she is **female**. In Roman Catholicism, the **archangel Michael** is viewed as the angel of death (carrying the souls of the deceased to Heaven, often see him w/balances. On one of the Tarot cards (*The Tarot of Marseilles/Mar-say*) is a **skeleton with a scythe**. In the Hindu scriptures known collectively as 'Vedas', the lord of death is called **Yama**, or Yamaraj (literally "the lord of death") He rides a black buffalo and carries a rope lasso to carry the soul back to his abode. In Mexico, a popular Catholic "cult" regards the personification of death as a saint, known as **Santa Muerte**. In our culture we know him best as *the Grim Reaper* (hooded, black robed, sickle in hand).

B. Let's join **John** & his *agricultural images* as he tells us the time was **ripe** for judgment.

III. Slide5 **PRIMO GRAPES (1-5)** *primo, first in a sequence*

A. (1) **From** the mark of the beast **to** the marked sealed servants from ch.7.

1. These *ever-ready saints* still standing, still singing, still going strong.

B. Chronologically the vision anticipates the **triumph** of the 144,000 **still intact** at the time of Jesus Christ's return from heaven to earth.

1. The Important point...*they're w/the Lamb*.

C. (2,3) No one could learn **their** song.

1. You probably have a song because of what you've been through, that wouldn't make sense for others to sing.

2. How's your life's song? What song is He writing on your heart presently? Is it a 1 hit wonder? or do you have an album full? Do you have both **Joy songs** and **Psalms of affliction**? Either way, *sing your song(s)*. [Solomon wrote 1005. 1 Kings 4:32]
- D. (4,5) God takes the best for Himself *before* the harvest begins.
- E. These are *model believers w/unblemished character*.
1. Identified by their **behavior** & not by their **appearance**.
- F. **Not defiled w/women - holy war imagery** (according to the Mosaic laws governing holy war) David, when fleeing from Saul w/his men, said to the high priest, desiring the showbread for his men...*the young men have remained sexually abstinent*.
- G. **Virgins?** - 2 possibilities:
1. **Literal?** Never married, therefore undistracted in their work for God like Paul said, *But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord--how he may please the Lord*. 1 Cor. 7:32
 - a) Are you dedicated & consecrated to Him?
 2. **Figurative?** It can also mean, they were completely separated unto the God they served.
 - a) *ie*. They didn't commit *spiritual fornication* by worshiping the beast or His image.
 - b) Virgin is used figuratively in 2 Cor.11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*.
- H. **Slide6** They follow the Lamb wherever He goes - *Mary had a little Lamb His name I'm sure you know, & everywhere that Jesus went this group was sure to follow*.
1. Simplest def of a Christian is...*one who follows Jesus Christ. A Follower of Jesus*.
- I. **Christ was the 1st Fruits** of the **Resurrection Harvest**.
This group was the 1st Fruits of the **Tribulation Harvest**.
1. **1st Fruits** are the **best** of the crops. *A symbol of the harvest to come*.
 2. **1st Fruits** acknowledging: *Gods provision, their thankfulness, their dependency & it showed they knew the entire harvest belonged to God*.
 3. **The Christian** is to be the **best** that can be offered to God. *Are you?*

- J. They had **no deceit** (no fraud, no false message) - Peter applied these words to Jesus, *Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.*
- K. They were **w/o fault** - or w/o blemish.
1. **A sacrificial term/word** - It describes *the animal* which is **w/o flaw** & so **fit** for an offering to God.
 2. This word is used often for the Christian, *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*

IV. Slide7 **POISONOUS GRAPES (6-12)**

- A. **Slide8a Triple Angelic Fly by's** [*opps!* not those angels] (**Announcements**) - telling everyone that the sovereign Creator is about to judge the world. [**Heavenly Town Criers**]
1. Man's day is over & God's day has come.
 2. Spanish Proverb, *Dios tarda, pero no olvida* [God delays, *but* doesn't forget]
- B. **Slide8b 1st ANGEL – The World's Doom (6,7)**
1. There are 3 assurances of the Gospel in the NT...
 - a) *Gospel of the kingdom* (good news that God is going to establish a kingdom).
 - b) *Gospel of salvation* (by **grace** thru **faith** in Christ *crucified & resurrected*).
 - c) *Everlasting kingdom* (**fear** God. Give **glory** to Him. **Worship** Him as creator).

(1) **It is Eternal Good News.**
 2. **It's God's last call of Grace**, to a world that persists in *rejecting* & openly *defying* Him.
 3. *Fear me. Glorify me. Worship me...* is what *the beast* was saying **ch.13**.
 - a) **No. Fear** the God who is about to judge. **Glorify** Him for He is worthy. **Worship** Him as creator of Heaven & Earth.
- C. **Slide8c 2nd ANGEL – Babylon's Doom (8)**
1. Babylon is a symbol of **man's pride** & of **his fall**. [1st mention in Rev]
 - a) Babylon was 1 of the major *enemies* of Israel & destroyed its Temple in 586 bc.
 - b) Ch.17,18 deal in detail with Babylon...*Political, Ecclesiastical, & Economic.*

D. Slide8d 3rd ANGEL – Antichrist’s Doom (9-12)

1. Cup of Wrath - Image from Jer.25:15,16 *For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.*
2. Babylon has given the world a *stupefying wine* & they got drunk from its false teaching.

E. Full Strength (10) - Unmixed, not diluted down, *untempered by the Mercy & Grace of God*. Mounce

1. It is hard to imagine an omnipotent God, adding to His wrath, His full-strength-fury. No longer is it *in wrath remember mercy* Hab.3:2.

F. *He who does not believe that God will cast unbelievers into Hell, will not be sure that he will take believers into Heaven.* (Spurg)

V. Slide9 PEACEFUL GRAPES (13)

A. May be applied to *all believers* who die, but it will have *special meaning* to the martyrs of that evil day.

1. The saints will rest...but only after their death.
2. *The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.* Spurgeon

B. What happens at death? We will be *with the Lord*. We will be *at rest*. We will be *rewarded*. We will be *freed from pain & problems*.

1. Mad at God for delivering us from this???
2. Here is the REAL R&R...Rest & Rewards.

VI. Slide10 PACKAGED GRAPES (14-16)

A. Jesus also used other imagery:

1. Sheep & Goats (Mt.25:31,32). Fish caught in net (Mt.13:47-50)
2. Wheat & Tares (Mt.13:24-30; 37-43)

- a) Slide11 *Here is another story Jesus told: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. 25 But that night as the workers slept, his enemy*

came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. 26 When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. 27 “The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’ 28 “ ‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed. “ ‘Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked. 29 “ ‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn...

- b) Slide12 36 *Then*, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, “Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.” 37 Jesus replied, “The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. 39 The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels 40 “Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. *Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!*

B. Actually this seems to be *a grain harvest* instead of *grapes*.

VII. Slide13 **PRESSED GRAPES (17-20)** *grapes of wrath*

A. Here are the true *Grapes of Wrath*.

B. (19) *The great winepress of the wrath of God* - this reaping involves not just *harvesting*, but *crushing* in a winepress. (their blood would be the same)

C. *The vine of the earth* is fast ripening & 1 day God will apply the sickle.

1. God still is *allowing* the *seeds of sin* to grow & produce a harvest.

a) *But one day*...He will **reap** what has been **sown**.

D. *Note*: ripe (15) & fully ripe (18). *Perfect ripeness vs. over-ripe*.

E. Slide14 They’d trample the grapes in a winepress & the juice would flow out into a lower vat

1. **1600 furlongs/stadia** - about 184 miles, the length of Israel.

a) Too much time has been spent in *literal* calculations...*it is a great bloody battle known as Armageddon.*

2. In this judgment *human blood* is replaced for *grape juice*.

F. **Note:** 3 Vines in Scripture:

1. **Israel** was God's original vine. They brought forth *wild grapes*. Is.5

2. The True Vine is **Jesus Christ**. *Abide in me*. Jn15 [The genuine vine all others are imitations]

3. Here, the **unbelievers** are the Vine of the earth.

G. **Slide15** Fruit, more fruit, much fruit. *9 Grapes...*

1. **Love is:** When we become transparent & Jesus shows thru very apparent.

Joy is: An attitude cultivated when the heart smiles.

Peace is: Enjoyment of Godliness & Contentment.

Patience is: The discipline to stop & pray before any decision. Not feeling the world's pressure to hurry through life.

Kindness: What is shown even to those who bend us the wrong way.

Goodness is: So general a term it spans every area of our life, in which we strive for the highest Good in all things.

Faithfulness is: Trustworthy in words spoken & deeds promised.

Gentleness is: Not weak but meek; like a strong father picking up his new-born for the 1st time.

Self-Control is: learning to say **no** to *me*.

a) *Lord, may the fruit of our lives bust forth in ripening acts of Christlikeness.*

H. **Past generations** weren't so quick to shy away from considering *the wrath of God*.

1. **Slide16** In 1861 **Julia Ward Howe** during the **Civil War** toured a *Union Army Camp* on the Potomac. There the soldiers were singing a song to **John Brown**, who had been hanged in 1859 for attempting to lead an insurrection of slaves at Harpers Ferry: "*John Brown's Body Lies a-mold'ring in the grave.*"

The music was rousing, but the words needed improvement. Her pastor encouraged her to write new & better words for it. **And she did.**

We know it as "*The Battle Hymn of the Republic.*"

2. *Mine eyes have seen the glory of **the coming of the Lord** (19:14); **He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored** (ch.14 & 19:15). He hath loosed the fateful lightening of His **terrible swift sword** (read 19:15). His **truth** is marching on (19:11).*