

Armageddon: The World's End

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- [0 : 00] Our Father, we pray, Lord, that you would speak to us today. What are we to get from this terrifying description of the end?
- What do you desire for us to understand? So make that clear, we pray. Prepare our hearts and our minds. And revive our souls by this.
- That we might see you. Your justice. Your rightness. Your holiness. This we pray in Christ's name.
- Amen. Please be seated. Oh. For God. Na, na, na, na, na, na.
- Na, na, na, na, na. Thank you. Carryover from last night. I will never look at Mark Harbour the same.
- [1 : 07] Oh, you did see the coat trick afterwards. Oh, I did. Wow. There's more to come. Okay. Okay. We believers today are living in a gap.
- We live in a gap between promise, the promise of God, of heaven, the promise of eternal life, the promise of making all things right.
- We live between the gap of promise and fulfillment. When that day comes. God's promises are sure. We know his promises are the anchor of our soul.
- Our part in the gap, in the waiting, is to believe, to trust his word, to wait in hope for all things to be made right.
- Let me give you an example of living in the gap. Abraham lived in the gap. He was told by God of great promises that would come to him.
- [2 : 14] He would be a great man. He would become a great nation. In him, in his offspring, all the families of the earth will be blessed through him.
- Incredible promise. And then in Genesis 15, God took him outside to see the stars. Right? To see all that. He said, this will be your descendants.
- Such as if you could count the stars, that will be your descendants. And Abraham there believed God. He believed. He took him at his word.
- Though he had no child and he was over 75 years old. But he believed. And it was reckoned to him as righteousness.
- He became righteous by faith. Then God also showed him and promised him that he would give to him the land upon which he was sleeping.
- [3 : 16] He promised him the land. But he told them, first, before I give your descendants this land, your descendants will go into slavery for 400 years.
- They will be in a gap between promise and fulfillment. It will only be after that 400 years that they will be released from bondage.
- God will judge that other nation and deliver them through judgment. So, right, you have Abraham.

Abraham has the promise. Remember that he didn't buy any of the land. He lived in the land as a pilgrim. This was his land. Then his descendants, he said, for 400 years would be outside the land.

And then they would come back in. Well, what would be the timing? What was it about the 400 years that God told Abraham would be the time of fulfillment?

[4 : 22] Well, the time of fulfillment, God said, would be when the iniquity of the Amorites in the land was complete. In other words, he promised to Abraham land that belonged to someone else for the next 400 years.

And the timing would end when the iniquity of that present people had filled up the cup.

Then that cup would be poured out upon those people. It is the cup of God's wrath.

Fulfillment comes after judgment. So we see that in Exodus. Fulfillment comes through suffering and through judgment. And so what we're seeing in Revelation is the same kind of thing.

We are told what the end looks like. It is the promise of what will come. God will make all things right. God will give us heaven. God will give us blessings beyond description. In the meantime, we live in the gap.

[5 : 32] We suffer in that gap. But the time will come. When the last martyr is killed, God will bring all things to conclusion.

So here's what we're coming. When we come to Revelation chapter 16, the seven bowls of God's wrath, we were told back in chapter 15, this was the end, that God was going to send these last seven plagues.

They would be the last plagues. The last acts of judgment. They will complete his wrath. They will fulfill his wrath. So chapter 15 prepared us for that.

Chapter 16 simply describes the pouring out of these bowls. So these are the seven last plagues that bring the end of the world, which is a conclusive downpour of God's wrath.

He's pouring out his wrath. And I picked it up, Rick, as you read from Psalm, the pouring out. Right? The pouring out.

[6 : 45] And then the connection between the pouring out of wrath, we're told, is connected to the people who shed the blood of the saints and the prophets.

And the actual word for shedding blood is pouring out. Those who poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets will now be poured out upon.

Those who drank the blood of the saints and the prophets will now drink the blood. This is justice. Eye for an eye.

They get a mark for a mark. They get poured out upon for their pouring out. It's justice.

I want you to notice a couple things. First of all, I believe this is highly symbolic. Now, you know, I came out of seminary thinking of all of this as literal.

[7 : 46] And I don't think this can be literal. Look at the symbols. First of all, we have the picture of pouring out the bowls. Do angels have real bowls that they're actually pouring out these plagues?

Or is it simply a picture of God pouring out his wrath through events? We have lots of symbol language.

Blood. Water turning to blood. Fire. Scorching with fire. Now, is the sun actually releasing fire? Or is it simply releasing heat? I think we have symbolic language.

We have words like darkness. The throne, the kingdom of the beast is plunged into darkness. Now, is that darkness like in Egypt where it's actually so dark that they feel the darkness?

Could be. God can do anything. I think rather, though, that this is symbolic. Darkness. Darkness. Here's how the New Testament describes darkness from Ephesians 4.

[8 : 49] It described our life before we came to Christ, right? This is our life. This is what every person's life is like until God opens their eyes, right? They are darkened, how?

In their understanding. Alienated from the life of God. Why? Because of the ignorance that is in them. Why are they ignorant? They're ignorant due to the hardness of heart.

See, it starts with a hard heart, which leads to ignorance, which leads to darkness. Darkness. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy, to practice every kind of impurity.

That describes every person before they come to Christ. That describes me. Darkness. Callousness. Given up to impurity.

So darkness. Then we have this word in verse 16, Armageddon. Armageddon. Right? That's the end of the world. There's movies about Armageddon, aren't there?

[9 : 57] It's the word for the end of the world. And that is true, what that's meaning here. But they arrive at a place called Armageddon. You go to Armageddon. I've been in Israel.

There's no Armageddon. There's a place called Megiddo. When I was in Israel, they took us, you know, after we landed at the airport, first place we went is to Mount Carmel on the west side near the Mediterranean, kind of inland a little bit.

You go up on Mount Carmel and they say, look down upon that huge plain that goes for miles. That's Armageddon. Armageddon. The problem is Armageddon in Hebrew means mountain of Megiddo.

And you look at Megiddo down on the plain and it's like this. So where's the mountain? No mountain.

Not even a hill. Now there's what archaeologists call a tell, which is like a little raising of the earth.

[11 : 02] That's where Megiddo is. Well, as you dig into that tell, you'll find Megiddo, which used to be on the flat plain. Now it's a little mound because it was destroyed. Armageddon.

Is that a real place? There's not a physical place of Armageddon. There's no mountain of Megiddo. So, hmm.

There is a plain. There is a plain there where Megiddo is. And there were many famous battles there. Many famous battles there. And it is a picture of the end.

It is a long ways from the Euphrates, though, because the Euphrates is connected to this whole Armageddon thing. And it's a long, long ways from there. Long, long ways. So, anyway.

No such mountain. It's a plain. And in Scripture, from the Old Testament through the New Testament, in fact, the two next descriptions of the final battle in Revelation 19 and Revelation 20 make it clear that the battle is not at the plain.

[12 : 08] The battle is at Jerusalem. So, symbol, I think. Symbol. Just makes me think this is symbolic. Again, there's echo of the Egyptian plagues.

We see sores. We see sores. Exodus 9 was boils, right? We see water turned to blood two times here. Exodus 7. We see darkness that comes, which is one of the plagues in Exodus 10.

Frogs are mentioned. They were a plague, right? In Egypt. From Exodus 8. And then hail. At the very end, hail was a plague in Egypt as well. Not all the plagues of Egypt, but many of the plagues of Egypt are there.

And then the story ends. We see in verse 18, we have all these signs, right? Which remind us of the Exodus as well. Because on Mount Sinai, there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake.

And there was other stuff too. There was smoke on the mountain. There was trumpet blasts on the mountain. It was a scary place. We're reminded of that here.

[13 : 17] So, there's this connection to Egypt and the plagues. What's the connection? I think the connection is the theme. The theme of the Exodus was deliverance through judgment.

How did God free his people from Egypt? By sending plagues. By judging Egypt and its gods. Remember, every plague humbled the god of Egypt.

Whether it was the sun god or the frog god. Yeah, they had a frog god. Yeah. The beast god. The Nile god.

Everything was humbled in Egypt. And then God set his people free through judgment. Again, here we have in Revelation a similar theme.

God is judging those who are his enemies. Those who have identified themselves as opposed to God. Or blaspheming God.

[14 : 16] Or denying God. He takes care of them. That's the gathering of the harvest for the final battle. Before he rewards his sins. So, this is what's happening.

So, let's look at these acts of judgment. We're going to go rather quickly. What time is it? Quickly. So, the question is, it doesn't really matter.

But the question, you know, as I read commentaries, there's always more than one view. They never agree on anything. So, as we've said about this book of Revelation, there are certain things that are absolutely certain.

We know God wins. Right? We know Christ returns. We know things will be made right. We don't know exactly the wins. Right? But that's not the point of Revelation.

The point of Revelation is to reveal that God makes all things right. He does have an order. He does have a plan. There will be judgment. There will be accountability. There will be warnings all along.

[15 : 31] So, the question is, so we've had seven seals. Which start from the time of Christ all the way to the end. We have seven trumpets, which also start from the time of Christ and happen all the way through history until the end.

Both the seals and the trumpets end with the last, right, the last judgment. So, now we have the bowls. Do they also start at the time of Christ?

Were they also happening in the time of Christ all the way to the end? Or are the seven bowls at the very end, right before the judgment? So, there's two views, right? One is that all seven are at the end because they're the completion.

They're the fulfillment. They're just the un... Or is it just the last two of these seven? The gathering, you know, the Euphrates and gathering at Armageddon and then the end.

Are those at the end? I don't know. It doesn't matter. What is clear is that this is a catastrophic... By these seven plagues, this is a catastrophic end of the world.

[16 : 39] As you're reading the last two, for sure, the sixth and the seventh bowl, it is the end. It's the gathering for the end and then the end. As mountains are gone and mountains and islands are gone, things are gone.

So, what do we see in all this? I don't want to kind of go through all these details and kind of what does that mean and what does that mean. What I want to kind of give you is what is the big picture here?

And I think the big picture of this chapter breaks down into two statements. These... As the bowls are poured out, they're interrupted twice. Okay, you got bowl one, bowl two, bowl three, and then a statement.

Verses five through seven, a statement. Just are you a declaration of who God is. That's one of the points of this whole thing.

Who God is, it's all about Him. It's about His justice. It's about His holiness. It's about His sovereignty. We see in verses five through seven, right? It's focus upon Him.

[17 : 46] His judgments are just. Why? For they have shed the blood of saints. They have poured out the blood of saints and prophets. And you have justly given back to them what they deserve.

Right? So, we have that statement. So, that's one point. And then, in verse 15. Right in the middle of the sixth bowl, we're talking about this gathering of kings.

And then, the frogs who deceive all the kings of the world to come and gather. And before we're told where they gather, Armageddon. There's verse 15's another interruption.

All of a sudden, you hear this voice. I am coming as a thief. Be ready. And be clothed. And then, verse 16, picks up as if nothing was said.

Oh, and they met at a place called Armageddon. So, what's the purpose of the interruption? I think, again, to tell us the meaning of this. So, we have two declarations in the middle of these seven bowls.

[18 : 50] One focused on God. The other one, verse 15. A call to who, by the way. Who's being talked to? I'm coming quickly.

If he was talking to the rebellious, what would he say? Repent. He doesn't say repent. He says, stay awake.

Keep your clothes on. Kind of odd, isn't it? Keep your clothes on now. Don't go to bed yet. Right? Stay awake. He's talking to Christians.

There's still Christians at the end. Okay? There's still Christians at the end. And we already knew that because God said, it's not over until the last martyr is killed.

The last martyr will mark the end of the world. Okay? So, these two mark. Okay, so let's look at those. So, first of all, the declaration that God's judgments are fair, and they vindicate his holy name, and they vindicate his people.

[19 : 59] That's what we see in verses five to seven. What I want you to see here is kind of the description of these first 11 verses, the first five bowls. We see a deprivation, first of all.

Each bowl poured out deprives, takes away something from people on the earth. Okay? He, in verse two, he gives them sores. And so they're festering wounds.

It takes away, deprives them of comfort and ease. And it's a mark for a mark. In the second one, verse three, the sea is turned to blood.

Suddenly, the sea is affected. And we're told that all the life in the sea dies. So what's the impact of that? Well, he takes away their resource from the sea, which is huge, by the way.

The resource of the sea is huge. As we read later in Revelation, it will talk about the impact of God's judgment on the merchants, and the traders, and the sailors, and the ships.

[21 : 08] God, is he literally turning the sea to blood? I don't know, but whatever is happening there, blood certainly symbolizing the death of all sea life, and the death of sea as a resource.

Then, what does he do in the next one then? Then it's the rivers and the streams. Then it's the water supply. Now, that's going to be huge. Rivers and the streams, or the springs.

The drinking water is now at least greatly reduced, if not gone. Now, the fourth one, verse 8. Now, he does what?

He pours out on the sun, and the sun is allowed, or given, to scorch people with fire. They're scorched with a fierce heat.

Now, you know what it's like in a hot day? Now, I live in Colorado. We don't really know what that's like, do we? Go to Arizona. Oh, I know.

[22 : 13] In the summer, go to Mexico. Yeah, that's pretty warm. Been there. That's fun. But not scorching. It's withering, but not scorching.

We got a picture. Remember Jonah? Remember Jonah? Remember? He's sitting out there waiting for God to do the wrath on this wicked Nineveh, right? And God blesses him.

A plant grows up overnight to shade him from the scorching. And then the worm comes, right, and kills the plant. And Noah, Jonah, one of those, turned it into my mom.

Sorry. Bless you, mom. Love you. All of a sudden, he's scorched by the sun. He withers.

He complains. It's painful. It's irritating. It's discomfort. Maybe that's the picture here. He takes away the comfort. Takes away the security. Takes away the peace.

[23 : 17] Certainly, that's what's happening in the next one, right, with the darkness. Taking away their peace. Taking away their understanding. They're clouded in darkness and confusion.

The other thing I want you to notice here, verse 2, who's the target? Who are these plagues aimed at? Verse 2 tells us in the very first one. He pours out the first bull on the earth.

And harmful and painful sores came upon the people who what? Who have the mark and worship the beast, right? Whatever that means. It at least means, the mark at least means their forehead or right hand, right?

Head. Head. Just like the Israelites put the law upon their head or their hands, right? Symbolic of their thinking and their work, right? They also put it on their gates for their business and doors, right, for their home.

All that kind of thing. But here it's just simply they identify with the beast in their thinking or their deeds. That's at least what it means. Is it a physical, actual mark?

[24 : 24] Could be. Don't know. Well, if it's been happening since the first century, which I believe it has, it's a symbolic mark. It's a mental identification. And then they worship.

Does that mean that today people are worshiping government? Because the beast, the first beast is right from the sea in the first century. The first beast was Rome.

And the second beast, the false prophet in the first century, was the imperial cult that forced people to worship Caesar. And we saw in the first three chapters of Revelation that the churches, people in those churches died because they did not worship the emperor.

They lost their place in the marketplace. They could not buy and sell because they did not worship the emperor. It was clear cut in the first century.

What is it today? Some kind of worldly government working through false prophets, which we probably in our world wouldn't call it religious worship, but worship simply, idolatry simply is replacing the true God with substitute gods.

[25 : 39] Things that we look to for security, for value, for identity. We could look to our job. We could look to a career. We could look to, right? Ideology.

It doesn't have to be a little statue that we bow down to. But we make our own gods. So these are people that are, right?

They identify with a mark and they worship. They're idols. So what does God, what does God do?

So the point of this whole thing, the declaration we see in verse five, God, God is holy. Interesting here. It says, just are you holy one who is and who was.

Remember that phrase, who is and who was? We saw it twice at the beginning of Revelation. Who is and who was and who is to come. Now it's changed. Who is and who was and who is holy.

[26 : 44] See, because now we're talking about the end. He's not to come. Now he is holy. And he's going to prove his holiness by his judgments.

So we have a threefold name. Who is, who is, who was, who is, who is, who was, whatever. And then we see the same thing in verse seven.

A tri, a tri name again. And we have, he's called Lord, the God, the almighty. Lord, the God, the almighty. Just and true are your judgments.

So it's just, his justice is the point. His holiness is the point. His name is the point. God is holy. God is just.

He is doing this for a reason. Because they shed the blood. They poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets. So he will give to them what they deserve.

[27 : 44] He will pour out his wrath upon them. Cause them, make them to drink the very blood that they spilled. God is vindicated.

His holy name is vindicated. So what's the response? Now we see the response. Verse nine through 11.

Verse nine. Right? They were scorched by the fierce heat. And what did they do? They cursed the name. They literally, they blasphemed the name of God.

The name of God. The who is, who was, and is to come. The holy one. The Lord, the God, the almighty.

They're blaspheming, cursing, reviling, abusing that name. It was one of the Ten Commandments, wasn't it?

[28 : 41] The name of God, wasn't it? And it was kind of a serious thing, right? The name of God. Because the name of God is God. His name is his reputation. His name is his character.

His name means everything. Now we humans get that way. You know, my name means something. Right? I want my name to mean something. I want when they think of Bill.

Is he on time? Is he, you know, faithful? Is he, you know, can we count on him? And does his name mean anything? I remember when I was a bus driver. Had a kid that was son of an Air Force officer.

And I said, can I, can I count on you? Has your word mean anything? Yes, sir. Yes, sir. You can count on me, sir.

All right. I wouldn't have any problem with that guy after a while. Does your name mean something? Does your word mean something? That's God. So they're going to blaspheme that. Now look what it says. Verse nine.

[29 : 41] They curse the name. And they blaspheme the name of God who had, who had the power over these plagues. They did not repent or give him glory.

Interesting. They blaspheme. They did not repent and give him glory. They didn't give him glory. What does that mean? What does that mean? They blaspheme.

So they're speaking evil. Literally the blaspheme, the word means stupid speech. Stupid. We blaspheme, you know, that comes out of our tongue, right?

We let words out. They're like, that was stupid. It was reviled. It was abusive, right? It was hurtful. That's what they're doing. They're just cursing God. They don't repent, right?

So they're not turning back to him or give him glory. So give him glory. And right after it says give him glory, they're talking about the God who had power over these plagues.

[30 : 43] In other words, it might mean they're not acknowledging that the plagues are from God at all. Oh, it's just bad karma. It's, you know.

It's the way it goes. They're not recognizing it for what it is. They're not giving it, okay, God, I hear you. I hear you.

Please have mercy. Would he? Absolutely. Absolutely. He's giving them every last chance.

Will they acknowledge him? They're going to swear his name. Our culture uses his name all the time.

Why? They don't believe in him. Why do they use his name? Why don't they use another name? Why don't they swear to Larry?

[31 : 46] Who's Larry? I don't know. He's what I call Abby's dog. Larry. Because there's an evil one behind all of this.

And he's aiming his abuse at one person. So they refuse to acknowledge that God is behind the plagues.

They deny and defy God's authority. Whether that's through suppression of truth. Ignorance. But as we just read, ignorance comes from the hardness of heart.

So it's really a heart choice to suppress God's truth. So they do that. Yet they'll slander him. They'll insult him. They'll revile him. They'll abuse his name freely.

But never turn to him. So God vindicates his name here. Verses 5 through 7 say he's vindicating his name. He's pouring out this because it's the right thing to do.

[32 : 49] It's the fair thing to do. It's the holy thing to do. Rick just read a text.

Just hit me. The enemies cry out to the people of God. Where's your God? Where is your God? Why isn't he making things right?

Why does he let the evil prosper? Why do good people suffer? Where is your God? Why isn't he?

Even the saints under the altar in heaven are saying, How long? Oh Lord! Won't you avenge? This was wrong what they did to us. It was wicked what they did to us.

Did you see how they tortured us? This is below even wicked people in the image of God shouldn't be treated that way.

[33 : 44] And they treated your servants like that. Where's the justice? Right? Here it comes.

It will come. Why is God waiting? We found out two reasons. One, because he's merciful. And he wants to give people every chance to return.

And he said, Because there's still a plan for every martyr to be killed. And until the very last one I've established is killed, I will hold off my judgment.

So here comes his judgment. How is he vindicated? I like looking at the Old Testament on this. Amos talks about this. God's final judgments show his fairness. And his fairness is all about giving people the opportunity to repent.

Listen to what he says through Amos. Amos describes it this way. He's speaking to Israel. He says, I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities and lack of bread in all your places. Yet you did not return to me, declares the Lord.

[35 : 00] I also withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest. Ooh, bad timing for rain. No rain.

I would send rain on one city and send no rain on another city. One field would have rain and the field on which it did not rain would wither. So two or three cities would wander to another city to drink water and would not be satisfied.

Yet you did not return to me, declares the Lord. I struck you with blight and mildew, your many gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees.

The locusts devoured them. Yet you did not return to me, declares the Lord. I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt. I killed your young men with a sword and carried away your horses.

And I made the stench of your camp go up in your nostrils. Yet you did not return to me, declares the Lord. What's the point? What's God easily looking to punish?

[36 : 09] Yet you did not return. Yet you did not return. I want you to return. Right? Then, declares the Lord, I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

And you, you survivors, were as a brand plucked out of the burning. Yet you didn't return to me. What's it take?

Therefore, thus I will do to you, O Israel, because I will do this to you. What's next? Prepare to meet your God.

That sounds serious. Prepare to meet your God. God's judgments are fair.

His judgments vindicate His holy name and His people. His judgments are just. People are given every opportunity.

[37 : 07] They are warned again and again. And those who refuse and deny God will ultimately meet Him. They will ultimately meet Him.

And what will they say? What will they say? What will all those geniuses we have in our world who can prove God doesn't exist, what will they say?

Oops. They know. Oops. They know. Romans 1 says they know. They know.

They've just taken the truth and suppressed it. That's all they've done. It's obvious. It's obvious. But we're in a world that's working very, very hard at telling us it's not obvious.

You believe in that message yet? A lot of people believe that message. Because it's, you know, science. Whatever that is.

[38 : 13] So, first declaration. God's fair judgment vindicate His holy name and His people. There's a second declaration we see in verse 15. The end will be sudden, so be vigilant and faithful.

There's a message to the world that God's judgments are right and fair and they vindicate His holy name. There's a second message that is to believers.

In the midst of all this, what is this? This doesn't regard us. This is about judgment on the world. This doesn't have any, you know, we'll be gone, right? I'm counting on the rapture, aren't you? I'm all for the rapture.

I hope it comes early. I'd love to be on that boat. I'm not counting on it. I'm just not counting. But I'd be happy to be wrong.

Absolutely. So shall we count on a rapture and not prepare for the end? Right? So we fall asleep and don't have our clothes on? When Jesus comes?

[39 : 16] Will you be ready when it comes? Will your lamps be lit? Will the oil be in your containers? Right? Will you be at your job when the master returns?

Parable after parable, Jesus describes, we need to be ready. And readiness is very simple. He says it's vigilant and faithful.

But first, notice that the sixth bull reveals this assembly that happens. We're told over the Euphrates, verse 12, which is dried up so that the kings of the east can come.

Now the Euphrates, the physical Euphrates goes all the way back to Garden of Eden, right? One of the four gardens that flows through the Garden of Eden. The Euphrates is one of the largest, I think it's the second in the whole world, second largest of the whole world.

It starts in the mountains of Armenia, flow all the way down to Persian Gulf. And they literally define the promised land, the northern and eastern edge of the promised land.

[40 : 25] So the idea of Euphrates is that it's where the invaders come from. It's where Persia comes from. It's where Babylon comes from. They all come across the Euphrates to invade Israel.

So that's the image of invasion. But I want you to notice, so verse 12, we're told about the Euphrates dries up, prepare the way for the kings from the east. And then there's no more talk about the Euphrates and there's no more talk about these eastern kings.

Notice what happens, verse 13. And I saw coming out of the mouth, now it's dragon stuff. Out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.

For they are, we're told exactly what they are, they are demonic spirits performing signs. Well, that's what that second beast always did, right? He was performing signs. That's what the dragon did.

Coming out of the mouth of the dragon is what? Deception and lie. Coming out of the mouth of the beast is deception and lie. Right? So they're demonics. They're performing signs.

[41 : 33] What are they going to do? They're going to do deceptive things in order to bring not just the kings of the east, but notice verse 14, the kings of the whole world. To assemble them for battle.

Literally for the war on the great day of God the Almighty. This is the gathering. So it goes from the Euphrates to the gathering.

And then verse 16, we're going to end up in Armageddon, which is a long, long ways away from Euphrates, way up north. Long, long ways.

Maybe that's, maybe, I don't know. So I think the Euphrates is probably symbolic of invasion.

In the end, what really happens, and again, this is revelation. It's uncovering what's behind the scenes. So when kings come, what's really happening is the demonic deception has brought kings for the final battle.

[42 : 37] It brings them all to the war. This final battle here that's mentioned in verse 14 here is going to be described again from another perspective in chapter 19.

When Jesus comes back on the horse, right? The sword, right? There's a gathering of all the peoples and all the kings. Chapter 19. It's going to be, and that's when the beasts, the first beast and the second beast are destroyed, thrown in the lake of fire.

Then in chapter 20, we have another description. After the thousand years, Satan's released. What's he released in order to do? To gather all the nations for battle to come to the holy city and do battle.

And what happens? Fire comes down from heaven. It's all over. And then, and then the dragon and then Satan is dealt with.

See, you have an interesting, you know, you have a revelation of the dragon and then the beast and then Babylon. They're judged in reversed order. So first Babylon's judged in chapter 17 and 18.

[43 : 46] And the beasts are judged in chapter 19. And then the dragon is judged in chapter 20. So you got a kind of a mirror unfolding, a very justice kind of thing. He deals with the ultimate devil at the end.

But descriptions of the battle, nonetheless. So what does this mean? So now we have in the middle of this sixth bull, verse 15, this voice.

Behold, I'm coming like a thief. How does a thief come, by the way? Is he time, you know, you know when he's coming? No?

Because we'd be ready. Right? Jesus talked about that. If you knew when the thief was coming, you'd be ready for him, right? He comes at an unexpected time. He comes suddenly.

He comes at a time you don't expect. That's how thieves plan it. They don't really want to get caught. Now, Jesus is not a thief, but he says, I'm going to come like that.

[44 : 55] When you don't expect it. Remember, Jesus said that the end will be just like the days of Noah when they're drinking and they're making merry and life is going on.

Everything's gray. And then, boy, there wasn't a sign. What was the sign? They said the end's going to be the same way. There won't be a sign.

You've had signs all along. Wars, rumors of wars. You've had these plagues coming. You've had these different warnings coming. Those are the signs all along. There won't be a big final last chance warning neon lights.

Because it wouldn't work. It'll be sudden. So what do believers do? One, they are to stay awake, this text says.

Blessed is the one who stays awake. That's kind of the idea, but it's more about vigilance. More vigilance. It's not a passive. It's an active kind of mentality. He's sober and alert.

[46 : 03] That's what Peter tells us. Be sober and alert for your enemy, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion. So be ready, Peter. When you're in the garden and you let down your guard and it's not the army, it's the little girl behind you.

Are you ready for that? And then keep your garments on. That's interesting, isn't it? Keep your garments on.

It kind of fits with the image of staying awake and not going to bed. Because you take your garments off when you go to bed. Most people, I guess. I don't know what you do. Keeping the garments on.

Well, what's the purpose of the garments? He explains it. That he may not go about naked and have been exposed. And that's going all the way up to the garden, right? The garden is the sin.

The sin reveals my nakedness and my shame. Right? And God says, who told you you're naked? Why are you covering yourselves? Right? Because we know we've done something wrong and we're ashamed and we want to cover it up.

[47 : 09] So, put your garments on. Why? To cover your shame. But you remember how he said it to the church in Laodicea back in Revelation chapter 3?

Remember the church that had everything? They're self-satisfied. They're self-sufficient. We don't need God. We're good. We're rich. We're wealthy. We're well-clothed.

We've got it all. And God says, no, you don't. No, you don't. Buy from me. Right? Buy from me. And he talks about garments.

Buy from me white garments. That you might cover your shame. What's the garment of Christ that covers our shame? Where do I get that?

Right here? We are delivered through judgment. It's like the Egyptians were delivered through judgment.

[48 : 06] We are delivered by Jesus taking the judgment for us. And he gives us his robe. Like, was it?

Jacob took his brother's robe, right? To look like his older brother. Jesus gives us his robe of righteousness. So we are like Christ. We're not Christ, but we're like Christ.

And we're certainly covered. We have his garment on. We're covered. And a symbol. We're forgiven. We've already been washed and cleaned. Keep your garment on.

It's a picture. To cover the shame of your nakedness. So be faithful in the faith. How does it end?

So then we come to verse 16. Armageddon talks about as they gather for the war. He doesn't. He says they gather for the war. And then he doesn't describe the war. He's going to describe that later. Chapter 19.

[49 : 03] Then we see that leads to the seventh bull. Finally, verse 17. He pours out into the air. Then a loud voice comes out of the temple from the throne saying, It is done.

Sounds reminiscent of the words on the cross, doesn't it? It is done. To tell us that it has been finished. Now, that one, that judgment was finished. And now this is the final judgment of the earth.

It is finished with the seventh bull. And then we have the signs. Right? We have all the signs. We're reminded of Sinai in verse 18. The flashes of lightning. The rumblings. The peals of thunder.

The great earthquake. An incomparable earthquake that had never been seen before. And then we see the fall. Verse 19. The fall of the cities. The great cities split into three places.

The cities of the nation. Not just one city. But all the cities of the nations. Fall. City, by the way. Why city? Because cities is where things happen. It's where things happen.

[50 : 03] It's where the nations conduct their businesses. It's where the harlots hang out. It's where the drinking happens. It's in the cities. We'll find that city theme in the next two chapters.

Cities fall. Babylon, again, is mentioned. She will get her due. We're going to see Babylon described in the next two chapters. Then we find verse 20, right? The destruction of the world.

Every island fled away. And no mountains were to be found. What's that sound like? That sounds like catastrophic disaster at the end.

Armageddon. It's over. Now those are the same two descriptions way back in the sixth seal. Remember you open the sixth seal and there was all this thunder and lightning. And every mountain was gone.

And every island was gone. So I'm like, wait a minute. The end of the world was already back there in chapter six. How did the islands and the mountains get back? Because it's not chronological here.

[51 : 06] It's describing the same event from a different perspective. Okay? The seals were showing us what happens through history.

And then it gives us a quick glimpse of the very end. And then it goes on to the next series. And then we have, so what happens at the end?

The great hailstones. Now, these are, you ever seen hailstones? You ever had a big hailstone hit your car or whatever? Like, how many pounds would you say is a big hailstone you see in Denver?

I never see one in Palmer Lake, but I see the little ones. I mean, what do those weigh, Rick? Ten pounds?

Five pounds? One pound? So a hundred pounds. Each one, so each one's, really? So the angels, we know when they're sending them out, they put them on the scale.

[52 : 10] I mean, what's, is this hyperbolic language? It doesn't matter. The point is, it's over. It's over. And how do people survive it, by the way?

Because it sounds like, well, a hundred pound hail falls on you. And you get up and you, really? Can you do that after a hundred pounds? So I think it's just described, this is, the hails come, and what do people do on their very last chance to repent?

They blaspheme. And they will not. Will not. Repent. But God is just.

So let me give you another description from the Old Testament, Ezekiel 38. Ezekiel describes the very last days and the very last battle. You'll recognize the language.

This comes from a long time before Revelation was written. Ezekiel says, therefore, or God is saying to Ezekiel, therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog.

[53 : 18] Gog. Who's Gog? Well, we're going to find Gog in Revelation 20. Gog is pretty much the leader of bringing all the nations together. Prophesy, I say to Gog, thus says the Lord God, on that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, you will not know it.

You, Gog, will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you know, beyond the Euphrates. Please. You and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army coming for battle.

You will come against my people, Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days, this is about the end.

In the latter days, I will bring you, Gog, against my land. Why? That the nations may know me. When through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

Thus says the Lord God, are you, he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants, the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them?

[54 : 38] But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger.

And in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath, I declare, on that day there shall be a great earthquake.

Hmm. In the land of Israel. Oh, and the fish of the sea. Hmm. Fish of the sea. What does that do with it? Fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all the creepy things that creep on the ground.

And all the people who are in the face of the earth. This is universal. All the people in the face of the earth shall quake at my presence. And the mountains. There we go. Mountains shall be thrown down.

And the cliffs shall fall. And every wall shall tumble to the ground. I will summon a sword against Gog. Now I brought Gog against my people. Now I'm going to summon a sword against Gog.

[55 : 41] On all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and bloodshed.

I will enter into judgment with him. I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many people who are with him. Torrential rains and hailstones.

Fire and sulfur. Fire and sulfur. Fire and sulfur. So, I will show my greatness and my holiness. And make myself known in the eyes of many nations.

Then they will know that I am the Lord. What's the point of the end?

What was God's point way back with Ezekiel describing this very same battle at the very end? Because John, the author of Revelation in chapter 20, is going to bring up the whole name Gog.

[56 : 43] So, he's going to say, yeah, what he was talking about there in Ezekiel, same thing. What's the point? God said, I'm doing all this.

Why? That you may know. That you may know me. Know you how? I'm holy. I'm almighty.

I vindicate my holiness. You spurn me. You deny me. You defy me. You hate me. I will defy. I will vindicate my holy, holy, holy name.

Then you will know that I am the Lord. You've ignored me all this time. You will not ignore me again. So, here's what I'm thinking.

I think it would be better to know him now. I think it would be better to meet him now. Because his arms are open to me. And his arms are open to you.

[57 : 47] The only reason he brings judgment after judgment is so that, what? You did not return. You still didn't return.

I drop blessings on you. You just ignore. You just, you know, right? I drop blessings. And you just think that's you. So, I drop a two by four. Right?

Maybe now you look up. Right? All right? I got a bigger two by four. Four by four. Six by six. I don't know. I got to get your attention. He makes every effort to get our attention.

He is absolutely just. He doesn't have to do that. He could have given us one chance. But he doesn't.

He gives us chance after chance after chance after chance. After chance. He reveals himself. He shows himself. We know his name because we use it in vain. It's not as if we don't know.

[58 : 48] And even I don't know the name Jesus or that there was a real Jesus. I know there's a God because I look at these mountains. And I look at the stars at night. And I know. No, this didn't just happen.

No, no, no, no, no, no. No, it's too well ordered. Oh, no, no, no. Right? I know. I know. So it's better to know him now.

So dear ones, if you do not know him, turn to him. Turn to him. Or if it's been a while, turn back to him. If you've been a prodigal, we all do that, don't we?

Turn back. You know it's good for you. And you know the only thing stopping you is your hardness of heart. Yeah. Right?

I want to mope for a while. Right? I know. I do that. Ask him to change your heart. Ask him to give you faith.

[59 : 54] Scripture says, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be delivered. He hears. He comes. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. Lord, this is not a text we would choose to go through had we a choice.

We have committed ourselves, Lord, to walk through your word. And to take the texts that are not as comfortable for us. So that we might know you better.

We know that all scripture is breathed out by God. And as profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

That we might be adequate and equipped for every good work. And so apply this text to us, Father. Help us to know that you truly are just and holy and sovereign.

[60 : 55] And Father, may we know as well that Jesus is coming at a time we do not expect.

So grant us, Lord, hearts that are ready and faithful. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen.