

The Revelation – Preparing for the End

Before getting into the lesson I want to once again apologize for missing the lesson last week. The past few weeks have been very hectic. We were hit by a tractor trailer on our way to church last Sunday. There were no injuries, but it still makes for a bad day. In any event, we'll continue our study by looking at the last two vials of God's wrath. Let's begin by looking at Revelation 16:12-16, which says:

- (12) And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.
- (13) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.
- (14) For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto 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 come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.
- (16) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

In this portion of the Revelation we find that the vial is poured out as a preparation for things which are to come. The Euphrates River is dried up. This appears to be an invitation to the battle at Armageddon. This is the last great World War before the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ. There won't be another one after that for 1000 years.

It is interesting to see that Antichrist quickly responds to the drying up of the Euphrates. He begins to work in an even more mighty way through the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. He uses demonic powers to work all sorts of miracles and prove to the world that he is God. As these unclean spirits gather for this great war it is a religious war above all others. War is declared against all who will not worship the god of this world.

The wording at the end of verse 14 is rather interesting. It would appear to me that the people who gather at this battle are gathering with the idea that they are fighting for god almighty. They have been deluded to think that this is the day that their god once and for all does away with those pesky Christians. God, though, chose these words because it truly is His great day.

The first part of verse 15 is very interesting in the context of what is going on. This is a clear reference to Matthew 24:36-44 where Jesus is instructing his followers to be watchful. This Scripture says:

- (36) But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.
- (37) But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

- (38) For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,
- (39) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- (40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
- (41) Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
- (42) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
- (43) But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.
- (44) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Now most people rightfully refer to this Scripture as referring to the Rapture, the time when God's people are "caught up" (raptured) to meet the Lord in the air. What many have missed, though, is the timing of this event. Jesus here clearly puts it at the time of Armageddon, at the end of the tribulation period. Once again, God follows the example that he has given us. In Egypt he protected his people through the tribulation and then brought them out. At the end of time he will protect his people through the Great Tribulation and then bring them out.

The culmination of this battle comes with the speaking of the word. Revelation 16:17-21 records the last vial of God's wrath. This Scripture says:

- (17) And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.
- (18) And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.
- (19) And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.
- (20) And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.
- (21) And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

As the voice of the Lord speaks and says, "It is done," we see that the earth begins to shake and is made into something entirely different. The land masses have joined together and have flattened. The men, though, continue to blaspheme the God of Heaven. Next week we'll look further at the total destruction which occurs when Christ returns.

Yours in Christ,

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