

The Days of Armageddon

Revelation 14-16

INTRODUCTION: We continue our study of the book of Revelation. Today we approach that climatic moment that is traditionally known as the **battle of Armageddon**. While Daniel and Ezekiel focused on the Earthly powers involved in the battle, John in Revelation emphasizes Heavenly powers.

Let me remind you of our context.

- At this point the Church as we know it has been removed from the scene.
- The AntiChrist has worked out a deal for the Jews to rebuild their temple and to reinstitute the OT sacrificial system on the temple mount.
- Jewish people by the 10's of thousands begin to follow Jesus as the Messiah.
- Then Anti-Christ turns on the Jews, enters and defiles the Temple and begins a Holocaust like the world has never seen.
- Unimaginable horrors begin to fall on the Earth.
- Wars break out, severe famines, deadly plagues, and terrible earthquakes and other natural disasters, all of which will result in millions of deaths.
- Sin will run rampant and all over the earth, fueled by Satan and his demonic hosts because they have been barred ultimately from access losing the right of approach.
- The Christ followers in Israel are taken to a place prepared for them where they will be protected from the worst part of the Tribulation.
- 144,000 Jewish Evangelists encompass the globe preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- We've seen the Seal Judgement, the Trumpet Judgements and today we see the SEAL Judgements.

At that point, John's vision begins to morph into this glorious **pre-battle ceremony** in Heaven.

1. Adoration

Revelation 14:1–16:21 (ESV)

¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

The Mount Zion was the name used to reference the mount on which Jerusalem was built. But in our text the Mountain that John sees is the **Zion of Heaven**. Remember **Hebrews 8:5** tells us that the Earthly temple was a replica of a Heavenly temple.

I don't intend to be overly complicated or to blow your minds too much at this point. But recognize that Heaven and Hell are not presented physical places that exist in time and space in the same way that another planet exists. But rather, they are in a **different dimension**. The concrete dimension we are familiar with is engulfed by the

heavenly spiritual dimension. We will unpack this more later as we get into the continuity and discontinuity of the New Heaven and New Earth.

Disintegration - Separation - Reintegration

So here, understand, that John is seeing the overlap - Heaven and the 144,000 who are still alive on Earth.

² And I heard a voice from heaven (the heavenly dimension) like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

I can't tell you how many times people have mentioned at the passing of a loved one, hearing into Heaven, hearing the Angels singing. There are times when the two dimensions spill over. That's what it happening here.

Isn't that interesting - before the greatest war Earth has ever known - heaven in singing. You've heard it said that WORSHIP is a WEAPON.. it is.

Is your marriage struggling? Is are your kids rebelling? Are you depressed? Surround yourself with worship. The time, when you feel like it the least, is when you sing by faith, you join with the heavenly chorus. ***Heaven is singing you should be as well.***

3b. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

I don't have time to fully unpack this, but the defilement he is speaking of is spiritual not physical. False worship is compared to spiritual fornication throughout revelation. Babylon we will learn next week is called the great Harlot. The same language is in use here.

These 144,000 have withstood the immense pressure of the world system to bow the knee to Anti-Christ, to receive his mark, and to worship his image. And, they have suffered greatly because of it.

But notice what it says, "No one could learn that song except the 144,000".

There are some songs you can't sing until you have been there. I think there is a reason some of the great hymns of the faith come out of the descendants of slaves. They've experienced something, I haven't experienced. I can sing the song, but not like the can. AND, I can sing a song, they can't sing. I've been through things you haven't experienced, and you have experienced things I can't relate to.

WORSHIP is a form of WITNESS.

Both the words you sing and the emotion with which you sing communicate a truth that volumes of literature can't convey. Your song says something. AND btw, I don't mean to get too personal, when you don't engage in worship... that says something also.

There is ADORATION... secondly notice...

2. Ambassadors

Heaven sends out a number of Ambassadors, just as a great King would send an emissary with terms of surrender before an invasion begins. No one in his right mind wishes for war. If a King is wise, he always offers terms of peace that are in the best interest of all involved.

a. The Gospel Appeal

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an **eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Before the Judgement falls, this Angel reminds humanity that God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Perhaps you are hearing this message today as a similar type of warning. How many times has the radio search fell to a Gospel preacher, or Billy Graham's distinctive voice been heard from your television? Perhaps a grand parent wanted to have a talk.

Don't take these warnings for granted. God always warns before he judges.

b. The Prophetic Promise

⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

Technically, the earthly city of Babylon was doing fine. This was a prophetic promise that her doom was at hand. We will see all about that next week.

c. The Final Warning

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever,

and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

This final warning is clear, unmistakable, expresses the ultimate consequences for rejecting Christ. Which is an eternal experience of God’s wrath forever and ever...

There is a false doctrine called annihilationism that suggest that if you die apart from grace you cease to exist. Friend, keep in mind, the clearest language we have about hell came from the mouth of Jesus Christ. It is a real experience. You don’t cease to exist. Again, we will talk more about that later.

There is an aside in verse 12-13 and an encouragement to endure...then we see the attack begins...

3. Attack

a. Judgement Likened to the Harvest of Wheat

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” ¹⁶ So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

There you see that image that has traditionally been referred to as the grim reaper carrying the sickle. This is an image that harkens back to the parables of Jesus comparing Judgement to the reaping of the Harvest. Remember in the parable of the wheat and tares Jesus said, “let them grow together, till the harvest... at which time they will be separated”.

b. Judgement Likened to the Treading of Grapes

¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

So there Judgement is compared to the treading of a wine press. So the harvest is taken, clusters of grapes thrown into a vat... then servant step on the grapes until the new wine pours forth.

Well here the image is people will be treaded rather than grapes... and the wine is the blood of those people... high as a horses bridle. It's probably the most horrifying picture of judgement in all of God's word.

c. Judgement Affirmed by the Host of Heaven

Revelation 15

¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished. ² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. ³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “**Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.**”

Sometimes, we wonder what will it be like to witness these things from the perspective of Heaven. Remember, some of these people will be people we know. Well hear we see that with a glorified perspective, knowing as we are known... all of Heaven will resound with AMEN! Yes, this is right!

⁵ After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, ⁶ and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. ⁷ And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, ⁸ and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

d. Judgement Poured out as Bowls

i. Bowl 1 - Painful Sours

Revelation 16:1-21 (ESV)

¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” ² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

Notice, this is selective. The sores only appearing on the worshippers of the beast.

ii. Bowl 2 - The Sea Rots

³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

Romans 8:22 (ESV)

22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

To be honest, it doesn't always look like it's groaning. But occasionally God will lift the curtain and let us see what's there. The smell itself of a rotting planet would be unbearable.

BTW, he does that will people sometimes also. Some of the most sinful people can appear very together and attractive. But occasionally, God will lift the veil and let us see what they are really like.

iii. Bowl 3 - Water Becomes Undrinkable

4 The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. ***It is what they deserve!***" 7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!"

iv. Bowl 4 - Unrelenting Heat

8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. 9 They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

v. Bowl 5 - Deep Darkness

10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish 11 and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

vi. Bowl 6 - Armageddon

12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 13 And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. 14 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to ***assemble them for battle*** on the great day of God the Almighty. 15 ("***Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!***") 16 And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

The Hebrew Word – Harmageddon means, "The Mount of Megiddo". Har – mount, Megiddo means slaughter; so Armageddon means the, "Mount of Slaughter".

The word Armageddon is mentioned only one time in the Bible, but the mount Meggido is rich in Biblical history.

AT Meggido:

- Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites (Judges 4-5)
- Gideon defeated the Midianites (Judges 7)
- Saul was slain during a war with the Philistines (1 Sam. 31)
- Ahaziah was slain by Jehu (2 Kings 9)
- Josiah slain by the Egyptians (2 Kings 23)



History has seen battles involving The Crusaders, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Druze, the Greeks, the Turks, and the Arabs all in this valley.

According to Alan Johnson, "More than 200 battles have been fought at or near there".

1799, Napoleon stood at Megiddo before the battle that ended his quest to conquer the East and rebuild the Roman Empire and said, "All the armies of the world could maneuver their forces on this vast plain... there is no place in the world more suited for war than this... it is the most natural battleground on planet earth".

You have probably heard of the Battle of Armageddon - it's actually a series of campaigns rather than a single battle.

1. *The King from the West - that's antiChrist according to Daniel 11*
2. *The King from the South - Eze. 38*
3. *The King from the North - Eze 38*
4. *The King from the East - Rev. 17*

Who are they gathering to battle? Israel and Israel's Messiah.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: *But as soon as their lines are formed we are going to see that Messiah coming on a WHITE HORSE.*

Historically, Roman Emperors would have a white horse on reserve. Once the battle was over and the dust had settled, the Emperor would saddle that horse, and flanked by the standards of Rome he would ride across the battlefield into the conquered city.

Our Lord doesn't wait until the battle is over...he shows up for the battle on the White horse... this is not fair fight.

Psalm 2:1–12 (ESV)

¹ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” ⁷ I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.