

## **Session 13 Jesus the Victorious King at Armageddon (Joel 3:1-2, 9-17)**

<sup>1</sup>“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations...” (Joel 3:1-2)

<sup>3</sup>Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up...<sup>10</sup> Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’”<sup>11</sup> Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. <sup>12</sup>“Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. <sup>13</sup>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.”<sup>14</sup> Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. <sup>15</sup>The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. <sup>16</sup>The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. <sup>17</sup>“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again.” (Joel 3:9-17)

### **I. HUMAN HISTORY DOES NOT END WITH A NUCLEAR WAR**

- A. The drama of natural history does not come to a close with the superpowers of the nations blowing each other up in a massive explosion, as has been the popular Hollywood theme of our day. Scripture makes it clear that natural history does end with a battle, but this battle is not between the East and the West; it is not about communism versus capitalism, or about any other human-against-human conflict. **The two sides of this great battle will be evil human beings against God Himself**—and God will win. The Church will not be absent when this great struggle takes place; the Church will still be here on the earth in the midst of the battle, walking in great victory and power. The Antichrist’s evil army will bring trouble to the earth and will persecute both the Jewish people and the Body of Christ.
- B. The end-time events will come to a crescendo, with revival breaking forth, persecution mounting, oppression deepening, economics failing, the judgments of God breaking forth upon the unbelievers, and the wrath of Satan breaking out against the Church.
- C. Jesus will stand in the sky as a human king who is fully God. No king has ever stood in the sky. This day will mark a new order—a Man will stand in the sky with His armies. The Antichrist’s mighty army will never have confronted an army like this, one that will stand in the sky!
- D. When Jesus splits the sky to come to earth and to liberate the captives, it will be a process! It will take time. Yes, those raptured will be changed instantly, but that does not imply that Jesus will “suspend” the natural processes in all the events to follow as He manifests His great power.

- E. The battle of Jerusalem that ends the Armageddon campaign will not be over in fifteen minutes. Jesus will appear in the sky with His angels to rapture the Church. Then He will strike the nations attacking Jerusalem. Jesus will come as the One from Edom who travels in great strength with His garments made red by the blood of His enemies (Isa. 63:1-4). Though the supernatural activity of God will accelerate this battle, Jesus will do it within natural human process.

***<sup>1</sup>Who is this who comes from Edom...this One [Jesus] who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength...<sup>2</sup>Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? <sup>3</sup>“...I have trodden them [nations] in My anger...their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.” (Isa. 63:1-3)***

- F. The concept of literal events occurring within natural dynamics is important to understand!
- G. Many Gentiles err in thinking of God’s kingdom and the end-time events as only supernatural and spiritual, without seeing the literal human and natural dimensions that will be involved.

## **II. REVIEW: ALL NATIONS GATHERED FOR JUDGMENT (JOEL 3:2)**

***<sup>2</sup>“I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat [area near Jerusalem]; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of...Israel.” (Joel 3:2)***

- A. The Lord will gather the armies of all the nations to one place. The “all nations” of this passage is not speaking of every single human being in every nation—it is not a gathering of the *whole population of the earth*. Rather, it refers to the armies of the earth—the military leaders and personnel representing each nation. It will consist of millions, if not billions, of people.

***<sup>2</sup>“I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken.” (Zech. 14:2)***

1. The Lord will bring the nations to a specific geographic place—the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There is no place in Israel with this name. Some see this valley as only symbolic of God’s judgment.
2. The Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12) may speak of the Valley of Berachah. It is just outside of Jerusalem, where King Jehoshaphat gathered Israel to worship after a victory against Ammon and Moab (2 Chr. 20:26, 16).

***<sup>25</sup>When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found...an abundance...<sup>26</sup>They assembled in the Valley of Berachah... (2 Chr. 20:25-26)***

- B. At that time, Israel will not be a great military power. An angel told Daniel that Israel would be completely shattered, speaking of her national weakness at that time.

***<sup>7</sup>I heard the man clothed in linen [angel]...he held up his right hand...and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time [3½ years]; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. (Dan. 12:7)***

- C. Zechariah described the Jewish people as trapped against a mountain and surrounded on all sides when Jesus comes and sets His foot on the Mount of Olives. The mountain will split apart creating a valley, so that the Jewish people may escape from their persecutors. (Zech. 14:4-5).

***<sup>4</sup>In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley...<sup>5</sup>Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee...Thus the LORD my God [Jesus] will come, and all the saints with You. (Zech. 14:4-5)***

- D. Satan will also work to gather the nations to Israel. He will send out his demons to work false miracles that cause the kings of the earth to be allured in the deception to unite against God.

***<sup>13</sup>I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup>For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Rev. 16:13-14)***

- E. Both Jesus and the Antichrist will be at work in gathering the nations to Jerusalem. Yet God's sovereignty always overrides the devil's schemes. Throughout history, Satan continually plays the role of "God's devil," in that whatever he does, God brings about good from it (Rom. 8:28). In other words, Satan's schemes continually fall into the greater purpose of God's ultimate plan.

- F. Another factor that will bring the nations together to war against Jerusalem will be their envy, bitterness, and greed against Israel—wanting to take the spoil from the land of Israel and steal the wealth of the Jewish people whom they wish to exterminate.

***<sup>11</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will do according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make Myself known among them when I judge you." (Ezek. 35:11)***

- G. ***Summary:*** Three things will work together to cause this great gathering of the nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, near Jerusalem—God, Satan, and sinful men. Men will come under the compulsion of bitterness and greed. The devil will deceive the nations into coming. Jesus will draw the wicked leaders of the earth to defeat them before the eyes of the whole world.

- H. The Lord will have given every person ample opportunity to repent. Yet these ungodly leaders will be in a state of rage against Jesus and His people (Ps. 2:1-3). In their rebellion, their hearts will be hardened and completely unresponsive to the grace of God. They will hate God with perfect hatred (Rev. 11:18).

### **III. THE ZEAL OF THE JEALOUS KING**

- A. The battle of Jerusalem that ends the Armageddon campaign is a military conflict that is covered thoroughly in the Word of God. The Lord has emphasized it, giving us many details in the Scripture, so that His people would have confidence in knowing that victory will surely come.
- B. Through this battle, He will not only save unbelieving Israel and Gentiles, He will also vindicate and deliver all the believers. This battle portrays Jesus' zeal and His commitment to His people. He will not sit back in passivity, but will take action and go to war on behalf of His own.
- C. It will be a real battle.

- D. What God does in that hour will make a great impact on the nations for the next 1,000 years. The people of the millennial nations will remember how Jesus' great power, wisdom, love, and justice were openly demonstrated. They will know how serious He is about His government.
- E. These events will make a great social and emotional impact upon the earth when they remember how Jesus killed untold millions in the Antichrist's empire, along with their wicked leaders.  
***<sup>5</sup>The Lord...shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. <sup>6</sup>He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. (Ps. 110:5-6)***
- F. The memory of these events will impact the social, emotional, legal, and economic decisions in the earth for the next 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-6).
- G. We need to get to know the Jesus who is portrayed in the Armageddon campaign; slaying reprobate oppressors is not contrary to His personality of love and tenderness—in this way, He delivers those who are oppressed. ***This is what Jesus' love is capable of.*** Knowing how far His love will go to deliver the persecuted and oppressed creates gratitude and love in His people.

#### IV. UNDERSTANDING THE ARMAGEDDON CAMPAIGN

- A. The battle of Armageddon is typically understood as an isolated battle that occurs in Jerusalem just before Christ returns. In actuality, it is not an isolated battle; rather, it is the final battle in a military campaign that lasts for 3½ years leading up to Jesus' coming.
- B. The Antichrist will conduct numerous battles and military campaigns around the world (Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 6:1-6). The largest and most violent will be the 3½-year Armageddon campaign, ending with the final battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat—the battle of Jerusalem (Rev. 16:14, 16). During this campaign, the Antichrist, with his ten-nation confederation and with the support of the kings of the earth, will gather to Armageddon. The Antichrist's armies will be stationed throughout the entire land of Israel, from the plains in the north, down through Jerusalem, out into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and southward to Edom.
- C. The term *Armageddon* appears only once in the entire Bible (Rev. 16:16). It is the place God chose to gather the nations for the war of the great Day of God Almighty. In Hebrew it is called *Har-Magedon* and these two adjoined Hebrew words can be translated “hill-country of Megiddo.” *Megiddo* actually means “mountain of gathering” and comes from a Hebrew root word *gaw-dahd*, which means “an assembling of troops.” Megiddo was an Old Testament city in northern Israel, sixty miles north of Jerusalem. It is located within a famous valley, a vast open plain that extends out toward the east, called the Valley of Jezreel. Today Megiddo is a fertile valley known as “Israel's breadbasket” because of its continual harvest. The Valley of Jezreel, where Megiddo is located, is approximately 15 miles wide at its widest point and 20 miles long.

- D. Megiddo itself served as a military stronghold where many strategic battles in Bible history were fought. There, Deborah defeated Sisera (Judg. 4-5), Gideon defeated the Midianites (Judg. 6), Saul died at the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam. 31), Joshua defeated the Canaanite king of Megiddo when entering the promised land (Josh. 12), and Josiah was killed by the Egyptians (2 Chr. 35:22-24; 2 Kgs. 23:29). This same valley will host the great battle of Armageddon. Though the plain of Megiddo is too small to host millions of soldiers from the armies of the earth long-term, it is large enough to act as the gathering place to dispatch armies throughout the land.

## V. THE GENTILE NATIONS PREPARE FOR WAR AGAINST GOD!

***<sup>9</sup>Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. <sup>10</sup>Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’” (Joel 3:9-10)***

- A. The nations will be summoned to war by God, Satan, and their own sin. The Holy Spirit will use the voice of His prophets to call the nations to “Prepare for war!” The prophetic cry will be, in effect, “Rally your strongest and best!” Demons will deceive with miracles and false prophecies telling of great victory and spoil! The lust in the heart of men will compel them to fight in this war. It is a mysterious thing when the forces of evil and the forces of righteousness move world history in the same direction, yet for different reasons.

- B. The Holy Spirit will call men to beat their plowshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears. He will appeal to and provoke the pride in their hearts. The nations will convert their agricultural factories into military machines. This command is the opposite of what Isaiah prophesied would occur after Jesus returns to end the Great Tribulation wars.

***<sup>4</sup>They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isa. 2:4)***

- C. By summoning the nations to prepare for war, the Lord will stir them up in their arrogance. These wicked nations only see defenseless Israel, without understanding that the Lord is setting a trap and will ambush them, as He comes from the sky with a heavenly army of angels and saints (Rev. 19:14; Zech. 14:5). As their bolstered confidence swells, they will come, mesmerized under the spell of their conceit, and certain of a triumph over Israel.

***<sup>14</sup>The armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen...followed Him on white horses. (Rev. 19:14)***

- D. David described the proud armies of the Antichrist in the end times. These kings will gather together and scheme: “We will destroy Jesus, God’s Anointed One, and His people!”

***<sup>1</sup>Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves...against the LORD and against His Anointed [Jesus]... (Ps. 2:1-2)***

## VI. LET THE NATIONS BE WAKENED

- A. The Lord calls all the nations to battle, not wanting one guilty nation to be absent (Joel 3:1).  
*<sup>11</sup>Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones [angels] to go down there, O LORD. <sup>12</sup>“Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.” (Joel 3:11-12)*
- B. God will stir up the nations. He will not force them to come, but will create a setting in which their unholy boldness is aroused. He wants their wickedness and pride to come to the surface.
- C. Psalm 45 portrays the glory and terror of that hour in which Jesus will go forth as a great warrior king against His enemies in the end times. The psalmist prophesied of the Armageddon campaign, crying out to the Messiah, “Gird Your sword on Your thigh and ride in victory” (v. 3).  
*<sup>2</sup>You are fairer [more beautiful] than the sons of men...<sup>3</sup>Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty. <sup>4</sup>And in Your majesty ride prosperously [victoriously—NASB, NIV] because of truth, humility, and righteousness...<sup>5</sup>the peoples [nations] fall under You. <sup>6</sup>Your throne, O God, is forever...<sup>7</sup>You love righteousness and hate wickedness...God has anointed You with the oil of gladness... (Ps. 45:2-7)*
- D. At the center of the Armageddon campaign is Jesus as the mighty One who fights His enemies (v. 3). This is the same Man who is anointed with the oil of gladness (v. 7). In this context, Jesus as the warrior king at Armageddon is seen as motivated by glad love. Even as He endured God’s wrath on the cross for the joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2), so He will judge the wicked for the joy of an earth that will be freed from wickedness and oppression. In this, His love for righteousness and hatred of wickedness is manifest (v. 7), revealing His unprecedented beauty (v. 2)!
- E. Jesus as our great warrior king loves truth, humility, and righteousness (Ps. 45:4). He goes to war and rides victoriously in battle against the wicked to promote truth, humility, and righteousness. He is forever the Lamb, who does everything in humility, even when He judges the wicked.
- F. Intercession is made for the release of angels in the Armageddon campaign. Joel utters the prayer that will be offered in that time, that the Lord would send out His mighty angels to this great battlefield. It as though Joel, right in the middle of recording the word of the Lord, put his pen down and entered in with this prophetic prayer, “God send the angels! Break in!” At other times in this book, Joel lifted his own voice to God in prayer (Joel 1:19; 2:17).  
*<sup>11</sup>Cause Your mighty ones [angels] to go down there, O Lord! (Joel 3:11)*

## VII. THERE THE LORD WILL SIT AND JUDGE

**<sup>13</sup>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. (Joel 3:13)**

- A. At the end of the age, the harvest of sin will be ripe. A principle in God's government is that He waits until sin is "ripe" before He judges a nation (Gen. 15:16; Jer. 27:7; Dan. 8:23; 12:10; Mt. 13:30; 23:32; 1 Thes. 2:16; Rev. 14:18; 17:4; 18:5). Sin is not ripe until it is acted out consistently with sinful deeds.
- B. Joel recorded the intercession of angels who cried out, "Put in the sickle" (v. 13).
- C. John describes part of the end-time scene from the heavenly point of view when angels cried out for the harvest of souls (Rev. 14:14-16), and then for judgment on the wicked (Rev. 14:17-20).  
**<sup>14</sup>On the cloud sat One like the Son of Man [Jesus]...and in His hand a sharp sickle. <sup>15</sup>And another angel...crying with a loud voice to Him... "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." <sup>16</sup>So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. (Rev. 14:14-16)**
- D. The angels cry out in intercession for Jesus to act against the evil that has fully matured on the earth. They are praying for Jesus to judge the Antichrist's empire (Rev. 14:17-20).
- E. John records the final stage of the Armageddon campaign, where Jesus treads the winepress (Rev. 14:17-20), and then later he more fully describes it (Rev. 19:12-21).  
**<sup>17</sup>Another angel...he also having a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup>And another angel came out from the altar...and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." <sup>19</sup>So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. (Rev. 14:17-19)**
- <sup>15</sup>He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Rev. 19:15)**
- F. Jesus will tread the winepress Himself with the fierceness and wrath of God (Rev. 19:12-15).
- G. The winepress is full and the vats are overflowing because the wickedness of the nations is great.
- H. Isaiah used the metaphor of treading grapes to portray the blood of the nations (Isa. 63:1-6).

## VIII. THE VALLEY OF DECISION

***<sup>14</sup>Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:14)***

- A. The valley of decision speaks of the time when every person must make a significant decision related to the battle of Jerusalem. Even now, people are moving in one direction or the other related to this. The principle of the valley of decision is applicable even now as each person establishes the way they will live before God. They are moving toward Jesus or away from Him.
- B. The whole earth will engage in deciding if they will follow Jesus or the Antichrist in the Armageddon campaign. Yet if they refuse the Antichrist, he will seek to kill them. However, if they refuse Jesus, then they will be judged.
- C. The spiritual compromises that we live in today will become easier and easier tomorrow. On the other hand, costly obedience to God will position one to walk in more grace in the future.

## IX. JESUS WILL REIGN OVER ALL THE EARTH

***<sup>15</sup>The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. <sup>16</sup>The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. <sup>17</sup>“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens [foreign armies in military conflict] shall ever pass through her again.” (Joel 3:15-17)***

- A. In that hour, this mighty Lion will become a shelter for His people! As He breaks through the clouds and sets His feet upon the Mount of Olives, He will protect those who call on His name. He will act as deliverer and savior to those being oppressed by the Antichrist.
- B. The Lord will not only use His sword in judging the wicked, but He will also use all His resources in creation, including the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth itself. He who spoke creation into being will use creation to judge those who refuse the Creator!
- C. The Lion of Judah will roar from Zion, or from *literal* Jerusalem! (Joel 3:16).
- D. Jesus shall reign from His throne in Jerusalem over all the earth (Zech. 14:9).

***<sup>9</sup>The LORD [Jesus] shall be King over all the earth. (Zech. 14:9)***

## X. CONCLUSION

What a gift God has given us in showing us the end of the story. So often in our shortsightedness, we get weighed down with the cares of life. But the Lord is zealous for our hearts. Even now He is deeply involved in our lives, orchestrating our circumstances in order for us to enter into the fullness of His plans for us—plans that are so marvelous we can hardly fathom them (1 Cor. 2:9).