

WORSHIP SERVICE - 2.27.2022

ARMAGEDDON

I. INTRODUCTION

MAIN POINT: A powerful motivation to remain faithful to Christ is remembering that the damnation of those who would seek our destruction has already been determined and designed by God.

Revelation 16:12-16

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.

II. THE SIXTH BOWL - ASSEMBLED FOR BATTLE

- 2 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.
- At the sixth trumpet blast, Rev. 9:14, the command was given to "release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."
- These angels were divinely commissioned and released at an appointed time to lead a massive demonic cavalry that would kill a third of mankind.
- The outcome of that judgment was the same we have seen with the bowl judgments. They did not repent. (Rev. 9:20-21)
- This sixth trumpet directly parallels the sixth bowl.
- What then is the meaning of the sixth bowl? Why does the Euphrates need to be dried up?
- It is to prepare the way for the kings from the east.
- Are we to take this literally or symbolically?

THE EUPHRATES AND THE KINGS

- The mention of the Euphrates had both a contemporary context for John's intended audience, and a biblical record for the people of God in the OT.
- At the time of the writing of Revelation, the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire was the Euphrates river.
- Across the Euphrates, to the east, was the mighty Parthian Kingdom—the arch-rival of the Roman Empire.

- In the Biblical record of the OT, the Euphrates has many references.
 - It is mentioned in Genesis as one of the rivers that flowed out of Eden to water the garden of God. (Gen 2:14)
 - The Euphrates also marked the northeast border of the promised land. (Gen 15:18; Deut 11:24; Joshua 1:4)
 - Two invading forces crossed the Euphrates during the period of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
 - By means of an invading army from the east, crossing the Euphrates, God sent judgment.
 - John uses this same image to underscore the reality of impending judgment that would be poured out.
 - We are not to think of this in geographical terms. It is a concept with deep meaning for the people of God.
 - The Euphrates is a symbol for the spiritual place from where Satan will marshal his forces against the people of God.
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- The phrase ‘*from the east*’ is a reminder that the east is where the enemy is and from where troubles come from.
 - But v14 tells us it is the kings of the world who are going to assemble for battle.
 - It is all nations, it is a global movement of kings and armies.
 - Why is God symbolically drying up the river for the kings and their armies to cross over?
 - God is making it easy for them to cross.
 - He is expediting the rallying of all of these forces for one final decisive battle.
 - Only this time, he is not using these invading armies as his instrument of judgment like he did in the past, they are going to be the recipients of divine judgment.
 - It is a trap set by God, drawing them out into the open, luring them to this battle, where they think that they are going to defeat the Lamb and the church.
 - But God is going to destroy them all!

DEMONIC SPIRITS

- By what means will God lead them to this trap?
 - 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.
 - God will use the counterfeit trinity to set in motion this final battle.
 - Satan, the antichrist government, antichrist religion, through the means of demonic deception, will cause them to assemble for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.
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- John sees three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of their mouths.
 - In the OT, frogs were considered unclean creatures (Lev. 11).
 - These unclean spirits are demonic beings.
 - Where do these unclean spirits come from? They come out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, the mouth of the false prophet.
 - Notice the threefold stress on the source of these spirits—the mouth.
 - The primary agenda of these unclean spirits will be deception.
 - Can the whole world be persuaded to do this? If so, how?
 - **James Hamilton**, in his commentary on Revelation, writes that these unclean spirits “*are the powers that produce the world’s network of assumptions and conclusions. These are the demonic powers that teach the world the common set of ‘given facts’ that convince the kings of the*

whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.”

- What these demonic spirits do through their lies and deceptions is to make certain things believable and others things unbelievable.
 - It is a carefully crafted worldview that people are compelled to adopt, that is a web of deception and lies, a framework of falsehood, through which the inhabitants of the world interpret everything.
 - **2 Cor. 4:4** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
 - Their sole agenda is to prepare people to worship the beast, hate God and his people, and ultimately, at an appointed time, to assemble the whole world as one unified army, to move against the people of God to wipe them off the face of the earth.
 - Even signs will be performed with the intention to cause people to join in the collective rebellion against God.
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- That final battle is called the battle on THE great day of God almighty.
 - It's the great day of God Almighty—which tells you the outcome of this battle.
 - God, through the means of these deceptive spirits, will ambush the kings of the whole world and their armies, having drawn them out, to decisively and definitively put an end to their rebellion.
 - Does God use deception to bring about this judgment on the field of battle?
 - Can God use lying spirits to orchestrate this annihilation of his enemies?
 - Yes, he does and yes, he can.
 - Read 1 Kings 22
 - God can and does use secondary means, like a lying spirit, in the unfolding of his decrees, plans and judgments. However, no evil or sin can be imputed to God in doing so.
 - The kings of the whole world are convinced that they will destroy the people of God once and for all time.
 - **Rev 19:19** And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.
 - **Rev. 20:7-9** And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them
 - Same event—different images and symbols.

ARMAGEDDON

- Where do they assemble? A place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.
- John tells us in Hebrew it's called Armageddon. The Hebrew is Har-Magedon.
- 'Har' means mountain, so it is the mount of Megiddo. But there is no such mountain by that name.
- What does that lead us to conclude?
- That just like some of the places already named in Revelation are to be taken symbolically and figuratively, like Sodom, Jerusalem, Babylon, and Euphrates, we take Armageddon symbolically.
- Some commentators say this must be referring to the plain of Megiddo, a two day's walk just north of Jerusalem.

- Judges 5 describes the powerful story of God gloriously rescuing his people against seemingly unbeatable odds in a battle near the plains of Megiddo. No doubt, this story is also a backdrop for this vision. But it is not on a mountain.
- The challenge is OT prophecy that mentions the final battle says it takes place in Jerusalem and Mount Zion, and the mountains of Israel, but no such mountain called Megiddo. (Joel 2:1,32; Zech. 12:3-4; 14:2,13-14; Ezek. 39:2-8)
- So just like the phrase, the kings of the whole world, implies a global application, so does the place name Armageddon.
- If Rev. 20:7-9 is a vision of the same event but from a different angle, John defines the place the kings gather for battle and the place that they surround, as the camp of the saints and the beloved city.
- That means Armageddon is referring to the universal church of Jesus Christ—the people of God! They are the spiritual Israel, the spiritual Jerusalem.
- **Rev 21:9-10** Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,
- The people of God in Revelation are Israel, are the holy city, are Jerusalem.
- This whole scene in John’s vision is a typological symbol of the last battle where God will lure all of the armies of the world into joining hands in a unified, concerted effort to destroy the church of Jesus Christ. It is a trap set by God himself.
- They are coming to make war on the church.
- But it is the great day of God the Almighty.
- It is NOT the day of the dragon, or the day of the beast, or the day of the false prophet.
- It is a day inscribed on God’s calendar from eternity past in which the redemptive purposes of God will be consummated. Salvation for his people / Judgment for the wicked.
- It is HIS Day!
- The outcome is assured.

A WARNING AND BENEDICTION

- While we rejoice knowing the outcome of the final battle, we know that the seeming annihilation of the church is in view at the end.
- The witnessing work of the church that we looked at in Rev. 11, the two witnesses, v7 tells us that "When they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them on the streets of the great city that is symbolically called Jerusalem."
- It will seem close to the end, that all hope is lost for the church, it will seem to the world like they have won.
- Near the end of the age the pressure to compromise and bow the knee to the beast and to believe the deceptive lies of the enemy will be overwhelming and will be felt worldwide.
- John inserts words from our Lord which are both a warning and a comfort.
- 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!”)
- Stay awake! Be alert! Don’t be deceived!
- Resist the temptation to forsake your allegiance to Christ just to save your own skin. Or so you don’t lose your business, or family, or

reputation.

- Don't let the suddenness of his return catch you naked and exposed!
- That is a metaphor for idolatry. Resist the pressure to embrace the beast so that you will not be judged along with the idolaters.

- **How do we resist? How do we stay awake?**

- Part of our spiritual warfare is rejecting the world's agenda. By refusing to use the framework that you are being told to use to interpret reality.
- This is why you need to read your Bible, consume it, know it, so that your thinking is shaped by the Word and not by the world.
- You will either interpret things from a biblical worldview or a beastly worldview.
- **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

- Blessed are those who do not cave in to the pressure to deny the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- There is a final battle looming on the horizon.
- Whose voice are you listening to?
- Blessed are you if you keep your garments on, holding fast to the confession of your faith!
- Blessed are you if you remain faithful to Christ, remembering that the damnation of those who would seek your destruction has already been determined and designed by God.