



## Devotional Thoughts :: IT'S TIME TO BEGIN REAPING by David Wilkerson

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Jesus declared, "The fields are ripe, and the harvest plentiful. It's time to begin reaping" (see Matthew 9:37-38). At that moment, the great, final spiritual harvest began among the Jews and Gentiles of Jesus' generation. And this same harvest is going to last until Christ returns.

As I read this passage, I wonder what Jesus saw in His time that caused Him to say, "The harvest is ready, so now is the time to reap." Did He see a spiritual awakening in Israel? Was there revival in the synagogues? Were priests turning back to God? Were scribes and Pharisees being convicted? What evidence was there that the harvest was ripe?

The gospels don't reveal much evidence of any spiritual move toward God. If anything, they show the opposite. Jesus was mocked in the synagogues. The nation's spiritual leaders rejected Him, questioning His integrity and divinity. One religious crowd even tried to throw Him over a cliff. Christ Himself upbraided Israel's cities for not repenting at His message: "Woe, Chorazin! Woe, Bethsaida! Woe, Tyre and Sidon! Woe, Capernaum!" (see Matthew 11:21-23).

As for the multitudes, they were embroiled in chaotic despair. Scripture tells us, "When he saw them they were like sheep without a shepherd" (see Matthew 9:36). Here was a society that was fearful, stressed out, depressed. The people ran about wildly, like scattered sheep, looking for help anywhere they could find it. Yet it was at this very point of great distress that Christ declared, "The fields are ripe, and the harvest is plentiful."

Do you think Jesus' words about a ripe harvest apply today? Where do we see evidence that the fields are white and ready to be reaped? Are nations repenting? Is there a great stirring in our society? And is the organized church waking up? Are religious leaders hungering for revival, seeking Christ anew? Is there a cry for holiness in this generation?

With few exceptions, I don't see any such things happening. Yet, none of these is what moved Jesus in His time. Rather, He was moved by the sad conditions He saw on every side. Everywhere He looked, people were overwhelmed with distress and He said, "It's time to begin reaping."