

#20 – The World’s Looming Final War - Armageddon

Introduction/Purpose:

To set opinion aside and discover the Word of God’s teaching about the battle of Armageddon.

1. Jeremiah 49:36-37 What do winds represent in symbolic prophecy? (war)

2. Revelation 7:1-3, 9:4 According to these texts, who is responsible for holding back the final war of this world? (v.1) Who are these angels serving? Who is ultimately in control of the final war of this world? When will God unleash the final war of this world? (v.3) In this war, who will be safe, and who will not? (v.3, 9:4) God is the one who is always ultimately in control, and the final battle of Armageddon is no exception. Even the fate of the grass is determined by God. God will not allow the plagues to be poured out until after every person who will pledge allegiance to God has been sealed with the seal of God. In other words, when the battle of Armageddon and the outpouring of the plagues happen, man’s probation will already be closed. For those who have the mark of the beast, there will be no turning back. Jesus will have ceased His intercession in the heavenly sanctuary. Rev 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still...and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Revelation 18:1-8 What unfaithful nation symbolizes those who do not receive the seal of God?

4. Revelation 14:6-12 What are the 3 last messages that will go around the world? Must these messages go out to the world before the probation and polarization ends? (Would these messages be of any use if probation and polarization had already ended?) What are the two symbols described in the book of Revelation that will polarize all people into the two groups of final opponents; the righteous and the wicked? (seal of God/mark of the beast) What idolatrous, unfaithful, iniquitous nation does God use as a symbol to describe the spiritual condition of the people who will not receive the seal of God? (v.8) What two characteristics will be displayed in those who do not receive the mark of the beast? (v.12) Who will drink of the wine of the wrath of God? (v.9-10)

5. Revelation 15:1, 16:1 The individuals who have the mark of the beast are the ones to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Who alone will be affected by the seven last plagues? Who is in control of the final conflict? Since the final war involves 7 ‘last’ plagues, what were the ‘first’ plagues?

6. Exodus 8:1 The following are the ten plagues that God poured out on Egypt: (Exodus 8-12)

#1. Waters turn to blood #2. Frogs #3. Lice #4. Flies #5. Pestilence among livestock #6. Inflamed boils #7. Thunder, hail, and fire #8. Locusts #9. Darkness #10. Death of Egypt’s first born The Egyptians worshiped frogs, lice, flies, locusts, the sun, and death. The whole nation suffered as a result of their leader; Pharaoh. The nation, represented by Pharaoh, hardened its heart in denial of God and defiance towards God’s messenger. idolatry, unfaithfulness, and iniquity of the Egyptians. They worshiped the creations of God rather than the God of creation. They worshiped the temporal instead of the eternal. Therefore, through the symbolism of the plagues, God gave them the essence of their desires according to what they worshiped.

7. Exodus 12:48, 51 God made provision so that the Israelites, Egyptians, and any stranger who would trust and obey Him would not be touched by the plagues. Concerning movement, where did God lead His people?

8. Revelation 16:1-2 (1/7) As with each of the first plagues, the symbolic consequences of the seven last plagues are directly linked to our society’s modern day worship of creation rather than God Himself. Like ancient Egypt, the world today also worships the infection of death. Therefore, through the symbolism of the seven last plagues, God will give spiritual Babylon the essence of their desires according to what they worship. The first of the seven last plagues is horrible sores. These sores represent our lust of vanity and the vileness of the practice of worshiping our bodies above our Creator. God is symbolically saying: when you worship your body without the sustenance of my Spirit, you worship an empty, decaying body of death.

9. Revelation 16:3 (2/7) The second of the seven last plagues is the sea turning to blood. This represents the lust for violence in our global culture. Movies, news, etc. are packed with as much violence as possible in order to satisfy the corrupt, fear and death mongering passions of this base culture.

10. Revelation 16:4-7 (3/7) The third of the seven last plagues; the rest of the water on earth turning to blood, represents the heartless violence and bloodshed inflicted upon Jesus and all martyrs for Christ, including the millions who were persecuted in the dark ages by the little horn beast power. When we worship ourselves above others to the point of promoting hate or violence, we create an intolerable atmosphere of death for our own flesh and blood, as well as for others.

11. Revelation 16:8-9 (4/7) The fourth of the seven last plagues; the scorching of the wicked with intense heat from the sun, represents worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. Men have worshipped the sun rather than the One who created the sun since the beginning of the world. In the time of the end in which we now live, Babylon’s sun day is tenaciously clung to rather than the seventh day Sabbath of our Lord and Creator.

12. Revelation 16:10-11 (5/7) The fifth of the seven last plagues; pitch black darkness, represents love of ignorance to the truth and love of lies. God is symbolically saying: when you worship at the altar of ignorance and lies, you cling to blindness that renders you incapable of seeing what is right in front of you: the love of God that is streaming out into every pitch black nook and cranny of our blinded hearts, striving to restore our sight.

13. Revelation 16:12-16 (6/7; Armageddon) What is different about this plague? (unlike the others, this is a plague that God allows His enemy to cause, similar to the tenth plague) What reminder warning is Jesus distinctly highlighting here? (v.15; most will not be sober and prepared) How many people in the world are involved in this war? (v.14) Is this war a final battle in which the polarization of all of humanity will be completed? What language is emphasized concerning Armageddon? (v.16; Hebrew) The word Armageddon comes from two Hebrew words: ‘har’ and ‘Megiddo’. ‘har’ means mount/mountain. ‘Megiddo’ was an ancient Israelite city. Popular speculation of the war of Armageddon theorizes that Armageddon is going to be a literal, physical battle. There are two primary reasons why this is not possible: First, there is no such place as ‘Mount Megiddo’. The actual location of the ancient Israelite city Megiddo is in a small valley, not on a mountain. Second, the valley of Megiddo is far too small for 7 billion people to fight a literal battle. To attempt to understand even the word ‘Armageddon’ in a strictly literal sense is impossible because the word itself is an oxymoron. The essence of the final battle of this world will be more Spiritual in nature rather than physical. Let’s try on other spectacles.

14. Revelation 16:12 What location is this plague poured out on? What happens to the water of this location? What cardinal direction do these kings come from? (v.12) So far, we can draw three major parallels between the ‘first’ and ‘last’ plagues: #1. Before the plagues occur, God calls His people (all people) out of the idolatry, unfaithfulness, and Commandment breaking of the rebellious spiritual condition represented by Egypt and Babylon. #2. Once the plagues fall, there is a perfect polarization of all people into two groups: the saved and the condemned. #3. Those upon whom the plagues fall do not display faith in the Lord through obedience to His Commands. Before the first plagues, God called His people out of their rebellious spiritual condition. Today, as every day brings us closer to the last plagues, we are being called by God out of our rebellious spiritual condition. This is a life and death choice, and by this choice, God is drawing a line in the sand between His people and those who choose Babylon and the beast. Only those who refuse the mark of the beast and display their faith in the Lord through obedience to His Commandments will receive the seal of God and escape the last plagues.

15. Genesis 6:5, 11-13, 17-18, 22, 7:10, 16 For what reasons did God destroy the earth with a flood? (6:5, 11-13) Did Noah obey God’s Commands to the letter? (6:22, 7:16) How many repented and entered the ark at the last minute? Was the world’s probation closed before its sentencing? (6:13, 7:10) What did God do to the ark once Noah and his family and all the animals were in the ark? (7:16; sealed) It took Noah 120 years to build the ark. Did Noah invite as many people into the ark as he possibly could? Let’s review the three major parallels between the ‘first’ and ‘last’ plagues and see how they compare to the circumstances of the flood: #1. Before the flood, God called His people (all) out of the idolatry, unfaithfulness, and Commandment breaking of their rebellious environment. #1. Before the plagues, God calls His people (all) out of the idolatry, unfaithfulness, and Commandment breaking of rebellious spiritual Egypt and Babylon. #2. Once God sealed the ark, there was a perfect polarization of all people into two groups: the saved and the condemned. #2. Once the plagues fall, there will be a perfect polarization of all people into two groups: the saved and the condemned. #3. Those who were lost in the flood did not display faith in the Lord through obedience to His Commands. #3. Those upon whom the plagues fall will not display faith in the Lord through obedience to His Commands. Next, notice the additional parallels between the actual circumstances of the flood and the first and last plagues: When the animals came out of the wilderness and entered the ark, it was a last call warning to the world. (Gen 7:8-9) Aaron’s rod (snake) eating the sorcerer’s rods (snakes) was a last call warning to Egypt. (Ex 7:10-12) The three angel’s messages are a last call warning to the world. This includes the last call to keep all Ten of God’s Ten Commandments, particularly the Sabbath. (Rev 14:6-10) Noah and his family went through a major trial of faith: they were sealed in the ark without rain for 7 days, and they were not fully aware of and confident in God’s sealing until the rain began to fall. (Gen 7:9-10) Moses and the Israelites went through major trials of faith: Pharaoh continually refused to let Moses and the Israelites go, and they did not become fully aware of God’s deliverance (sealing) until they had left Pharaoh and Egypt behind. We will be sealed with the seal of God, yet we will go through major trials of faith as the last plagues fall; we will not become fully aware of and confident in God’s sealing until we rise to meet Jesus in the air. Next we look at the seven last plagues and earth’s final battle: Armageddon.

16. Isaiah 44:24–45:1 What word is used to describe the Lord? (v.24) What word is used to describe Cyrus? (v.28) According to this prophecy, what was going to happen to the waters/rivers? (v.27) What are the last three specific prophecies concerning what God would accomplish through Cyrus? (45:1) The Lord is described as ‘redeemer’. Cyrus is described in similar fashion as ‘shepherd’; one who protects, or saves. Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd... (Jesus)

What other word is used to describe Cyrus? (v.1 – ch.45) Who else is the ‘anointed’? - Daniel 9:26 shall **Messiah**^{H4899} be cut off, **H4899** mâshîyach From **H4886**; *anointed*; usually a *consecrated* person (as a king, priest, or saint); anointed, Messiah. What cardinal direction do kings come from? (east; Rev 18:12)

17. Ezekiel 43:2, Matthew 24:27 During the 2nd coming, what cardinal direction does Jesus come from? In the prophecies concerning Cyrus (Isa 44:27 – 45:1), we have already seen that there would be rivers dried up, loins of kings or a king would be loosed, and certain two leaved gates that were previously closed would be permanently opened. How was this prophecy fulfilled? First of all, let us note that these prophecies were written more than one hundred years before Cyrus was even born. Cyrus, a Persian, would become a king later in his life. It became Cyrus’ goal to ‘loose’ the loins of the king of Babylon. In an act of military genius due to the influence of God, King Cyrus is especially noted in history for the ingenious method and the incredible timing with which he overthrew Babylon. Before we look at what actually happened according to the historical account, let’s gather more details about the circumstances leading up to Cyrus’ victory over the city of Babylon.

18. Daniel 5:18, 22 (Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson), **1-30** (*vs 2-5) In the night that Belshazzar was killed, what was happening in Babylon? (v.1-4) What were they specifically doing while they were drinking wine? (v.4) What would their intoxication have done to their capacity to defend themselves in battle? Was Babylon’s probation closed before her sentencing? (v.27-28, 30) Here is what actually happened that night according to the historical record: The city of Babylon was renowned for its outstanding defensive design. It was thought to be invincible for two primary reasons. First, the walls of the city were huge: there was enough room to drive two chariots side by side on top of them. Second, the city had a large river running right through the middle of it and enough fields to produce large amounts of food. Babylon’s apparent unlimited supply of food and water, combined with its seemingly impervious walls, was thought to make the city capable of sustaining itself for an indefinite time period in the case of a siege. King Cyrus was inspired by God to engage in the battle against Babylon with an entirely unconventional and unique strategy. He diverted the river upstream and marched his army under the walls in the dry riverbed. Because of the lack of sobriety of the Babylonian king and his subjects, Babylon was conquered by Cyrus and his army with ease. Babylon was forever conquered just as God had foretold in Isaiah when He said “the two leaved gates...shall not be shut” What cardinal direction King Cyrus and his army approached Babylon from? – They approached Babylon from the East. What was the name of the river that was dried up when Cyrus diverted it? – It was the river Euphrates. There are blatant parallels between the 2nd coming of Jesus and Cyrus’ conquering of Babylon. Let’s look at the condition of the Babylonians as Cyrus was preparing to attack Babylon. Those who lived within the walls of Babylon believed that they dwelt in ‘peace and safety’. They trusted in their own seemingly impressive human precautions and defenses, and not in the warnings of the Word of God. They were ignorant of the Word of God. It is because of this that they lived in an unholy nonchalant lifestyle of being ignorantly blissful. They were entirely unprepared for the sudden destruction that was about to come upon them. On the contrary of being sober, they were in a drunken state – drunk on the wine of Babylon in the darkness of night, and they were drinking from blasphemous cups filled with the filthiness of their fornication with other Gods. King Cyrus, God’s ‘anointed’ came upon them from the east as a thief in the night, and they were cut down like grass due to their self confidence and lack of respect for God and His Word. The destruction of Babylon was permanent; the gates of which were never to be shut.

19. 1Peter 1:13-17 (this whole chapter is very interesting in this context), **1Thes. 5:2-7** King Cyrus’ conquer of Babylon parallels Jesus’ 2nd coming.

Cyrus

called ‘shepherd’ (Isaiah 44:28)
called ‘anointed’ (Isaiah 45:21)
comes from the east (historically accurate)
came as a thief in the night (Daniel 5:30)
loosed the loins of king Belshazzar (Isaiah 45:21)
slew the drunken/idolatrous/lawless (those not sober)
conquered Babylon permanently (Isaiah 45:21)
God’s servant Daniel was exalted (Daniel 5:29)

Jesus

called ‘shepherd’ (John 10:14)
called ‘anointed’ (Daniel 9:26)
comes from the east (Matthew 24:27, Ezekiel 43:2, 4)
comes as a thief in the night (1Thessalonians 5:2)
brings terror/destruction to kings (Revelation 6:15-17)
will slay the drunken/idolatrous/lawless (those not sober; Gal 5:19-21, 2Thes 2:8, Rev 22:14)
conquers spiritual Babylon permanently (Revelation 18:21)
God’s servants will be highly exalted (Revelation 5:10)

Now we need to go back to the sixth plague – the battle of Armageddon, and use some of the keys we have collected to unlock this prophecy.

20. Revelation 16:12-16 What location is this plague poured out on? What happens to the water of this location? What cardinal direction do these kings come from? (v.12) Unlike the others, this is a plague in which God initiates a positive circumstance (v.12), while God allows His enemy to implement the plague (v.13-14) What reminder warning is Jesus distinctly highlighting here (v.15)? (most will not be sober; prepared) How many people are involved in this war? (v.14) Is this war a final battle in which the polarization of all of humanity will be completed? God alone shall be the one the world shall declare has been offended. The end of the world will not be brought about by secret societies and satanic power, but by God’s withdrawal of Himself; His Spirit. Remember: the word ‘Armageddon’ is an oxymoron. There is no such place as ‘Mount Megiddo’. Megiddo is in a valley, and the valley of Megiddo is far too small for 7 billion people to fight a literal battle. With our different spectacles, we have seen with crystal clarity that Armageddon is not a battle fought in a literal location, but rather, a battle fought in a spiritual location. God is comparing Armageddon to both the 2nd coming, as well as to the defeat of Babylon because overall, there are only two sides to any skirmish in this world. This identical battle of only two sides has been fought in every individual’s life since the fall of Adam. We can trace the origin of this bloody warfare all the way back to the origin of the counterfeit leader; the opposer of the true Leader. In this final spiritual battle called ‘Armageddon’, just as in Moses showdown with Pharaoh, as well as Cyrus’ conquering of Babylon, there are two armies with two spiritual leaders. This battle will finally culminate in one last choice for everyone living; a choice between the two leaders that have been vying for worship in every individual’s life. Some day soon, everyone alive will see the last conflict in this ancient spiritual battle – Armageddon. When the smoke of the warfare clears, the true God and His followers are victorious over the counterfeit triune god and his followers. The result of Armageddon is that spiritual Israel (Gal 3:29) will finally be delivered from spiritual Babylon. (Rev 18:2-4)

21. 1Kings 18:17-40 It is no coincidence that Mt. Carmel, the location of this showdown, was at the heart of more battles than any location on earth. It was at the crossroads of every major trading route. Is it any surprise then, to discover that Mt. Carmel overlooks the valley of Megiddo? According to Elijah, what is at the heart of this showdown, and how many sides are there? How obliging, or in other words, how comfortable was Ahab in agreeing to this showdown? (v.19-20) Was Baal put to shame that day? After worshipping Baal all day, and after Elijah had worshipped God in the showdown, did the prophets of Baal have a chance to repent? What happened to the prophets of Baal? (v.40) For what specific reason does Elijah set up this piritual showdown? (v.18) (notice the legalism of Baal worship vs. Elijah’s faith)

22. Revelation 22:14 Why would disobedience to the Ten Commandments be at the heart of the ‘troubling of Israel’? What happened to those prophets who had been following Baal and breaking the Commandments? If we don’t have access to the tree of life, do we have eternal life? Therefore, if we can only have access to the tree of life if we keep the Ten Commandments, how important is obedience to the Ten Commandments? This is the Revelation of Jesus’ thoughts in the book of Revelation. Elijah was simply speaking on behalf of Jesus when he said that disobedience to the Ten Commandments was at the heart of the ‘troubling of Israel’.

23. Revelation 22:11-12 Is there a time when our chances to repent will be gone? When should we put an end to halting between two opinions? Since Jesus comes with His reward, is probation over before He comes?

24. Revelation 16:17-21 (the seventh last plague), **17:1-6, 18:1-4, 21** What will drunkenness on wine do to Babylon’s capacity to defend themselves in battle? (v.21) How important is it that we stop halting between two opinions; between worshipping any idol; or anything man-made instead of our Creator-God? What color was this Babylonian mother of harlots missing? Why is God so blatantly including every other color and observable characteristic of the high priest; why is this important?

25. Psalms 91:1-11 Does God want us to be scared of spiritual warfare? Who is our refuge?

Conclusion: In the flood, in the plagues of Moses and Pharaoh, in the showdown between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, in the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus, and finally, in the battle of Armageddon, there are three extremely consistent and reliable realities which apply to every person’s individual battle with satan:

- #1. God calls His people (all people) out of the idolatry, unfaithfulness, and Commandment breaking of their rebellious spiritual condition.
- #2. Once God’s final warning call has gone out, at an unexpected time, there is a perfect polarization of all people into 2 groups: the saved, and the condemned.
- #3. God judges us by our freewill choices, which either condemn or free us. Probation closes before sentencing. Those who are condemned do not display faith in the Lord by obeying His Commandments.

APPEAL: Isaiah 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Today is the day of salvation. Will we devote our all to Jesus and His Word? Will you and I trust Him enough to obey Him?

Will we keep His Commandments including His Sabbath? To halt between two opinions is to not choose God. Let us choose God! Let us choose life!