

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Climactic Armageddon"

Revelation 16:12-21

Introduction

1. This is the chapter of God's seven vial judgments. It is the final and third series of seven judgments in the Book of Revelation. All take place during the Tribulation Period.
2. The vials have specific judgment connections: Vial 1 deals with sores; 2 with the sea; 3 with the fresh water supply; 4 allows the sun to scorch men; 5 relates to darkness. Two more remain for this study.
3. The sad commentary on the judgments of this chapter is that none brings anyone to his knees for salvation. There is no repentance (vv. 9, 11, 21). If grace will not save a soul, nothing else will! The tribulation does not suddenly sweep thousands into heaven!
4. So, now what happens in the final two vial judgments. Look in your Bible and you will find the answer:

1. SIXTH VIAL vv. 12-17.

a. Euphrates river v. 12. Just as all else in this passage is literal, so the 1,800 mile river mentioned is real. God dried up the Red Sea and the Jordan. He will do the same in the last day for this river. Why? The purpose is stated: to prepare the way for eastern kings to invade Palestine (cf. 9:13-21; Isa. 11:15; Zech. 10:11). The natural boundry will be broken to allow a flood of armies to move in on the land.

b. World armies vv. 13, 14, 16. The leaders of the entire inhabited earth are involved at this point in God's program. God gathers them for the battle described as the "great day of God Almighty." This is done in two ways:

1) By demons Three unclean spirits rise from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The Greek preposition used three times marks the source of these foul spirits. They are like frogs in filth. They are actually demons (v. 14). They work (present tense) miracles. This notes that miracles do not necessarily affirm a work of God! The point is clearly made that the demons move the armies of the earth to the land! Thus, here is a demon passioned war. God allows this (1 Kings 22:19-35).

2) By God The "he" of the text (v. 16) refers to God. He energizes the nations also to get to Megiddo. This Mt. Megiddo is in northern Israel and relates to the Plain of Esdraelon. The nations are there for destruction (1 Cor. 2:6; Judges 5:19; Josh. 12:21; 2 Chron. 35:22-24). This is the

final war prior to the millennium (14:14-20; 19:11-15; Psa. 2; Joel 3:9-11).

NOTE: Included in the "parenthesis" (vv. 13-16), God provides a warning to the professed saints of that day. He promises that the coming of the Messiah will be as a thief (cf. 1 Thess. 5:1-10). This has nothing to do with the church, for believers are of the day and not the night. But, then as now, God affirms that behavior must match belief to confirm the reality of the belief! Watchfulness is a mark for all ages. So is holiness of life!

2. SEVENTH VIAL vv. 17-21.

a. Aerially This is clear because the vial is poured out into the "air." Even the air men breathe has been contaminated by the forces of evil (Eph. 2:2).

b. Atmospherically The voices, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake all affect natural conditions. The earthquake is the most terrible the world has ever known. Four expressions indicate this (v. 18; Isa. 2:19, 21, Haggai 2:3, 4). The greatness of the earthquake is qualitative. But the combined effect of these convulsions of nature are too much for the world!

c. Globally The expressions employed here defy localization of the judgments: earth, every island. God notes what takes place in detail:

1) Jerusalem It is divided into three parts (v. 19).

2) Nations Cities are destroyed. This is world-wide destruction.

3) Babylon This may presuppose a rebuilt Babylon. In any case, Babylonianism, Gentile power, is completely broken! She gets back what she has given: fierceness (Greek-boiling rage) and wrath (Greek--settled anger) from God!

4) Islands These get lost in the seas because of the earthquake. Land mass is totally altered.

5) Hail stones The weight of these staggers the imagination: 108-130 pounds. They are like huge blocks of ice falling everywhere. There are few retreats for safety under these conditions (cf. Ex. 9:19; Rev. 8:17; 11:19).

Conclusion One could hope for repentance from men with such devastation, but there is none. Rather, men blaspheme God for the plagues inflicted upon them. They are ripe for judgment. There is no turning to God. Oh, that men would heed what is written and be warned.