

The Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 19:17-21

Introduction: The verses before us in this passage represent the next event in the chronological timeline of the end of the Tribulation period – the event that is called by most “The Battle of Armageddon.” A great deal of time and resources have been spent on understanding this great battle, but, oddly enough, not much is actually said in the Bible regarding it. I believe the reason for that is that it isn’t much of a battle. There will be millions that gather to fight against the King of Kings and His armies, but there really isn’t going to be much of a fight. It is reasonable to believe that most of the time involved in this battle is really the preparation by the enemies of Christ in preparing for the battle. As we’ll see, the battle doesn’t take long.

We need to be careful that we don’t put too much emphasis on the wrong thing when it comes to future events as described in the Bible. It is necessary that we, as church-age saints, understand how this applies to us, and what it all means for us in our lives, and in the ministry of the church today. I believe that too much emphasis has been placed upon this battle, when the emphasis in the Bible is on what follows the battle, not on the battle itself. We need to make sure that we understand any portion of Scripture in its true light, context and emphasis. The problem with cults and false religions is that they have put the emphasis on the wrong things when it comes to the Bible.

I. THE CALL BY THE ANGEL – VS. 17-18

A. The first words of vs. 17 show the next event – which follows closely on the previous one – “and I saw”

B. He saw “an angel standing in the sun”

1. This doesn't mean that he was standing “on” the sun
2. It most likely means that he was standing in front of the sun in the sky
3. We use the same terminology today to indicate someone is standing with the sun at their back – which is what is seen here
4. The angel, however, is seen, as near as we can determine, by all the world – so he would have been in a very conspicuous spot in the sky – “in the sun”

C. His purpose was to call the “fowls” to the “supper of the great God”

Matthew 24:27–28

²⁷ For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

²⁸ For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

D. This “supper” takes place in the valley of Megiddo – although that is not said here, it is described in Rev. 16:13-16 and it is prophesied in Zech. 12:1-9

Revelation 16:13–16

¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the

mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Zechariah 12:1-9

1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and

on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

⁷ The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

⁸ In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

⁹ And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

E. "Armageddon (the ancient hill and valley of Megiddo, west of Jordan in the plain of Jezreel) is the appointed place for the beginning of the great battle in which the Lord, at His coming in glory, will deliver the Jewish remnant besieged by the Gentile world-powers under the Beast and False Prophet. (Rev. 16:13-16); (Zec. 12:1-9)

"Apparently, the besieging hosts, whose approach to Jerusalem is described in (Isa. 10:28-32) alarmed by the signs which precede the Lord's coming (Matt. 24:29); (Matt. 24:30) have fallen back to Megiddo, after the events of (Zech. 14:2) where their destruction begins; a destruction consummated in Moab and the plains of Idumea. (Isa. 63:1-6). This battle is the first event in "the day of Jehovah" (Isa. 2:12) and is the fulfillment of the smiting-stone prophecy of (Dan. 2:35)." (Scofield)

II. THE ARMIES GATHERED – VS. 19

A. Vs. 19 begins with the words "I saw" – again, noting that this is the next event that follows immediately after the angel appears to call the fowls to the "supper of the great God" – it could be that it took a little time for enough birds to gather for this that this event needs to be seen as separate

B. The first being mentioned is "the beast" – this, of course, is the Antichrist – the one-world leader that was the worship of all the world – Rev. 13:1-10

C. Second, "the kings of the earth"

1. This would seem to be all of them
2. Although we don't have a king, the word king here is indicative of the world leaders – not just "kings"

D. And, "their armies" – every leader brought their army

E. Remember, some of these initially came to fight against the Beast, but they realized they had a greater enemy – and they united together to fight against the King of Kings

F. Their purpose was "to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army"

1. Of course, it is the King of Kings on the horse

2. And "his army" is the saints that were in heaven – most likely, the saints from the Old Testament period and the Age of Grace

III. THE ENEMIES DESTROYED – vs. 20-21

A. These two verses are part of the episode that begins in vs. 19 – this is the continuation of that part of the vision

B. In this great battle, the first thing that happens is the beast and the false prophet are taken and cast alive into "a lake of fire burning with brimstone"

Revelation 20:10

¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:14

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Daniel 7:11

¹¹ I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.



C. Next, vs. 21, the "remnant were slain" – this will be the rest of the armies – all the rest of the armies – everybody dies

D. They are all destroyed "with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth"

1. Although the King of Kings has an army, they are not seen fighting

2. The only one that is seen fighting is the one on “the horse”
3. It is the sword “out of his mouth” that destroys the armies – it is the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit that destroys them
4. The same voice that spoke the world into existence will be the same voice that destroys the enemies at the Battle of Armageddon

E. One thing to note – the remnant are those gathered to fight against the King of Kings – there will be people, unsaved people that have not taken the mark of the beast, that make it through to the Millennium and they can still be saved

Conclusion: This will be a terrible event in the history of mankind – next to the Great Flood, this may be the most disastrous event the world has ever known. Some might ask, “Why?” The answer is because they rejected the payment of the only begotten Son of God for their sins. We need to keep in mind, the judgment of God is just as righteous and absolute as is His grace, love and mercy.

I would like to take you, if I could, to a graphic portrayal of the Word of God in a great cathedral in Milan. Come in out of the glare of the Italian sunshine, pass through the cathedral doors, and suddenly see stretching out before you, Europe's third largest cathedral where fifty-two marbled columns hold up the lofty, octagonal dome, with over 4,400 turrets and pinnacles.

Statues of angels rise all about us, and the effect is one of an incomparable combination of grace and grandeur, beauty and vastness.

Up front behind the altar, like a window opening out of heaven, is one of the largest stained glass windows in the world. Depicted here is not an Old Testament scene. That stained glass window does not depict the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Lord, not his crucifixion or ascension. With tremendous imagery the window depicts the triumph of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The afternoon sun strains in, turning the window into a sea of glass mingled with fire. You see the vials being outpoured, the trumpets, Michael and his angels in battle against the dragon, the great angel with the rainbow upon his head and one foot upon the earth and the other upon the heaven, declaring in the name of him who lives forever and ever that time shall be no longer. Bound with a chain, Satan is thrown into the bottomless pit at last. The great white throne glows in the sunlight.

Most impressive of all is the great, white horse. Upon the horse sits a still greater rider with the armies of heaven behind him. He comes to set everything straight at last for everyone of us who has hoped in him, and for everyone who has been subjected to the pain and prejudice of living for Jesus Christ in a world seemingly gone mad.

— R. Geoffrey Brown, "Look! A Great White Horse!," Preaching Today, Tape No. 111.