

The Battle of Armageddon

Rev 16:12-16: The sixth bowl to prepare for Armageddon.

With the sixth bowl, the Euphrates dried up (12). A possible harmony is that the kings of the east are leading the large army of the sixth trumpet (9:16). They are now at the Euphrates and thus will need to cross it. In 9:14, the four demons that gathered the army are from the Euphrates and thus this is probably their destination. However in v13-16, unclean spirits emerge from the “unholy trinity”. Together, they deceive the kings of the world, which must include the easterners to gather at Armageddon in Israel and it will be at Christ’s second coming (15). In 19:19, it states that the armies gathered to war against Christ. This is the ultimate deception. After what has transpired, they must know that Christ is coming but still they gather to war against Him thinking that they can win.

Lesson to Ponder: In v15 we are to stay awake, keep our clothes and avoid nakedness. This is to remain pure and to deal with sins as a committed Christian should in 1John 1:9.

Rev 19:11-21 Description on the actual event of His coming. 11-21

The second coming begins (11-16). Christ rides a white horse, an emblem of victory and not a donkey as before. He is called faithful and true because He comes as promised, now as a judge to battle the evil forces (11). Next in v12 He is the divine king with a crown of diadems. The unknown name means as God He cannot be fully known. Yet Christ with His blood is still the redeemer who came to reveal God and thus His known name is The Word of God (13). He redeems the Church which is the army following behind, wearing fine linen as in v8 to be the bride. Amazingly, Christ alone battles the evil forces in v15. The Greek, “fierce wrath” is “thumos orge”, used this way only in 16:19 for the last bowl and thus they are similar events. Christ’s official title, the ultimate King and Lord is in v16. In v17-21, Christ descends to destroy the antichrist’s forces at Armageddon (16:16). The birds feasting on the flesh is to enhance the graphic nature of the scene (17-18) but note that the false prophet is still present (20) for only the harlot is destroyed in Babylon.

Lesson to Ponder: The terrifying last battle is not the end for the antichrist and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire showing the horror of eternal judgment (20).

Joel 2: The Day of the Lord - God’s judgment and it subsequent effects. KV 11-12

Joel now depicts the actual Day of the Lord and calls for the proper responses.

1. An ultimate army invasion in awesome circumstances. 1-11

Joel starts in v1-3 with a warning, a trumpet call from Zion or Jerusalem on the Day of the Lord. In that day, amidst darkness and gloom will come a large army unmatched in history nor will it occur again. Indeed no such army is seen in Israel before which is so highly destructive. The fire ahead must be the forward bombing to clear the enemy, while anything on its path is left desolate. This matches the armies of the Antichrist depicted in Rev. 16:14-20 as they march to Armageddon and to Jerusalem towards the end of the Tribulation. The army in v4-9 sounds like a modern army of tanks and helicopters with sounds of crackling flames (5) and the ability to climb onto houses and enter windows with ease (9). In v10-11, all these occur in an awesome environment of earthquakes and the throes of nature and it can only be in the Tribulation. It is indeed the Day of the Lord.

2. Call for repentance, altering God's judgment to blessings.12-27

Even as the army approaches, Joel's exhortation is that it is not too late to repent (12-14). But it must be with their whole heart and not just ritually, such as rending their garments. Genuine repentance even this late is possible only because God is so gracious. There is no guarantee that punishment is withheld at this late stage but in v14, we can look to Him with such expectation. Not only is there forgiveness but blessings will come for unlike the locust plague (1:9), they will have enough to offer the grain and drink offerings. In v15-17, the priests are to organize and lead the repentance to involve all, including those in the midst of their wedding. In fact such national repentance of all Israel is predicted in Zech. 12:10-14 towards the end of the Tribulation. So in that final Day of the Lord, the response will be positive and His blessings are now described. God will response with strong feelings to affirm the land and His people (18-19). They will be fully restored agriculturally and in v20, the invading army will be destroyed. The details harmonize well for the army's vanguard invading Jerusalem in the south is thrown to the eastern or Dead Sea while the rear at Armageddon in the north goes to the western or Mediterranean Sea. This matches the locality, for the Armageddon valley opens broadly into the west. Finally v21-27 is a call to rejoice in the Lord with valid reasons. The land will be blessed and they will be fully satisfied but most of all God will be in their midst (27). They will never again be put to shame (26-27) indicating the start of Christ's millennial rule.

3. Special associated manifestations in the last days, 28-32

It is logical to read the last section as continuing into the Millennium. But v31 seems to be the Tribulation and why is deliverance needed in the Millennium (32)? So the timeline doesn't tally. Fortunately Peter quotes the passage in Acts 2:16-21 for the advent of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. Thus "after this" in v28 must be after the locust plague in 1:20. The timeline now fits for after the OT is Acts where v28-29 is fulfilled and then in v30-31 the Tribulation. Also in v32 calling on the Lord must be as in 2:12 and Zech. 12:10-14. As all Israel repents they will be saved, for salvation is now possible by the cross.

Lesson to Ponder: It is relevant that after v28-29 for the initiation of the Church is v30-32 where Israel faces the Tribulation. Both events greatly need the Spirit's empowerment.

哈米吉多頓大戰

第六個碗是要備戰哈米吉多頓—12-16節

到第六個碗幼發拉底河已經乾涸了（12節）。而另一處和這所提協調一致的，是在第六枝號筒帶著大軍的東方眾王（9:16）。他們如今已抵達幼發拉底河並有需要渡河。在9:14那四個把軍隊招集來的惡魔是從幼發拉底河出來的，所以這地方可能就是他們的目的地。還有在13-16節有三個污靈從那“不潔的假三位一體”出來，牠們一同欺騙全世界的王，要他們聚集在以色列的哈米吉多頓，當中必定也包括那來自東方的軍隊，而這事將會發生在基督再來的一刻（15節）。19:19說那些軍隊集合起來是要與基督作戰。這是終極的騙局。經過之前所發生的一切他們應該曉得基督快要來了，但他們仍然聚集起來要和基督開戰，還自忖能得勝。

思想心得：15節提醒我們要警醒，看守著自己的衣服免得赤身露體。這是指我們要持守潔淨，要如約翰一書1:9的教導那樣，以委身基督徒的態度去對付罪。

基督再來時的真實情節—11-21節

基督的再來啟動了（11-16節），祂騎著象徵勝利的白馬而不再是昔日的驢。祂的名字是“誠信真實”，因為祂如所應許的到來了，如今祂要來審判和與罪惡勢力爭戰（11節）。在12節祂是戴著冠冕的王。那些無人知道的名字表示祂作為神是人難以全然認識的。不過基督並祂的血仍是那位要來顯明神的救贖主，因此祂的名字是“神的道”（13節）。祂救贖教會，就是那跟在祂後面的軍隊，他們穿著像第8節所講的細麻衣，要作基督的新婦。令人驚異的是，基督在15節是獨力和罪惡勢力作戰。“烈怒”的希臘文是“*thumos orge*”，這用法只在16:19出現過，是和最後的碗有關，因此這應該是相同的事件。16節我們看見基督的正式名號：萬王之王，萬主之主。在17-21節基督從天上降下在哈米吉多頓消滅敵基督的軍隊（16:16）。飛鳥吃屍體這景象讓17-18節的描述更是悚目驚心，但留意假先知仍然活著（20節），在巴比倫被消滅的只有大淫婦而已。

思想心得：可怕的最後一仗並不代表敵基督和假先知的結局，牠們還將活活地被扔進火湖裏，永遠的懲罰是多麼令人震駭（20節）。

約珥書第二章：耶和華的日子—神的懲罰及其影響鑰節：11-12節

約珥如今描述在耶和華的日子到時會如何，並呼籲恰當地作出回應。

1. 無比龐大的軍隊前來進攻，境況堪虞—1-11節

約珥在1-3節以警告開始，在耶和華的日子，錫安或耶路撒冷會有號角吹響。在那日，有一前無古人，後無來者的無比龐大軍隊會穿越黑暗陰霾的籠罩前來。事實上以色列從未見過這樣殺傷性強大的軍隊。前面的火一定是為清除敵人的進軍前空襲，而被轟炸之處盡都成為廢墟。這和啟示錄16:4-20所形容的敵基督軍隊非常吻合，他們在大災難要結束時往哈米吉多頓和耶路撒冷推進。4-9節的軍隊聽起來就像現代的軍備如坦克和直昇機等，它們發出火燒碎積的聲音（5節），並且能輕而易舉地爬上房屋，破窗而進（9節）。在10-11節，這一切都伴隨著地震和大自然崩解的可怖情況下發生，而這只可能出現在大災難當時。這確實是耶和華的日子。

2. 呼籲悔改，讓神的懲罰變作祝福—12-27節

雖然快要兵臨城下，約珥的勸勉依然是悔改仍不太遲（12-14節）。不過他們的悔改得發自內心而非只有表面工夫，例如撕裂衣服之所為等。真正的悔改到此刻仍不會太遲，因為神滿有恩

惠。在這麼晚的階段沒有保證懲罰會打住，但從14節所見，我們還是可以這樣仰望神。不但赦免會臨到，而且還有祝福，與蝗災不同（1:9），他們有充足的收穫來獻素祭及奠祭。在15-17節，祭司要組織和帶領所有的人進行悔改，包括那些正在舉行婚禮的人。事實是在大災難後期，以色列舉國上下一同悔改的情況在撒迦利亞書12:10-14早有預言。因此，在耶和華的日子，人的回應將會非常正面，接著是有關神的祝福。神將會以熱情的回應來肯定那地和祂的子民（18-19節）。他們的農作物必重新恢復收成，而在20節，入侵的軍隊將會被消滅。這處的細節互相吻合，進攻南面耶路撒冷的敵軍先頭部隊，他們是被逐到東面，即死海那邊，而在北面哈米吉多頓的殿後部隊則被逐到西面，即地中海那邊。這都合乎該處地形，因為哈米吉多頓谷的寬潤帶是向西延展的。最後21-27節是在主裏為確實的原因喜樂的呼召。地會得到祝福，而他們將全然被滿足，但特別的是神在他們中間（27節）。他們永遠不再羞愧（26-27節），而這也意表基督的千禧年統治已然開始。

3. 末日會出現的特別現象—28-32節

看最後一段為進入千禧年時的狀況本是順理成章，但31節似乎仍在大災難中，為甚麼在千禧年還需要有拯救（32節）？這時間軸似乎有點對不上。幸而彼得在使徒行傳2:16-21引用了這段經文來解釋聖靈在使徒行傳2:1-4的降臨。所以28節的“以後”應該發生在1:20的蝗災之後，這樣時間的順序就能解釋了。舊約之後是使徒行傳，28-29節是在那時候應驗的，接著30-31節是講到大災難。至於32節的求告主名，所指的是2:20和撒迦利亞書12:10-14的情況。當以色列全家悔改時他們都會被拯救，因為十字架讓救恩如今成為可能。

思想心得：教會始自 28-29 節，隨而 30-31 節則是以色列面對大災難。兩個事件都需要聖靈大大的澆灌。