

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #63

1/02/2008

The King Is Coming To Defeat His Enemies: Part 1

19:17-21

Joined with the concise description in verse fifteen of what is often called **Armageddon**, verses seventeen through twenty-one give us an overview of **Armageddon** and its results. Considering its importance and all that is involved, its brevity is astounding. The awesomeness of what is described is surpassed only by what is described in the previous verses. There is no contest; God is the master of the understatement. What He tells us in these few verses describes what has been anticipated by multitudes over the centuries of mankind. Though the verses be few, the subject of this brief passage has saturated Scripture, beginning with the first book in God's Holy Word, when God told Satan that *"the woman's seed would bruise his head"* (Gen. 3:15) He was pronouncing His sentence of judgment upon His adversary, Satan. Some form of this impending judgment or its execution is found in almost every succeeding book. These details, planted like seeds waiting to sprout unto maturity, are sown by God throughout His Holy Word, portending the awful certainty of Satan's final destiny along with those who choose to subjugate themselves to his rule.

The climatic finale is more accurately described as the execution of a sentence passed long ago rather than a final victory in a war. The judgment and execution of the criminal, Satan, has never been in doubt. Satan, all along, has known the nature of his destiny, but has struggled to seduce and gain as many followers as possible to share in his judgment and punishment. **Armageddon**, then, is God executing His judgment upon Satan and his followers. It will happen quickly and with finality.

While this passage in Revelation nineteen does not provide us with many specifics, many graphic and important details of this climatic finale are provided by the prophets. Isaiah wrote of this day: *"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many"* (Isa. 66:15-16).

Ezekiel 39 tells us of God's destruction of Gog and Magog, at the beginning of the **Tribulation Period** (Rev. 6:2-8) seven years prior to the events of Revelation nineteen. In describing what happens to a large but limited number of people it is a prophetic picturing of what happens to all of God's enemies when He comes in victory as portrayed in Revelation nineteen. In the Ezekiel passage, God offered a feast for the carrion birds and wild beasts similar to the one presented in Revelation nineteen:

"... Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood" (Ezekiel 39:17).

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Jeremiah tells us *“And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall frighten them away”* (Jer. 7:33). *“They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth”* (Jer. 16:4). *“And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth”* (Jer. 19:7).

The Minor Prophets seem to contain the greatest abundance of prophetic details pointing toward our Lord’s great victory. As an example, we select two passages, one from Joel and one from Zechariah.

“Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining” (Joel 3:12-15).

Zechariah presents gruesome details of what happens when our Lord executes His sentence of condemnation upon Satan and his followers:

“Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it

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shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth"

(Zechariah 14:3-12).

Note, we are told, in Rev. 19:15, that when the Lord comes, **“out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations.”** In the details are not presented this passage of what actually happens to His enemies when He smites them with His **“sharp sword.”** Rather, descriptive details of the horrific fate which befalls those whom our Lord executes at His coming are given to us in bits and pieces in other places.

In Zec. 14:12, we are told about **“a plague”** that God **“smites all of the people with.”** This Hebrew word for **“plague”** always denotes **“something disastrous and fatal.”** God used this word in Deuteronomy twenty-eight when He told the Israelites that he would strike those who rebelled against Him with **“a botch”** or sore that covered their entire bodies and could not be healed (Deu. 28:35). In the **Bowl Judgments** (Rev. 16:2), this prophesy was fulfilled when the first angel poured out the contents of his bowl upon the enemies of God. Even though that judgment was awful, it was not nearly as horrendous as what is described in Zec. 14:12. Perhaps the only other judgment found in God's Word that even comes close to the horror of what we read in Zec. 14:12 is what happened to the pompous Herod as worms began to eat his flesh even while he stood speaking arrogant and blasphemous words against God (Acts 12:23).

However, the last phrase of Zechariah 14:12 describes such a gruesome, lurid, and macabre scene that it is difficult to imagine it. That may be one reason why God does not use many words to describe it. Perhaps He wants us to recognize that His execution of His enemies at **Armageddon** is so horrific that it cannot be compared to anything that man has known or imagined.

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His actions are simple — He opens His mouth and issues forth a consuming power that accomplishes His purpose of devastating and annihilating His foolish enemies without the aid of anyone or anything else. No weapons are needed. He does not even use the forces of nature which are certainly at His beck and call. Those who have so haughtily scoffed at the Scriptural accounts of the creative power of the Word that flows from His mouth will experience the fullness of that power expressed in a consuming fury of judgment that destroys their audaciously arrogant existence.

The only thing left is the disposal of the putrefying flesh and bones of those who have been so arrogantly foolish as to reject His grace and think that they could somehow successfully oppose Him. To rid His abused earth of the carnage left behind after His actions of judgment, He simply has an angel summon the fowls of the air and, as the millions of birds fly to the feast, they block out the light from the sun and constitute an indescribably gruesome scene:

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Then John, looking back to set the scene, tells of the foolishness of those who had risen to power, perhaps only shortly before, intoxicated with their own sense of importance, disillusioned by their own sense of power, gathering themselves against the Almighty King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is like seeing bugs drawn to a light to be electrocuted. It is the epitome of foolishness — evil men blinded by their own delusions — men helpless to resist their own lustful passions to which they have long since surrendered themselves — their insatiable passion for power, importance and authority over God Himself, but they come as bidden by God Himself for He long ago said: ***“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle”*** (Zechariah 14:2). He summons and they obey Him because He has so determined that they come to their own execution.

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The finale is upon them. They are done — defeated, destroyed, never again to exercise their foolish haughtiness against the King of Kings! The only thing that awaits them is their eternal destiny, their assignment to the place of suffering and anguish which God long ago prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

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