

Session 11 Jesus the Victorious King at Armageddon

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

This is the eleventh class and we're in session notes thirteen. Let's read it: Joel 3. We'll begin with review in verses 1-2 and then we'll take up with verses 9-17, which is really the subject of Jesus, the victorious King, at Armageddon.

THE LORD WILL JUDGE THE NATIONS IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and I will bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there” (Joel 3:1-2)—in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which I believe is just outside of Jerusalem. Because there's no place in the Bible that tells us exactly what the Valley of Jehoshaphat was. We only know that King Jehoshaphat had a great battle and a great celebration to the Lord in the valley right outside of Jerusalem. Many believe that's called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The other fact is that the rest of Scripture says the great end-time battle is around the city of Jerusalem. So I believe the Valley of Jehoshaphat is right outside Jerusalem.

“PROCLAIM THIS AMONG THE NATIONS: ‘PREPARE FOR WAR!’”

“Proclaim this among the nations: ‘Prepare for war!’” (Joel 3:9). This is really an unusual statement: because the nations never announce, “Let's start a war”; they always say, “Let's have peace.” While the Antichrist is bringing the nations into a false peace, the prophets of the Lord are saying, “Get ready for war.”

Everyone is saying, “What are you guys talking about?” This is a statement that, in its context, is so bizarre to the natural mind; it's unthinkable that someone would prophesy this.

I say, “Oh my goodness; who would have the nerve to say that to the earth when it's in a state of pseudo-peace?”

But he says, “Proclaim this, O prophets of God, tell all the earth, ‘Prepare for war.’”

“BEAT YOUR PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS AND YOUR PRUNING HOOKS INTO SPEARS”

Then he says, “Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near” (Joel 3:9)—to the city of Jerusalem. He says, “Let them come up and engage in battle at the city of Jerusalem.”

“Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears” (Joel 3:10). A plowshare was an agricultural instrument. He's saying, “Go melt down the metal and make a sword out of it. Stop farming and get ready for battle. Take your pruning hooks and turn them into spears, and let the weak say, ‘I am strong’” (ibid, paraphrased). He's talking about the weak soldier, instead of drawing back in timidity, saying, “I'm ready for this great battle.” As we'll see in a moment, this is a divine taunt; God is taunting the nations with this. He's speaking to evil men here. This isn't a verse you use when you want to say, “Let the weak say they are strong.” He is telling the arrogant men of the earth, who are hesitant to get involved in this battle, “Bolster up your courage and pride and come and stand against Me. So you think you can? Come and do it.” It's really a challenge, a taunt. There's a divine sarcasm in this statement here.

“PUT IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST IS RIPE”

“Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together, all around” (Joel 3:11)—around the city of Jerusalem. God is saying, “Come and lay siege to the city of Jerusalem. I dare you. Lay siege to Jerusalem. Cause your mighty ones to go down there.”

Joel stops in the middle of this prophecy and calls out for angelic involvement to break in. Then he goes back to his prophecy. “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat”—around the area of Jerusalem—“for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations”—nations that surround the city of Jerusalem” (Joel 3:12). What the Lord is saying is, “I will destroy them.”

“Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe” (Joel 3:13). This is an intercessory cry; it’s actually a second prayer to the angelic realm: “Come, go down to that battle around the city of Jerusalem, O angels of God, for the winepress of God’s wrath is full.” “The vats have overflowed, for the wickedness of the nations is great” (Joel 3:13b, paraphrased).

THE LORD JESUS, THE STRENGTH OF HIS PEOPLE, WILL ROAR FROM MOUNT ZION

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem” (Joel 3:15-16). Zion is the city of Jerusalem. This is after the Lord returns; He’s in the city of Jerusalem roaring to the earth. When He does this, the heavens, the sky, the sun, the stars, etc., will shake. The earth will shake. When this Man, fully God and fully Man, roars from Zion, all creation will obey Him again. The reason I say *again* is because He’s the One who created the universe in Genesis 1. Creation obeyed Him the first time. He’s saying, “Don’t worry, people of God; the Lord will be a shelter for His people when everything is shaking. He will be a strength for the children of Israel. When all these things happen, when this drama unfolds, you will know that I am your God.” This is Jesus of Nazareth: “You will know, Israel, that I am the Creator God, not your enemy or adversary, but your God and protection.”

Jesus, fully God and fully Man, in His resurrected body, will live in Zion, on the holy mountain in Jerusalem. He will actually live there as a man. When He does this, Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens, no foreign armies, will pass through her in a hostile way again.

GOD WILL ALLOW THE FREE WILL OF MAN TO BE EXERCISED IN ITS FULLNESS

Let’s look at Roman numeral I. This is a very dramatic story line that God is orchestrating. God is allowing the free will of man to play into this to the full. Some people in their free will will choose to love God. Others in their free will will choose to hate God. The Lord will allow what’s in the heart of man to come to the surface in fullness. He will allow Satan to use his power to the fullest to persuade man because He’s confident that His Son Jesus has more power than Satan has. Satan, in this hour in history, possesses unusual liberty to move, to persuade men to stand against God. That’s what happens in the end-time drama.

NOT THE END OF THE WORLD OR THE END OF THE EARTH, BUT THE END OF THE AGE

Paragraph A. The drama of natural history doesn’t come to an end by a big nuclear explosion, as we like to think when we use the term *Armageddon*. In Hollywood, *Armageddon* always means a bomb. That’s not how natural history comes to an end. Incidentally, history never comes to an end. I like to use the more specific phrase, “natural history.” Because a million years from now, history will go on. The earth will never end. We don’t believe in the end of the world or the end of the earth; we believe in the end of the age. We believe in the

end of the time frame in which Satan interferes with the government of the nations. That's what's coming to its end, Satan's involvement in the government of the nations. Natural history doesn't end by one nation blowing up another nation. The Scripture makes clear that it does end in a military conflict, but it's not about bombs; it's not about east vs. west. Rather, it's evil men and their armies against God. It's men against God, not men against men per se. It's men against God: that's what the battle of Armageddon is about. The Hollywood take on it misses what's happening in the Armageddon concept. The Church will be on the earth in those final years. It will be the Church's hour of greatest victory and power. Because some have been taught that we'll be gone, so the drama doesn't begin until after we're gone. No, we'll be anointed and the Church will walk in victory and be dynamically used of God in the midst of this great drama.

Paragraph B. There will be a great revival, there will be great persecution, there will be judgment of God on the Antichrist, and there will be the wrath of Satan against the Church—all of them operating together. The net result will be this, that the great harvest will come in, Israel will be saved, and the Church will be purified.

JESUS WILL STAND IN THE SKY AS A HUMAN KING CHARGING INTO BATTLE

Paragraph C. Jesus will stand in the sky as a human King, as a man. He will stand in the sky. No king has ever stood in the sky, ever. He's leading His army into battle, but He begins in the sky. What a completely unexpected ambush this is to the Antichrist. For real! It seems funny. It's sort of funny to think about, but it's a divine ambush. As the Antichrist and his armies and the armies of the earth are gathering around Jerusalem, they're looking to the right and to the left. They only see this weak, decimated nation. It's the greatest military force in history, the Antichrist's army. They look right and they look left and they say, "There's no match; there's no contest"—but they don't look up. They walk right into an ambush from heaven and they're totally destroyed. There's only one group of people on the earth saying this ahead of time, and that's the prophetic Church. Because the army that will ambush this great military force is an invisible army right now, but it won't always be invisible. It's angels and saints in heaven, and saints now as well, but we will receive our resurrected bodies beforehand. The natural eye can't see that army right now. As far as they're concerned, it doesn't exist. We see it in the Word of God, so as far as we're concerned, it does exist.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, ALL THE NATIONS WILL ASSEMBLE

Top of page 131. Roman numeral II. All the nations are gathered for judgment. He says it twice in Joel 3: first in verse 2, "I will... gather all nations," and then again in verse 11, "Assemble and come, all you nations." Never in history have all the nations gathered for anything; not even the Olympics. Never in history have all the nations gathered: not for a sporting event, not for a military conflict, not even in a United Nations context where they're all coming for peace or for economic summits. Never has this happened. The only true world gathering in the strictest sense of every nation will be this gathering around the city of Jerusalem. It will be a military conflict.

This is an unprecedented statement: "All the nations will gather." Just take a step back and think, "How could anyone get all the nations together? There's no man on earth, no force that could get all nations to gather."

It has never happened except by the Word of the Lord, the Lord Himself. He says, "I will enter into judgment with them there" (Joel 3:2). In other words, "I will destroy them there at the city of Jerusalem." To enter into judgment means that the most powerful military force on earth will be decimated. Again, there's only one group of people saying this ahead of time. Guess who that is? It's you. In other words, it's the prophetic Church in the

earth, but mostly the young folks who are learning it and growing in the knowledge of this as one year turns to ten and ten to twenty and however long it takes before this happens.

Just to get your mind around it, this military force is so powerful and so big, most of the nations are celebrating it as a unifying peacekeeping army. The prophets will say, “It’s not a peacekeeping army; in fact, it’s a demonic army, and in fact it won’t keep peace, it won’t bring peace, and it will be destroyed by God.” I just can’t imagine the hostility the nations will feel about that message. You look at Joel 3:2; that’s a great verse until you have to say it. It’s cool to say it in a Bible study with unified people in a classroom like this; but imagine saying this before the United Nations when you’re looking at the very leaders of the earth face to face. It will be a tough day.

“I WILL GATHER ALL THE NATIONS TO BATTLE AGAINST JERUSALEM”

Paragraph A. The Lord will gather the armies of all the nations into one place. This is unprecedented. I challenge you to try to picture this. Never has anything like this happened. Even the world wars only occurred between a few of the nations, in reality. There are 238 nations in the earth. World wars might involve fifty nations; I don’t actually know the technical number, but there are three or four main countries on each side, assisted by secondary nations. However, all 238 nations of the earth are going to be involved in this.

In Zechariah 14:2, the Lord says, “I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem” (Zech. 14:2). The surprising statement is, it actually looks at first like they will win: “They will capture the city” (v. 2b, paraphrased). I’m glad this is in the Hebrew Bible. I’ve shared this with a few Jewish leaders, not many, and I told them, “Your prophets said it. This is in the Old Testament. This isn’t a New Testament apostle; this isn’t a Gentile believer; this is an Old Testament prophet. Your own men say this.” Thank you, Lord, for putting that in Zechariah 14 if You’re going to make us say it. At first it looks like all the armies, all the nations win, because the city of Jerusalem will be captured in the future. It really will be. I believe we should pray against hostility for Jerusalem, because we don’t know when and we don’t know to what degree; we don’t know what’s going to happen. So we pray always for the peace of the city of Jerusalem. We never pray for this to happen; actually, we pray for peace to break in, and then we let the Lord sort out the details.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT GOD MIGHT ALLOW YOUR PRAYERS TO ACCOMPLISH

When it says “all nations,” it doesn’t mean every single person in the earth. It doesn’t mean the whole population of the earth; it means all the armies of the earth. Look at the word *all*. You know, this is where I’m at: When the word *all* is used like this, you never know what prayer might stop. Because out of 238 nations, you think, “Lord, is it possible there are some nations that won’t be involved in this?” I don’t know; because the word *all* means *all*. Sometimes the word *all* is a broad-stroke statement, meaning it’s the trend of where the nations are going. It says *all*. I will continue to pray that America won’t be involved in that. We’ll see what happens. You never know what happens with prayer. *All* means *all*, but sometimes it’s a general term and not a very precise term. Other times it’s a precise term and you don’t always know how prayer will affect that.

Some people say, “We might as well give up and give in.”

I say, “No, you never know what God will do through prayer.” That’s the message of Joel: “Perhaps.” Perhaps God will do what you don’t expect.

THERE WILL BE MILLIONS OF SOLDIERS THERE, BUT NOT BILLIONS OF PEOPLE

This is talking about all the military personnel; it's not talking about all the general population. All the six billion people of the earth don't go to Jerusalem, that's not what it means, but there wouldn't be enough room if they tried. There will be millions of soldiers, but not billions of people.

ISRAEL'S MILITARY POWER IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Paragraph B. At this time, Israel won't be a great military power. Israel has unusual military might in this moment. That's good and bad. It's good because there are hostile nations that keep them at bay; it's bad because Israel trusts in their military, not in God. The Lord is going to sort that out in His own time and His own way. In some ways, Israel's military is part of their problem. In some ways, Israel's military keeps some of the evil at bay and slows down their destruction.

THE STORY OF DAVID AND GOLIATH REPLAYED BEFORE THE EYES OF THE WORLD

I'll quote a verse from Daniel 12:7. An angel appears to Daniel and raises his hand before God and swears an oath. What he swears is that Israel, as a power, will be completely shattered in the end times. That's a very graphic, heavy description—completely shattered. But he also promises that it will only last for three and a half years—for a time, times, and half a time. That means a year, two years, and a half year. The word *time* in this context means “a year.” The angel swears; he says, “I swear to you, Daniel, Israel will be completely shattered, but it will only be temporary.” Israel won't have an army that can contest this international powerbase of the Antichrist. It's the true David-and-Goliath scenario in an end-time or eschatological context. It's David and Goliath played out before the whole world, Goliath being the armies of the Antichrist, and David being Israel with no weapons, just a slingshot in the name of the Lord. It will really be that, replayed on a global scale. It's meant to be understood that way, in fact.

TRAPPED AGAINST A MOUNTAIN WITH NO PLACE TO ESCAPE

Paragraph C. Not only will Israel be weak, it's pictured in the Bible, in Zechariah 14:4-5, as being trapped against a mountain with no place to escape. They're surrounded; there's a siege, which means the armies surround the cities of Jerusalem. They can't get out; they're in the middle of the city starving. The enemy has already taken half the city to prison camps; the other half are resisting. It's a resistance effort; a resistance army. They're holding on. I don't doubt that a number of them will be holding on because they've heard the prophetic proclamation of the saints in the time leading up to this moment, that this drama will occur. They're saying, “Well, what if it's true? Let's hold on!” Eventually they cry out to Jesus. When all their options are removed, they cry out to Jesus and Jesus comes and answers them.

HIS FOOT SHALL STAND ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, AND THE MOUNT SHALL SPLIT

In Zechariah 14:4-5, the prophet describes Israel as trapped against a number of mountains. Jesus appears and puts His foot on the Mount of Olives; the mountain splits in two and they escape. It's an amazing thing. Instead of the Red Sea splitting as they came out of Egypt, He actually causes the Mount of Olives to split to make a way of escape. It's quite a passage: “In that day He will put His feet on the Mount of Olives, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two. It will form a very large valley; then you shall flee through the valley” (Zech. 14:4-5, paraphrased).

They're trapped against the wall. They can hardly believe their ears, so the prophet says, “Yes, then you shall flee.” Zechariah says, “Yes, you heard me right. I'll say it again: You shall flee.”

“Flee? But the Messiah is here.”

Zechariah might say, “Yes, He’s here, but you need to escape. He’s doing some things right now; He’ll come back and talk with you in a few moments. You just escape right now.”

It will be a very dramatic day. Those men running through that mountain will say, “Did you see what I saw? He looked Jewish, He looked human, He looked divine, He split the mountain. Who is that man?” Finally they sort it all out and they call Him their Messiah. This is the Red Sea drama played out again, except that they’re in Israel instead of coming out of Egypt.

GOD, SATAN, AND THE HATRED OF MAN WILL SUMMON THE NATIONS TO BATTLE

It’s not only that the Father is calling all the nations to Israel for the battle; unusually, if you look at paragraph D, Satan is calling the nations to the battle as well. Who is it? Is it God or is it Satan? Both of them are calling the nations to the battle, but for different reasons.

Top of page 132. Paragraph F. There’s a third factor. Not only is Satan calling the nations, not only is God calling the nations to battle, men go to the battle because of their anger, their envy, and their hatred of Israel (Eze. 38:11). Men say, “You know, whether it’s God or the Devil, we hate that nation. With envy we want their stuff. We want their stuff.” Ezekiel 38:11-13 is talking about the end-time scenario where men want to come and steal the plunder from the people of Israel. They come for the gold, for the wealth of the land. They’re not so much demonic or divine; that’s not what’s on their mind. What’s on their mind is the gold, and their desire to steal it from the land of Israel. Paragraph G. There are three forces working together, but with very different motives. God and His angels are working, Satan and his demons are working, and sinful men in the earth are motivated by greed and anger.

UNDERSTANDING THE ARMAGEDDON CAMPAIGN

Top of page 133. Roman numeral IV. Understanding the Armageddon Campaign. A lot of people just say “the battle of Armageddon.” That’s actually not a Biblical term. You never see the term, “the battle of Armageddon,” in the Bible. Megiddo is actually a geographical area up in the northern part of Israel. *Armageddon* is a military staging area. It’s the place where the nations gather to get organized and deploy their armies throughout not only Israel but the entire Middle East. Armageddon is the military staging area, not actually where the battle takes place; it’s where the hostile armies touch down and rally and mobilize and deploy. The main battle is actually down in the southern part of Israel, around Jerusalem. Armageddon is up in the north; it’s a military campaign in reality. That’s not a biblical term either; there’s no place in the Bible that calls it a military campaign, but it does describe it that way. There are a number of battles that the Antichrist wages in Israel in the Middle East. The “Armageddon Campaign” is a series of military battles over a three-and-a-half-year period. It really is an entire campaign that lasts for three and a half years. It’s more accurate to talk about the battle of Jerusalem, which is actually what most people mean when they say “the battle of Armageddon.” Armageddon is the organizing place, the staging area; Jerusalem is where the battle takes place.

AWAKENING THE ANIMOSITY IN THE HEARTS OF WICKED MEN TOWARDS GOD

Roman numeral V. Top of page 134. Joel 3:9-10. This is the Holy Spirit speaking. It’s the prophetic Church that obeys this command, this exhortation. “Proclaim this among the nations: ‘Prepare for war!’” Then He says, “Go beyond even that: ‘Wake up the mighty men!’ The soldiers, wake them up” (Joel 3:9, paraphrased). It doesn’t mean “Wake them up because they’re physically sleeping; go and knock on their doors.” That’s not what He

means. The pride of their heart and their animosity against God is there; they have arrogance and animosity against God. “Stir it up, wake them up, provoke them, challenge them to take a stand against God, because they have already set their heart against Him.”

GOD AND THE CHURCH TAUNT THE REPROBATE, TO DRAW THEM TO JERUSALEM

“Let all the men of war draw near”—to the city of Jerusalem; let them come up to Jerusalem. “Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong’” (Joel 3:9-10). This is a very dramatic passage of Scripture. It’s a divine challenge; it’s a taunt. Because this international army of the Antichrist is so strong; there’s no military force like it in history. I mean, it doesn’t exist right now; but when this army and this coalition of nations is in place, there will be nothing comparable to it in history. It will be that strong. Israel will be so weak that the angel described Israel as shattered. But we, the prophetic Church, will think totally opposite of their thinking at that time. The prophetic Church says, “Oh nations, God challenges you to fight Israel.”

They say, “It’s a million to one. We don’t understand what the challenge is.”

“What we’re telling you is this: If you go to war in Jerusalem, and we want you to go. Go!” Because they’ve already made their contract with the Devil, they’ve taken the mark of the beast, they’re reprobate and cannot be turned. They’ve already covenanted to be Satan worshipers to the end. It’s permanent, to the end; that’s what *reprobate* means. The Lord wants them now to gather together, all the kings of the earth, into one place. Again, never in history have all the kings of the earth gathered in one geographical place, ever. God is going to provoke their pride, the prophetic voice is going to say, “If you go to Jerusalem, God will destroy you, and He will do it as you go to war against the nation of Israel. The God of Israel will destroy you.”

These nations will say, “What are you talking about? The odds are so against Israel and so in our favor.”

Then the prophetic Church takes it up a notch in verse 10: “You had better be desperate. You had better use all resources available. As a matter of fact, you’re going to need so many more weapons than you have now.” It’s already a million-to-one odds. “Even a million to one isn’t enough in your favor.”

These kings are smart men. They’re saying, “You guys are completely crazy.”

We say, “No, here is what we tell you to do: Take your agricultural factories and convert them into military factories. Re-armament. In other words, you will have such a desperate battle, you’ll need to take all your agricultural factories in all your nations and turn them into rearmament plants to make weapons. It’s not a million to one; it’s a billion to one, all of you have vast amounts of weapons, and you’re still going to lose.”

“WHEN THEY SHALL SAY, ‘PEACE AND SAFETY!’ SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMES”

Not only that, but the world is at peace for the first time in history—for the first time since the garden of Eden. In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, Paul tells us that at that time they will be saying, “Peace and safety!” The Antichrist will bring an artificial, temporary peace, and the earth will say there’s peace and safety for the first time under this man’s leadership.

But we’ll say, “No, it’s time for war. Not only that, you will be totally destroyed when you go to war.”

Israel will undoubtedly be saying, “Please, you guys, be quiet!” There are people in the Church who will say this is false. There are people in Israel who will say, “Stop it.” The United Nations will say, “Stop it.” Everyone will be saying, “Don’t say this.” But the prophets of God will say it. Why? Because the prophets of God believe in the Word of God. Because the ambush God is setting up is coming from the sky. At that point in time, it’s an invisible army; it won’t be visible until after the battle starts. Up to that point in time, it’s an invisible army. The ambush is coming from above. They will say, “Take your plowshares, take your plowing instruments, your tools, use the factories to make military equipment, and tell the weak, the man who doesn’t like war, the timid man who isn’t a mighty soldier, and who says, ‘I’m not really into war; that’s not what I’m into’; tell that man to get with it and join the army, because you will need every single person available.”

Again, this challenge is so bizarre to the minds of the nations, even to some in the Church, and certainly in Israel. They’ll say, “Will you stop provoking the nations?”

“WHY DO THE NATIONS RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES IMAGINE A VAIN THING?”

Page 135. It’s a pretty intense commandment to say these things. Paragraph D. David described this battle. Remember from the last session, Psalm 2 is that famous psalm describing the great conflict. David describes the great conflict, this conflict that has been going on for 3,000 years. David was alive 3,000 years ago, in about 1,000 B.C. This has been going on for 3,000 years, but it has its full, complete fulfillment around the Armageddon Campaign and the battle for Jerusalem. “Why do the nations rage?” (Ps. 2:1). “Why are the nations raging against God?” is the idea. David is letting us see the emotional condition of the armies that are gathering. They hate God; they perfectly hate Him. These aren’t just carnal people who compromise. They hate God; they rage against Him.

THE INVISIBLE GOD IS GOING TO SHOW HIMSELF VISIBLE IN THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

As a matter of fact, John the apostle quoted this verse in Revelation 11:18. When the seventh trumpet sounds and Jesus comes, and all the kingdoms of the earth are given to Him, John quotes this verse to signify that the nations will be raging in anger against the God of Israel. They will be so angry at Him, they will plot a vain thing. They’ll be plotting this proud, vain plot, this scheme against God, to destroy and eliminate Israel. The prophetic Church will tell them, “You’re plotting vanity. It doesn’t matter if the odds are a million to one, it’s vanity. You’re going to lose. It’s a false plot. The invisible God is going to show Himself visible in the Man Christ Jesus.”

THE LORD WILL AMBUSH THE HEADS OF STATE AND KILL THEM IN ONE DAY

We know from Revelation 19:14 that Jesus is coming with an army from heaven. He’s coming with an army from heaven. This call to Jerusalem is a trap. God is calling them to an ambush. Here’s what He wants to do; it’s unthinkable what the Father is planning. He’s going to gather all the kings of the earth into one setting at one time, in the land of Israel. Then—I’m using figurative language—He’s going to get them all in one room and lock the door. We’re talking about all 238 kings. When all the armies gather, that’s one thing, but the presidents typically don’t show up to the battle when their armies go. It’s one thing to have all the armies gather; that in itself has never happened in history. The first time ever will be in the future, but this is more than the armies; the heads of state will actually show up as well. They will go all the way around the world. What an inconvenience for them. They will show up in the land of Israel. It’s like a big room, and God locks the door. He says, “I have all the kings of the earth in one setting,” and He kills all of them and changes the leadership of the earth in one day. That’s what the battle of Armageddon is about. He executes every single head of state, gets

rid of all their cabinet members, and then gives the leadership of the nations to a whole new group of people and begins the Millennial Kingdom.

HE IS TRAMPLING OUT THE VINTAGE WHERE THE GRAPES OF WRATH ARE STORED

That's how this age transitions into the age to come. It's called "the winepress of the wrath of God." Because in ancient Israel, there were winepresses. A really big one would be like the size of this stage, and maybe a foot deep. It wouldn't be this big, but just for the sake of the illustration, they would put all the grapes in this big container; the people would get inside the container and they would stomp the grapes. Then the grapes would become grape juice. Then the juice would drain down at the bottom. That's how they made wine. The big vats where they placed and stomped the grapes was called a winepress. The grape juice would run out in the appointed places, down at the bottom of these big vats. Then they would turn that juice into wine.

The Word of God says God is going to have a winepress. It won't be a big container like the size of this stage. Rather, the whole land of Israel is going to be the winepress, particularly Jerusalem. He's saying, "I'm calling all the kings of the earth together into one place, I'm locking the door, and I will stomp them myself. Blood will flow and I will turn the leadership of the earth over to an entirely different group of people, who have different values, who have relationship with Me." That's what the Bible means by "the winepress of God." It's a terrifying concept. That's what Joel is going to talk about in a moment. It's only one time in history, it's in the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding land of Israel. That's the big winepress; that's the big room, so to speak, where God locks the door and won't let them out. He kills every one of them.

"LET ALL THE NATIONS BE WAKENED AND COME UP TO THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT"

Bottom of page 134. Roman numeral VI. He says, "Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all round. Cause your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord" (Joel 3:11). That's actually an intercessory cry to the angels to be involved, and they will be. As a matter of fact, Jesus brings all the angelic hosts with Him when He comes. They're totally involved in the battle, before, during, and after. "Let the nations be wakened... and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel 3:12)—the city of Jerusalem. And there He will destroy them as they surround the city of Jerusalem. The enemy will take over the city; and because they take the city for a moment, they'll think they have won. Then the whole thing turns suddenly and God kills all the leaders of the nations. He says, "I will judge you and destroy every one of you."

IN THE DAY HE MARCHES THROUGH ISRAEL, WE WILL SEE HIM AS THE FAIREST OF MEN

Top of page 136. The famous Psalm 45. We sing through Psalm 45 a bit at IHOP-KC in the "Worship with the Word" sets. Psalm 45 says, "Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One" (Ps. 45:5). In context, this is actually talking about Jesus at the Armageddon Campaign. This is Jesus marching up the land of Israel, to Jerusalem, to draw His sword against the nations. That's what it's talking about. What's interesting is Psalm 45:2. Do you know what that is? It's that famous verse we sing a lot at IHOP-KC. "You are fairer than the sons of men" (Ps. 45:2). "You are more beautiful than all the sons of men, Jesus." The beauty of Jesus is manifest at the Armageddon Campaign when He confronts oppressors and removes them forever from the earth and turns the government of the earth over to the righteous. That's the context in which the Psalmist says, "Jesus, You are fairer, You are more beautiful than all the sons of men."

"THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART"

"God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions" (Ps. 45:7). The gladness of God. What a strange thing at first glance. The beauty of God is connected with the battle of

Armageddon. In what way is His beauty and His gladness manifest in this context? Because He's driving wickedness and oppressors and persecutors off the earth and making the earth righteous. That's the context. It's the day of His gladness.

“GATHER THE CLUSTERS OF THE VINE OF THE EARTH, FOR HER GRAPES ARE... RIPE”

Turn to page 137. Roman numeral VII. “Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe” (Joel 3:13). This verse 13 is terrifying. When I read verse 13, I tremble. “Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great.” What you'll see here is that John quotes this verse, Joel 3:13, in Revelation 14:17. He pulls back the veil and gives us more of the context of what's happening here. In Joel it's an intercessory cry: “Put in your sickle, for the harvest, the evil harvest of the earth, is ripe.” We don't know to whom Joel is speaking. To whom is he speaking?

John the apostle comes along 600 years later in the book of Revelation and pulls the veil back, and we find in Revelation 14:17, in heaven, that one of the angels is speaking to another angel in Joel 3. Here in Revelation he says, “O angel of God, put in the sickle of God's judgment, because the earth is ripe in her sin, and she is ripe for judgment” (Rev. 14:17, paraphrased). We know this is a heavenly conversation going on around the throne of God. There is coming a time where the angels will be involved in the end-time judgment. Jesus Himself will be involved; the whole people of God will understand what's going on. Putting in the sickle means it's time to judge the earth. That's what Revelation 14 explains to us.

“Why?”

Because the harvest is ripe.

“What harvest?”

The harvest of sin. God has allowed sin to mature; He has allowed the free will of man to be fully exercised to the fullest degree, and sin has reached a level beyond any other time in history. It has even surpassed the days of Noah. The earth is ripe.

THE JESUS OF CHRISTMAS IS THE JESUS OF ARMAGEDDON

“Come down.” He's talking to Jesus; He's talking to the angels. “Come down, confront it, and free the people who are oppressed. Bring righteousness to the earth. It's time for a crisis experience to transition the world to the age to come.” The winepress is full. In other words, all the kings are now assembled in the winepress. That's a terrifying thing. They're all there: all their presidential, kingly cabinets are with them. Their top military leaders are there. The winepress is full. As a matter of fact, the vats, the containers where the grapes are stored—all of the right people are in the vats. The vats are overflowing with these wicked men. For the only time in history, He says, “Go now and confront them.” Jesus goes down from heaven and kills all of them.

That's why I say that the Jesus of Armageddon, who confronts oppression and wickedness, and the Jesus of Christmas, who brings peace and good will to all men, is the same Jesus. There's no contradiction in Him at all. Many people only think of the Jesus of Christmas. The Jesus of Armageddon, they want to get rid of Him. It's impossible to get rid of the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of Christmas will bring peace to all men by confronting the reprobate hearts of the leaders of the earth on a global level, all together at the same time. It's the most dramatic hour of history.

THE HOUR OF DECISION HAS ARRIVED FOR ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH

Let's look at page 138. We're coming to an end here. Roman numeral VIII. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

The valley of decision is the valley of Jehoshaphat. Every leader, king, president, prime minister, chancellor, all the top leadership and all the military command, need to decide, "Are we going or are we not going?" The fate of their nation and the nations of the earth are all in the balance as to what people do in that day. It's called the valley of decision. All of human history and the destiny of nations are set in a finalized way based on this decision here. It's the decision of all decisions: militarily, politically. It's such an important hour. They don't see the armies of heaven, so they don't believe what the prophetic Church is saying: "Whatever, these armies are coming and we're all going to get killed. We don't believe that." The Antichrist and the Devil and the false prophet have been performing signs and wonders, seducing them to come, promising that it will go well for them. They're thinking, "We had better go, because there are miracles confirming it, it will be good for us personally, for our military and political careers, and for our nations. Those prophetic people keep saying we will be killed. We don't really buy that."

Yet all through the nations, there are those saying, "The Word of God is true. It's bad if you go."

Other people are saying, "No, that great world leader, the Antichrist"—that won't be his name; he'll be called something really cool—"is promising us goodness and victory." Every single nation will be in the hour of decision. Human history throughout the entire millennial kingdom will flow based on these decisions.

On a personal level, we're all in the valley of decision in a very small way even now. The valley of decision is how the nations decide to line up for the battle of Jerusalem. That's really what it is, for the battle of Jerusalem. Are they for God or against God, or are they ignoring the whole thing? We're all in the valley of decision in a very small way right now. If you just read the news, the nations right now are already lining up in the battle for Jerusalem against Israel. The valley is already here in a figurative sense.

THE ONLY MAN ANNOUNCED BY THE STARS IS THE ONLY MAN WHO MADE THEM

Top of page 139. We'll end with this. Roman numeral IX. Joel 3:15-17. I'll tell you how important this valley of decision, this hour of history is: The sun and the moon and the stars will back up and confirm the message of the prophetic Church. Talk about signs in the heavens! This valley of decision is so significant. The sun, moon, and stars will be affected. Jesus will roar from Zion; He will utter His voice from Jerusalem. He comes right after that. When He roars from Zion (Joel 3:16), that means He's already in Jerusalem. His feet have touched the Mount of Olives, and it split. The Jews who were trapped against the mountain have fled. They'll meet up again with Jesus really soon, but they say, "We're getting out of here for now. We'll sort out what just happened, but we're running right now." Jesus roars from the earth as a man. He is fully God and fully Man. He's the Person who acted in Genesis 1, the Creator God, Jesus of Nazareth, and He still has authority over the heavens and the earth. He always did and always will. That's the Man we worship; that's the Man we obey. We don't cast off His Word; we obey this man.

The valley of decision is so significant. It's related to these glorious messianic signs. A messianic sign means signs in the heavens—the sun, moon, and stars. They will give witness and testify to the coming of Jesus. There's no other man who comes proclaimed by the stars. No, there's only one Man of whom the stars testify, Jesus. When He was born, the cosmic powers in the sky were affected; when He died on the cross, they were

affected; when He returns, they will be affected again. He is the only Man announced by the stars, because He's the only Man who commands the stars. The power over the stars is connected to Him as the Genesis 1 Creator. He's the only Man who in this scenario, His end-time drama, has command over the stars.

“THE SUN SHALL BE DARKENED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD”

Here's why: because when the sun, the moon, and the stars are affected, the whole earth stops and takes notice. I don't mean they're curious; they're filled with fear. There's only one Man with that kind of power—He's the Man coming to destroy the Antichrist. When the Bible talks here about the sun, moon, and stars, it's saying He has the ability to affect them and seize the attention of the whole world. The sun, moon, and stars will be prophetic signs. The end-time prophets will give words and they'll be affected. The heavenly bodies will confirm those words of the end-time prophets in the end-time scenario. That's part of Joel's main message; he gives it three times: in Joel 2:11, Joel 2:31, and then here in 3:15. He says, “The heavenly bodies will confirm the end-time scenario, the unfolding of the Day of the Lord.”

“SO YOU SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, DWELLING IN ZION”

Signs in the heavens. Jesus will come; He will roar from Zion. He will be so zealous against the Antichrist. When He roars, it will shake the entire earth, because it was His voice that created the earth. Literally, when He speaks, the earth will shake. Who is this Man? What is He saying to the earth? He's saying, “I am the Creator God. I will use the very creation to judge those who won't obey Me, their Creator.” Then He says to Israel, “Israel, this terrifying, beautiful God, the Psalm 45 God of beauty, this terrifying God whom the heavens are obeying, He will be a shelter for you if you call on Him”—as He says in Joel 2:32. He says, “If you'll call on Him, He will protect you. He loves you; He will protect anyone who calls on Him and obeys Him.”

“So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain” (Joel 3:17). “You will know Me; we will have an intimate relationship. This is what the whole story line is about: We will know each other deeply, and be together forever.” Amen.

