

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Week 6 – The Campaign of Armageddon

February 20, 2018

The word *Armageddon* is made up of two words in Hebrew: *Har* (mountain; or hill) and *Megiddo* (a city in the northern part of ancient Israel). The city of Megiddo overlooks a beautiful, large valley known as the Plain of Esdraelon (*Jezreel* in the Hebrew). The armies of the “whole world” will gather here in the last days and face total defeat by the returning King from heaven (Rev. 16:12-16; Rev. 19:19-21). Armageddon is not a single battle. Armageddon is a campaign – a series of battles - in the land of Israel in the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation. Armageddon is the result of the outpouring of the sixth bowl judgment. Armageddon is also often equated with the last battle or war on earth. This is NOT true. The last war in history will be the final revolt of Satan in Rev. 20:7-11 – the second Gog and Magog. The first Gog and Magog is found in Ezekiel 38-39. Why the same title, “Gog and Magog”? The players in the two battles are demonstrating the same rebellion and antagonism against God

The sixth bowl poured out upon the earth...

Rev. 16:12-16 - *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.* ¹³ *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.* ¹⁴ *For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.* ¹⁵ *‘Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.’* ¹⁶ *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

Ten main passages in Scripture that describe Armageddon: Psalm 2; Isa. 34:1-16; Isa. 63:1-6; Joel 3:1-17; Zech. 12:1-9; Zech. 14:1-15; Mal. 4:1-5; Rev. 14:14-20; Rev. 16:12-16; Rev. 19:19-21.

Seven key titles for Armageddon:

- The day of the Lord’s vengeance (Isa. 34:8)
- The winepress of God (Isa. 63:2; Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:19-20)
- The great and awesome day of the Lord (Joel 2:31 NASB)
- The harvest (Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:15-16)
- The day...burning like a furnace (Mal. 4:1)
- The great and terrible day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5 NASB)
- The war of the great day of God, the Almighty (Rev. 16:14)

The campaign of Armageddon will encompass the entire land of Israel from Megiddo in the north to Edom and Bozrah in Jordan in the south. (See map at end of handout) The battles will be the most intense in three specific areas:

- The Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12). The word *Jehoshaphat* means “Yahweh judges”! This valley runs east of Jerusalem and between the city and the Mount of Olives.

- The Plain of Esdraelon (also known as the Valley of Jezreel and the Plains of Megiddo).
- Bozrah/Edom (Isa. 34:1-5; Isa. 63:1). Bozrah is a city east of the Jordan River in the ancient nation of Edom (in the modern nation of Jordan). It is near the rock city of Petra.

The most vivid description of the severity and brutality of Armageddon is found in Rev. 14:17-20 - *Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.* ¹⁸ *And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."* ¹⁹ *So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.* ²⁰ *And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

Will blood really flow as deep as a horse's bridle – about four feet deep, for a distance of 184 miles from Megiddo in northern Israel to Bozrah in Jordan? Some believe that this will be so. Others believe that the language is exaggerated to impress the reader with the massive extent of the slaughter. The picture that we have been given in Scripture is of a winepress. When the grapes were put into the upper vat of the winepress (wider and more shallow), the treaders would stomp and crush the grapes. The grapes would burst and the juice would flow downward into the lower vat (the collection vat) through a pipe. The imagery suggests that because of the massive slaughter of those engaging in the battles of Armageddon (Joel 3:12-15), the juice from the "grapes" that are trodden in the winepress can be viewed as splashing as high as a horse's bridle. This is a picture of the ferocity of God's judgment. Armageddon will be an extended campaign between God and His opponents: Satan, the fallen angels, and unregenerate mankind.

Why do the nations gather for the campaign of Armageddon? Scripture doesn't clearly state why a massive army is assembled (by the unholy trinity). The spirits of demons gather the kings of the whole world (v. 14). Some believe the army is gathered to challenge the antichrist. Consider: by the end of the Tribulation, with all God's judgments pouring forth, the world will be in terrible shape. The nations may view the antichrist as the source of the trouble and may very well desire to destroy him! Others believe that the armies are gathered to finally eradicate the Jewish people most likely believing them to be the source of the world's problems. It does not make sense that the unholy trinity would gather the armies together to destroy the antichrist. YET, Who is causing the sixth bowl to be poured out? GOD!

Rev. 16:12-16 – (the voice from the Temple [God's voice] will direct the angels re: the outpouring of the bowls of judgment) *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. (God is making the way for the armies to gather)* ¹³ *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of*

the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Look at God's purpose...)

¹⁵ "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

According to God's divine purpose, Armageddon will be the means by which God will judge His enemies. Read Psa. 2:1-6. The human intent according to Psalm 2 is to overthrow God Himself! Armageddon will be the culmination of the antichrist's reign and it will end with the physical Second Coming of Jesus who will destroy the antichrist and his forces.

The campaign of Armageddon appears to include eight phases. NOTE: no single Biblical passage provides a sequence of all the events.

Phase 1 – The assembling of antichrist's armies

Phase 2 – The destruction of commercial Babylon

Phase 3 – Antichrist's armies attack Jerusalem

Phase 4 – Antichrist's armies move south against the remnant

Phase 5 – The regeneration of the nation of Israel

Phase 6 – The Second Coming of Jesus

Phase 7 – The final battle

Phase 8 – Jesus' ascent on the Mount of Olives

Phase 1: The assembling of the antichrist's armies (Joel 2:1-2; Psalm 2:1-6; Rev. 16:12-16). The Euphrates River is dried up to prepare a faster and easier assembling of the "kings of the east" (v. 12) and the kings of the whole world (v. 14) which is the inhabited earth!

Joel 2:1-2 - *Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand:*

² *A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,*

Joel 3:1-2 - *For behold, in those days and at that time (during the time of the Tribulation), when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. Who is gathering the kings/the armies? GOD!*

The Euphrates River which is the longest river of Western Asia (1,740 miles) begins in Turkey, heads toward the Mediterranean Sea, then turns south, flowing more than 1000 miles and converges with the Tigris River and then flows into the Persian Gulf. Many ancient cities, including Ur and Babylon, are located at various points along the river. The kings of the east (Mesopotamia [Babylon]) may refer to the armies of the antichrist as Babylon is the antichrist's capital (Rev. 17-18). Some have suggested that these kings of the east are those which make up the ten nation union under the antichrist's kingdom - Daniel 7:24-27 (ten kings of the ten nation confederacy depicted by the toes on the statue

of the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream) and Rev. 17:12-13 who have submitted to the authority of the antichrist - *The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.* ¹³ *These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.* ¹⁴ *These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.*

The drying of this river is prophesied:

Isa. 11:15 - *The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dry-shod.*

Phase 2: Destruction of commercial Babylon.

NOTE: religious Babylon has already fallen (will be discussed in week 7).

Some have suggested that while the armies are being gathered, the antichrist's capital in Babylon will be attacked and destroyed by God! The irony is that while the armies might be gathered to come against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:3), God attacks the antichrist's city. How do we know that Babylon is the antichrist's city? We haven't as yet looked at the antichrist's rise to power. We saw him as the rider on the white horse in Rev. 6 when Jesus broke the first seal on the scroll. How did the antichrist rise to power?

- Dan. 7 speaks of the fourth beast which is the Roman Empire. We know from the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan. 2, the Roman empire is depicted by the two legs of iron – representing Western Rome and Eastern Rome (timeframe of combined Western/Eastern Roman Empire: 753 BC – 1453 AD). We then see the feet of the statue (ten toes) which is comprised of clay and iron representing an empire coming up from Rome but not in John's day. This is a future empire – a revived Roman Empire. This is antichrist's kingdom. The antichrist is the "little horn" that we read of in Dan. 7:8.

- In Dan. 7:21 we read that *Daniel was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them*, this "same horn" (same as in Dan. 7:8) is the antichrist during the middle of the Tribulation.

Once the attack and destruction are finished, Babylon will be uninhabitable and will never again be rebuilt (Rev. 18:21-24). The antichrist will be a world ruler, but his earthly control will not be absolute; he will not be able to squelch all opposition.

Jer. 50:35, 39-40 - *A sword is against the Chaldeans," says the LORD, 'Against the inhabitants of Babylon...Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell there with the jackals, and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.* ⁴⁰ *As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors,' says the LORD, 'So no one shall reside there, (in Babylon) nor son of man dwell in it.'* This destruction of commercial Babylon is God's doing.

Phase 3: Antichrist's armies attack Jerusalem (Zech. 12:1-3; Zech. 14:1-3)

In the destruction of Babylon, nothing is said about the destruction of the armies. It appears that rather than moving eastward to confront the attack on Babylon (remember, it is GOD attacking Babylon), the armies move south toward Jerusalem.

Zech. 12:2-3 - *Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.* ³ *And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though **all** nations of the earth are gathered against it.*

Zech. 14:1-2 - *Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst.* ² *For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.* It appears that the city shall not be overthrown.

Phase 4: Antichrist's armies move south against the remnant

The campaign now shifts into the desert and mountains. It is thought that at this time the armies are heading 80 miles southeast of Jerusalem toward Bozrah and Petra. Rev.12:6 speaks of the "woman" (representing Israel) fleeing into the wilderness to a place prepared for her when the antichrist breaks the peace treaty at the middle of the Tribulation.

Phase 5: Regeneration of the nation of Israel (nation of Israel coming to faith in Jesus)

The campaign of Armageddon will culminate in the Second Coming of Jesus. Before Jesus returns physically, God will pour out His Spirit upon the Jews remaining at the end of the Tribulation (one-third).

Zech. 12:10 - *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

Phase 6: The Second Coming of Jesus

Jesus will return to earth to defeat the armies of the antichrist at Bozrah and to begin the final battles of the campaign (Isa. 34:1-7; Isa. 63:1-6; Micah 2:12-13).

Isa. 63:1-6 - *Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?— 'I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.'* ² *Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?* ³ *I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.* ⁴ *For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.* (cross reference w/ Isa. 61:1-3). ⁵ *I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me.* ⁶ *I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.'*

He will return to earth in the clouds, in the same manner in which He departed (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 14:4). At His Second Coming to earth, Jesus will enter battle against the antichrist's forces and He will defeat them.

Rev. 19:11, 15 - *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war...¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

Rev. 14:20 - *And the winepress was trampled outside the city (outside Jerusalem; Bozrah/Petra), and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

Phase 7: The final battle

Following the "sacrifice at Bozrah" (Isa. 34:6), Jesus will engage and destroy the armies of the antichrist in the Kidron Valley also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat – east of Jerusalem between the city and the Mount of Olives.

Joel 3:12-13 - *Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. ¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great.*

Rev. 14:12 - *And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.*

Rev. 19:19-21 - *And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Phase 8: Jesus victoriously ascends the Mount of Olives

With the destruction of the antichrist and his armies, Jesus will stand on the Mount of Olives in a victory ascent. (The text does not say that He descends upon the Mount of Olives)

Zech. 14:3-4 - *Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. ⁴ And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.*

Aftermath of Armageddon

- The great bird supper (Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37; Rev. 19:17-21) – carcasses will fill the entire region. The birds will gather to feed on the carnage of those who will die in the campaign of Armageddon.

Rev. 19:17-21 - *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,'¹⁸ that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.'*¹⁹ *And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*²⁰ *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*²¹ *And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

- The antichrist and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 19:20). They will be the first two occupants of the lake of fire.

Thus ends the campaign of Armageddon. There will be no more war on earth for one thousand years.

The seventh bowl...

Rev. 16:17-21 - *Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"*¹⁸ *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*¹⁹ *Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.*²⁰ *Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*²¹ *And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.* Could this be the result of Jesus' victory ascent on the Mt. of Olives which results in the upheaval of the topography? The seventh bowl judgment will be poured out into the air. Eph. 2:2 – Satan is "the prince of the power of the air". The entire earth will be literally shaken, its great cities will be destroyed, and the contour of the earth will be changed. Islands will disappear; mountains will be leveled. Hail, approx. one hundred lbs. each, will plummet to the earth. People will continue to blaspheme God!

Rev. 16:19 - *The great city was divided into three parts* –Jerusalem will be split into three parts (??) Zech. 14:4 - *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.* Perhaps this causes a three-way division (north, south, and west) within Jerusalem itself. "The great city" is not mentioned by name, but it is so clearly distinguished from 'the cities of the nations,' that there can be no doubt that it is Jerusalem. And, here we find the fulfillment of several prophecies concerning geographical changes in Jerusalem – for improvement (Isa. 2:2ff; Zech. 14:8; Zech. 14:4-

5; Psa. 48:2)! The destruction which is prophesied for Babylon is far more severe than a mere division into three parts. Babylon will be overwhelming devastated resulting in her complete unfitness for further habitation.

and the cities of the nations fell – nations is translated as “gentiles” (Matt. 4:15; 6:32; [10:5](#); [12:18](#); [20:19](#); Rev. [11:2+](#); etc.). This refers to all the cities other than Jerusalem, including that center of ungodliness, Babylon itself. Babylon, the capital of antichrist’s empire, will receive a special outpouring of God’s wrath as prophesied in Isa. 13:6-13. Rev. 17 & 18 give details of its destruction.

Rev. 16:21 - *And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.* Under the law, what was the punishment for blaspheming God?

Lev. 24:16 - *And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him.*

Unrepentant blasphemers are being stoned at the end of the outpouring of God’s judgment. And, the weight of these stones, the hail, is massive. Oh that the eyes of the lost today would be opened to the truth of His abundant mercy and great patience while there is yet the possibility of turning to Him!

QUESTIONS

WHY did we go through these phases of the campaign of Armageddon?

How does it impact you?

WHY does this matter TO GOD????

What are you taking away from this lesson?

STRONGLY SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread the handout with the references.

Make observations and note questions. Begin to answer questions with Scripture.

Share the lesson with unsaved friends, acquaintances, neighbors.

Add to your journal.

Read week 7’s handout when you receive it.

