Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Seven Bowl Judgment, Part 2
Scripture: Revelation 16:12-16
Code: 66-57

Let's open our Bibles now to Revelation chapter 16, a continuing look at the apocalypse, the revelation of Jesus Christ in the glory of His Second Coming. Our text for this evening is the sixteenth chapter beginning at verse 12. We read, "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates, and its water was dried up that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east. 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, for they are spirits of demons performing signs which go out to the kings of the whole earth to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. Behold, I am coming like a thief, blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments lest he walk about naked and men see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying it is done. And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and there was a great earthquake such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it and so mighty. And the great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations fell and Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away and the mountains were not found. Huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each came down from heaven upon men and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail because its plague was extremely severe."

All the earthly cataclysms which man experiences are warnings of the final ones when God unleashes His anger at the end of man's day. Any severe earthly disaster is just a taste of what is to come. In fact all of the natural disasters of human history since the flood are just warning samples, whether they be hurricanes, tornados, floods, plaguing diseases, tidal waves, or earthquakes, they're just samples of the worldwide devastation that will occur just before Jesus Christ returns to the earth.

And we have been looking at these horrifying final judgments of which any current or past disasters are but a preview, and we've been looking at them for a long time now, frankly. We started looking at them way back in chapter 6.

From chapter 6 all the way through to where we are now we have had frighteningly clear detail of the coming disasters that fall into the category of the final wrath of God. They are gathered together in an interesting format, they are described first as seven-seal judgments, then seven-trumpet judgments and then seven-bowl judgments. Those simply indicate the initiating features of the vision. The first

seven judgments feature the unrolling of a seven-sealed scroll, that's the motif used to described the judgments. The second seven judgements are inaugurated by seven separate trumpet blasts by angels. The last seven judgments, the rapid fire and the worst of the judgments are described in a motif of seven bowls that are poured out by seven different angels. We are now in the seven bowls, we are at the last two bowls, the two final plagues in the final wrath of God before the return of Jesus Christ. The next event after the seventh bowl is the return of the Lord. We will read about that as we get into chapter 19.

So we're studying the last of the two judgments. Now we've already, last of the seven judgments, I should say, the last two. We have already looked at the first five. In verses 1 through 11 you have the first five bowl judgments, or the first five of the last plagues. The first one brought malignant sores on everyone. The second bowl judgment caused the world's oceans to be polluted so that everything in them dies. The third caused the world's fresh water to be polluted so it too is deadly. The fourth bowl caused scorching sunlight as God turns up the heavenly thermostat and cooks the world. And the fifth brings darkness which covers the entire earth. And God is just in doing all of this, as verses 5 through 7 indicate. He is a holy one, verse 5 says, because He did judge these things. And verse 7...verse 6 says they deserve it, and verse 7 says, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments."

The judgments are right. The judgments are just. Why? Because men have refused and refused and refused the offer of salvation. In chapter 9 they are blaspheming the name of God and they will not...in verse 9, I should say, they are blaspheming the name of God and they will not repent. In verse 11 again they are blaspheming the God of heaven and they will not repent of their deeds. So after warning upon warning upon warning through this whole period of seven years, the unfolding now of twenty-one separate judgments, twenty-one separately identified judgments, after many calls to salvation both from men and angels, men continue to reject and God then is just in all that He does.

After these first five bowls, the two more I read to you take up most space in the chapter. They ware the worst of all, frightening, more terrifying than anything that's ever happened in the history of the world. Connected to those last two bowls is the battle of Armageddon. You remember there in verse 16 it is mentioned. We will get into a description of that later on as some of the detail unfolds in chapter 17, 18 and 19, detail that needs to be filled in before the discussion of the coming of Jesus Christ, even though it is the very next event.

This is a monumental event. This is the very end, the final judgment of God. John Phillips writes about this, some very interesting things regarding a comparison. Listen to what he said. "The holy land has been chosen by God as the stage upon which two crucial events take place. One on a mountain and one on a plain. Mount Calvary and the Plain of Megiddo are the two altars of sacrifice that dominate the history of the world. Both are blood baths. Both are the descent of wrath upon sin. Both are brought about by God's bitterest foes. From each proceeds a supper, one a feast of

remembrance for the people of God and the other a feast of retribution for the carry on. At Mount Calvary there rang up the gates of heaven a victorious cry, `It is finished.' At the plain of Armageddon there rings down to earth an answering cry, `It is done,'" end quote.

And I might add that the comparison is apt because the judgment on Calvary provided forgiveness and grace for sinners. The judgment at Megiddo provides destruction and damnation for sinners. On the first, Mount Calvary, Jesus Christ died for sinners. At the foot of the second mount, Mount Megiddo, sinners die themselves. Here then is another like the cross of God's fierce judgments. In fact, the cross and the final judgment played out at Megiddo are the two most severe judgments that God brings upon the world as we know it. One is a saving judgment on sin, the other is a damning one.

And so we look at these last two plagues, understanding that they are very much high points in God's redemptive acts. Let's look, first of all, at the sixth bowl. And there's so much that can be said, and I have to be somewhat selective about all of this and I can't say everything that ought to be said, but I think we can get the flavor and the sense of these things and it's enough to overwhelm us even with a limited comprehension.

Verse 12, "The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates." The sixth angel in sequence acting as his turn arrives pours his bowl on the great river Euphrates. This isn't the first time, by the way, in the judgments of the book of Revelation that the Euphrates has been mentioned. Back in chapter 9 and verse 14 the sixth angel who had a trumpet blew it at the appropriate time and a voice said, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And when that happened, you remember two hundred million demons were released.

So the river Euphrates has already played a part. Here the next specifically selected angel acts quickly and dumps his saucer in the image, the vision of judgment, and it falls on the great river Euphrates. It's called a great river because, in fact, it is. It's eighteen-hundred miles long. It runs from north to south. In fact, its headwaters are found in no other place than Mount Ararat. You remember that, don't you? That's where the ark ended up. The summit of Mount Ararat is somewhere around seventeen thousand feet. It is snow-capped all year long. The headwaters of the great Euphrates River begin there and they flow downhill all the way to the gulf of the Arabian Sea, clear across the Middle East in what we know is the Fertile Crescent.

At some points it is as wide as thirty-six hundred feet, and as deep as thirty-plus feet. This is a great Middle Eastern river, along with another sort of twin river called the Tigris that formed the life blood of the ancient Fertile Crescent area where once the Garden of Eden was and once was not a wilderness at all, but a flourishing, flowering and beautiful place. The Euphrates River, by the way, is very important in the plan of God. It identifies itself by virtue of God's plan and promise as the eastern boundary of the land which God gave to Israel. You find that in Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 1:7,

Joshua 1:4, Deuteronomy 11:24. The Euphrates was the eastern boundary. The land that God gave to Israel went from the sea, the Mediterranean, all the way to the Euphrates River and would encompass what today is Arab territory.

By the way, in three of those Old Testament references that I just mentioned to you, it is also called The Great River Euphrates. So it plays a very important role in that it is a boundary for God's land promised to the people of Israel.

The prophets talked about it. Isaiah chapter 11 verse 15, "The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt, and He will wave his hand over the river with His scorching wind and He will strike it into seven streams and make men walk over dry shod. And there will be a highway from Assyria." There is a statement by Isaiah that God is going to dry up the Euphrates River. Zechariah said the same thing. The tenth chapter of Zechariah and...I think it's the eleventh verse..."He will pass through the sea of distress, strike the waves in the sea so that the depths of the Nile will dry and the pride of Assyria will be brought down, the scepter of Egypt will depart." There you have the drying up of the Nile River. The prophets are talking about a time when God comes in judgment. Isaiah spoke of the drying of the Euphrates, Zechariah, of the drying of the Nile.

Now what happens here, I want you to notice, see if we can't put this together. Here is...here is the time when God dries up this river. The bowl is poured out upon it and it says its water was dried up. Now I want you to remember something. By the time this happens the Euphrates River will be different than we know it today, or have ever known it for a very significant reason. The prior bowl judgment was darkness, but the one prior to that, the fourth bowl back in verses 8 and 9, was the sun scorching men with fire. You will remember that I told you this is going to create some massive problems in the world, very likely the melting of the solar..of the polar icecaps by the solar heat, causing the world's oceans to rise as high as two hundred feet which will inundate cities. Well also that kind of scorching heat is going to melt the cap, the snowcap and the glaziers way up in the mountains of Ararat and the surrounding area which is going to cause the Euphrates River to swell and that whole Fertile Crescent area to become a massive flood plain. Whatever bridges and whatever access is across that river now, it will surely be useless when the snow pack and the glaziers swamp the land below all the way down to the gulf of the Arabian Sea.

Because of this, the nations are hindered. And, of course, because also it's dark, it's going to be very difficult for them to have access to Palestine. But notice it says in verse 12, "The water was dried up in order that...that's what that means in the original...the way might be prepared for the kings from the east." There needs to be access for the oriental leaders who will come to the land of Palestine. The millions of Asia, literally the Greek says here, "The kings of the rising of the sun," anatole, the kings of the rising...the sun rising in the east. God dries up the Euphrates River so these kings from the great empires, India, China, Japan, whatever great empires will be at that time, can come to Palestine.

First it might appear that God is doing them a favor. But it's a trap...it is a deadly trap, just as the parting of the Red Sea was a deadly trap for the Egyptian army. They are like sheep led to the slaughter. The world is coming to be executed.

The question that arises here, for any commentator or any student of this, is what makes them come? Why are they coming? You say, "Well, they're coming for the battle of Armageddon." But isn't there just one world government at that time? Yes. Isn't the Antichrist ruling the world? Yes. They certainly aren't coming to fight him, are they? I mean, he's their one-world ruler. They aren't coming to fight each other, are they? What brings them to Israel?

Well it is possible they may be coming to fight each other. You can well understand that by this time the whole thing is beginning to disintegrate seriously and surely if any kind of survey were taken, the population would have a declining approval rate for the Antichrist. He isn't really doing anything to stop the fierce judgments. It is possible that there is a great world conflict played out on the stage, right there at Palestine, and that the east and west and north and south are all convening there to fight each other. It is also possible, and Scripture doesn't tell us, that what really brings them is that their last ditch effort to stop all of this somehow involves the destruction of any remaining Jews in the land of Israel. Maybe this is a final act of rabid anti-semitism to destroy the remaining Jews. You remember the Lord is going to hide some Jews. And we learn about that back in chapter 12. They're going to be protected and nourished for that second half of the Tribulation time and maybe they're going to come and rout them out and massacre them all in hopes that God will tuck His tail and go away and hide and leave them alone because all of His people are destroyed. Maybe they believe that in some way these Jews are responsible for this. We don't know any of those things, those could be true.

We do know this. Verse 13, "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." A pretty gross sort of vision, isn't it? Like something in a horror movie. He sees a vision of the dragon who is Satan, the beast who is Antichrist, the false prophet who is the false prophet, the one who points to the Antichrist, builds an image to him and gets the whole world to worship him, his ally. He sees this unholy trinity of Satan, Antichrist and the false prophet and out of each of their mouths come unclean spirits like slimy frogs.

Why out of the mouth? Well the mouth is the seat of influence, isn't it? The source of speech. That's where influence comes from, it comes from speech. So out of the mouth of these three come frog-like creatures. That's sort of emblematic of them coming out of the muck and the mire and the slime. And what John sees here is really the spirit of demons. Verse 14 says that. They are spirits of demons, ugly, foul demons coming out of the filthy slime of the unholy trinity. And the whole scene is to be as graphic and as revolting and as disgusting and showing the source as it could possible be. Frogs

were detestable, unclean things, according to Leviticus chapter 11. To the Persians, the frog was the twin of Arymon(?). Arymon was the god of evil and the agent of all plagues. So the Persians was the plague-inducing creature. These aren't real frogs, these are demon-seducing spirits spreading lies and deception.

So that's the point. Why do these eastern kings, why do all the powers of the east come in the scorching, blazing sun across the dry desert? Why do they come in the darkness? Why do they come with all their boils? Why do they come with no water to drink except what they have already stored up? Why do they come? They come because they are induced to come by demons.

You say, "What is Satan's plan?" Perhaps to make one final attack on Jerusalem and destroy the Jews as we said. Perhaps to destroy any remaining who may have congregated in that place. Verse 14 says, "They are spirits of demons." And what convinces the kings of the east to come is their performing signs, magic, trickery, deception and perhaps sometimes even supernatural. There is evidence that most of what they do is chicanery and deception, magic. But it's also possible that they may do some mighty supernatural demonic things.

You can go back to chapter 13 and remember in verses 12 to 15 how the Antichrist was aided by the false prophet who came along and feigned a resurrection. And verse 13 says, "Performed great signs." Such a great miracle worker was the false prophet that fire came down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men and he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which was given to him to perform in the presence of the beast. The false prophet has the power to do this because he too is demonically energized. And so here comes some others with their wonders, their wonders are convincing and they deceive these great kings and they come with their powerful armies.

In Mark 13:22 it says, "False Christs and false prophets will arise," speaking of the same time of the Tribulation, "they'll show signs and wonders in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray." These things are so convincing and so powerful that if it were possible, and it isn't, they would lead the elect astray. They lead the whole world astray. There's really no rational explanation for why the kings of the east are all going to march over to Palestine in the scorching sun and the dark with no water. It doesn't make any sense. But they do it because they have been demonically deceived, which isn't anything new in human life, is it?

Back in 1 Kings chapter 22 you can read an interesting illustration of how demons do this. The Lord said, "Who will entice Ahab to go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said this while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, `I'll entice him.' And the Lord said to him, `How?' And he said, `I'll go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' He said, `You are to entice him, go and do it.' Now therefore behold the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you."

There's always an available demon to do the deception. Some of them are so wretched they'll even work for God against their own. This very, very effective deception results in the world coming to the land of Israel. Look what it says. "They are spirits of demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." These demons are able to go out and convince the whole world to come. They're going to bring the whole world to a war against God. And I think that's really the only specific thing we know. It doesn't say anything about whether they were coming to persecute Christians or whether they were coming to take over Israel or whether they were coming to roust out and execute remaining Jews who were hidden. But what it does say is they were coming to fight God...they were coming to do battle with God. And somehow the demons by virtue of their signs and wonders and great power convinced these armies and these kings and generals all over the globe that there's enough power in their favor on their side to do in God. And to be honest, they don't have much of a choice.

Joel speaks about this in Joel 3:9. It says, "Proclaim this among the nations, prepare a war, arouse the mighty men. Let all the soldiers draw near. Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say I am a mighty man. Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations and gather yourselves there. Bring down, O Lord, Thy mighty ones and let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe. Come tread, for the winepress is full, the vats overflow for their wickedness is great."

They're going to all be gathered there thinking they're going to fight against God and win. And God's going to destroy them all. Psalm 2, "Why are the nations in an uproar and the people devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed." They're coming to do battle with God. And the deluding demons are able to convince the whole world that they've got the power to come against God. That the mission then by the beast, the Antichrist and the false prophet to gather the kings of the world to war, a war like no other war, this is the war with God. It says in verse 14, "They're gathering them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

Now this march of the kings is further described in chapter 17. Chapter 17 and 18 give some more details which we'll see. But this march of these kings is described, if you start in verse 12 of chapter 17, and flow down to the end, you'll see some references to features that will occur when all these great nations arrive for this great war. And we'll dig into that when we get into chapter 17.

Remember now, a revival, a great moving of God and I believe the salvation of Israel has taken place back in chapter 11, at the end of the chapter because...at the end of the first half of the chapter because of the influence of the two witnesses. It says there was a great earthquake, a tenth of the city, that's Jerusalem, fell, seven thousand people were killed, the rest were terrified and gave glory to

the God of heaven. I think you have the salvation of the Jews at that point, so they have been redeemed and intensified hatred from the world results, maybe they're coming because of that. But more than that, they're coming to fight God. They really are the allies of the Antichrist.

Look at chapter 17 just at least one thought there. It says at the end of verse 12, they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour, that's a brief time. They have one purpose. They give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb. And the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of Lords and King of kings. So the real point here is they're coming to do battle with God and to do battle with Christ. They come from every part of the world. They probably come by every means, plane, ship, truck, train, any way they can get there. Why? "To gather together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." That is the purpose of the sixth bowl. The sixth bowl gathers the world to the great polemos, that is a word for major war. And very likely this is the climax of events described in Daniel 11:40 to 45. Verse 44 of Daniel 11 says, "They're tidings from the east," and then the description of verse 45. It seems as though what is in this sixth bowl is the climax of the events described in Daniel 11:40 to 45, and you have a little description of how the battle flows. And finally ends up tidings from the east and then the great war with God.

The Apostle Paul gave attention to this great war with God and I only refer to it so you can compare in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, it says, "You know full well the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night." In 2 Thessalonians 1:10, He's going to come to be glorified in His saints on that day. And, of course, it will be a day of tremendous, tremendous judgment. There will be retribution. There will be the penalty of eternal destruction. All of that in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

So they're being gathered together for this great war. Joel also refers to this in chapter 2. It talks about how strong the Lord is. The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome and who can endure it, Joel 2:11. And again over in chapter 3 verses 2, 3 and 4, it talks about gathering all the nations together and then destroying them.

This war will be over very, very fast. Jesus comes and it's over. The world feels they can annihilate the people of God, they can destroy the Son of God, they can even defeat God Himself. That's not how it is. Chapter 19, look at verse 11. Here comes Christ on a white horse, verse 11. Verse 12, "His eyes are a flame of fire, His head has many crowns, He has a name written on him which no man can know except Himself. He's clothed with a robe dipped in blood, His name is called The Word of God. The armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, follow Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword so that with it He may smite the nations." That's how the war ends. He smites them. He rules them with a rod of iron and He smashes out the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." And the victory is so complete that the birds which fly in the mid-heaven are assembled for a great supper, to eat the flesh of kings and commanders and mighty men and horses and those who sit on them and flesh of all men, freemen and slaves, small and great. He says, "I saw

the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army, the beast was seized, with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. And these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone and the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse and all the birds were filled with their flesh. And an angel came down from heaven having the key of the abyss, a chain in his hand, laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old who was the devil and Satan and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the abyss. Sealed and shut so that he couldn't deceive the nations any longer, till the thousand years was over.

That's how it ends. The whole world and this is the moment when redemptive purpose is completed. Then in verse 15 you will notice probably in your Bible a parenthesis. This is a bit of a respite, an interlude, a word from heaven. It could be considered as a gracious warning. "Behold, I'm coming like a thief, blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame."

It could be considered a warning, it also could be a promise to the saints. And I think it's that because between the sixth and seventh seal there's a respite to give promise and hope to the saints, between the sixth and seventh trumpet there's a respite to give promise to the saints, and here between the sixth and seventh bowl there's a respite and a promise to give hope and encouragement to the saints. The prior comforting passages between six and seven seals and six and seven trumpets are longer, but remember this is a rapid-fire situation here and the respite is brief and the comfort is brief.

You can go back to chapter 7:1 to 17, and you'll see the respite before the seventh seal. Go back to chapter 10 through chapter 11:13, see the respite between the six and seventh trumpet. And here is a word of brief comfort, brief comfort, no time for details, just brief, "Behold, I'm coming like a thief." This is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's coming, He's coming like a thief. How does a thief come? Suddenly, quickly. Revelation 22:7, "Behold I am coming quickly." The thief comes unexpectedly, quickly, with stealth, he's there. Verse 12 of chapter 22, "Behold I'm coming quickly." Verse 20, "Yes, I'm coming quickly." The thief comes rapidly, speedily, and dangerously to do harm.

This same kind of imagery of our Lord coming like a thief is found, isn't it, in the gospels and the writings of Paul and Peter. Just reminding you, Matthew 24:42, "Be on the alert, you do not know which day your Lord is coming. Be sure of this, if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and not allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason, be ready, for the Son of Man is coming in an hour when you don't think He will."

First Thessalonians chapter 5 essentially says the same thing. Verse 3, "When they're saying,`Peace and safety, destruction will come suddenly.'" Verse 2, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." Second Peter 3:10 essentially says the very same thing. "Behold, I'm coming like a thief." And

they would all know too that that's not going to effect them negatively, they who were saints.

Then he gives a beatitude. This is one of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. "Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments lest he walk about naked and men see his shame." What's he saying? Well, it's really very simple. He's...a beatitude is a blessing or a benediction. There are seven, as I said, in the book of Revelation, I won't go over them. This speaks of being ready. It's very much like the story of the virgins in Matthew 25. Remember ten virgins, five were ready and five weren't, five had oil, five didn't.

But the imagery is a little bit different here. It's not a wedding and it's not virgins preparing to be the bridesmaids in the wedding. What it is is a soldier on duty. The imagery is a soldier who is on duty. And if you're a soldier on duty you want to keep your clothes on because if you don't have your clothes on, you're not going to be ready. Some have suggested that a soldier on duty was to stay awake or he might be beaten. And if he was found without his uniform on when the battle broke out, he would be dishonorably discharged, if not lose his life.

It's also possible to take the same imagery that's the imagery of the thief here, that there's a thief coming and you better be ready for the moment when he arrives. The imagery is just to be dressed so that when it all breaks loose, you're not stark naked. It was humorous if it wasn't so sad. I was told about a man who was staying in a hotel when the earthquake hit. He was in such panic early in the morning, he was completely unclothed and in the panic darted into the lobby. To his immense shame, everyone noticed his nakedness...the earthquake not withstanding...and hasten to wrap him in whatever was available. When the shaking comes, when the judgment comes, make sure you're dressed, it's preparedness. Be clothed with righteousness, not naked and ashamed. First John 2:28 tells us that if we abide in Christ, if we abide in Christ when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

So I think this is an encouragement, a little bit of encouragement and blessing and benediction on those who are dressed and ready when He comes. Well after that brief interlude, verse 16 says, "And they gather them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon." After the interlude, back to the plague, they gather them together to a place called Har-Magedon. This is Megiddo. If you've ever been to the land of Israel, you've been there. It's an incredible place. Sixty miles north of Jerusalem, up the valley, the Jordan Valley is a mount called Mount Megiddo. And at the foot of that Mount to the west is the Plain of Megiddo. At the foot of that Mount to the east is what is known as the Plain of Esdraelon, actually northeast. It flows northeast and west. it is a massive plain and it has been throughout the history of the land of Israel a battlefield. Would you believe that over two hundred battles have been fought there? Napoleon saw it, called it the greatest battlefield he had ever seen. There Barak fought the Canaanites in Judges 4. There Gideon fought, Judges 7. There Samson triumphed over the Philistines and slew Goliath. There Saul and Josiah's death occurred. There have been some amazing and astounding wars in that place. It is a battlefield of all battlefields.

And the great war gathering is going to be there.

But it's just not going to be only there. Go back to chapter 14 verse 20. When we get down to the end, to the final judgment and the wrath of God really unfolds, as described here, it says in verse 20, "The winepress was trodden outside the city," that would be Jerusalem, "and blood came out from the winepress up to the horses' bridles for a distance of two hundred miles." That would mean that the final great holocaust of judgment that would have a two hundred mile stretch, that would put it south of and through the city of Jerusalem all the way to the north and through the Valley of Megiddo, the Plain of Esdraelon and beyond. I think it encompasses the whole land of Palestine from the very top to the very bottom and includes Jerusalem. And we're just putting the Scriptures together to come to that conclusion.

Zechariah chapter 14 and verse 1, "Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, half the city exiled, the rest of the people not be cut off from the city. The Lord will then go forth and fight against those nations as when He fights in a day of battle and in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which is in front of Jerusalem," and so forth. Joel 3:16 refers to the same thing.

So the battle runs all the way from Jerusalem in the south and beyond that, all the way to the plain of Megiddo in the north and beyond that. The battle ends in a bloodbath that I already read to you from chapter 19. It is a fierce and inconceivable, horrifying, frightening battle ended by the return of Christ.

But, before the seventh plague hits, I should say before the battle ends, the seventh plague hits. We don't know the timing here. We assume in the sixth plague, we're right at the end now, the nations have all been gathered. In just a matter of days they can move fast, transportation being what it is. And they're all over the land of Palestine, stretching from the north Megiddo to Jerusalem and beyond. It would take all of that for all the armies of the world. And Jesus is about to come. But there's one last thing before He comes. And that last thing is described in the seventh plague.

I wish we had time for that tonight but our time is gone. It is incredible. Next Sunday night we're going to have communion, but I'll tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to finish and preach this last plague next Sunday night. We'll have the Lord's table along with it. I'll squeeze it down a little bit.

Our Father, as we think about these things and we study Your Word together, it's just so overwhelming, so much that can be said. So frightening. You are a holy God. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, cannot look upon iniquity. You judge sin and sinners. You have in your very nature violence, vengeance, hatred, wrath, judgment. And when Your grace is spurned, and when Your mercy is rejected, and when men will not repent and will continue to blaspheme, You will judge. And this is where the world is going. This is where the world is headed. And, Lord, we are so grateful

that the day will not overtake us like a thief. We are so grateful, that as Paul said to the Thessalonians, Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come. So grateful for the promise in Revelation 3 that we will be kept from this hour of trial which comes upon the whole earth. We know we can't prevent it. But we can escape it. We can escape it by putting our trust and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. You must act in a holy way against sin, but also You must act in a gracious way and be merciful, that too is Your character and Your nature. We thank You that in mercy You remember...in wrath You remember mercy, in judgment You remember love, that righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And, Lord, as we think about what's coming on the world, this incredible battle of Armageddon when the whole world deceived by demon spirits gathers to fight You and are totally destroyed, like John it is bitter and sweet. It is bitter because of the damnation that comes to their souls, it is sweet because of the glory that comes to You as You clean the earth of its curse and its sinners and establish Your glorious Kingdom. We thank You for this. We thank You that we'll be a part of it for when You return we'll come back with You to reign. What a glorious promise. Thank You for loving us and saving us, in Christ's name. Amen.

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