

Session 13: Sixth Bowl: Deceiving the Nations to Come to Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16)

Tonight, we are going to be looking at Revelation 16:12–16, which is the sixth bowl. You have to read this bowl carefully. You have to pause. You have to think, “What are the implications behind these very dramatic statements?” If you read it casually and quickly, you will miss it. Of the twenty-one judgments, this is the one that terrifies my spirit the most in the grace of God. My spirit trembles when the implications of the sixth bowl really come into focus.

NATURAL HISTORY ENDS IN A BATTLE

Paragraph A. Natural history is often described in the media and even some who study prophecy is the superpower blowing up the world with a nuclear exchange. That is not how natural history ends. Notice I say natural history, because human history is going to go on forever, for billions of years.

Natural history ends in a battle. It is unusual. It is not between the east and the west, or Christianity and Islam in the sense that some are thinking right now. It is a battle between a Jewish King coming from heaven in a literal military conflict with all the kings of the earth in the Middle East. That is how natural history changes, or switches, to the age to come.

It takes a little while to get your mind around that. We often have the idea of Jesus appearing in the sky, we go away, and then we are done with the earth. He is coming to have a hand-to-hand battle with the kings of the earth. I do not want to push the word “hand-to-hand”; I mean up-front, up-close, personal contact with them. This is a strange idea for many people to get their mind around, but it is a clearly biblical concept. The sixth bowl describes the events that set up this great personal conflict with Jesus and the kings of the earth.

Revelation 16:12: “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way for the kings from the east might be prepared.” Now God is the One drying up the river, but it is unusual, because He is going to allow evil kings to do the evil that is in their heart. He is going to make a way for their evil to be manifest on a world stage— that already throws you off. Verse 12 is God’s part of this judgment. Verse 13 is what happens in the aftermath. “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of

the mouth of the dragon”—Satan—“out of the mouth of the beast”—Antichrist—
“and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”

It goes in verse 14 to describe the meaning of this. Verse 14 (paraphrased): “They are spirits of demons that are performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth.” The dragon, the false prophet, and the Antichrist speak. By the words of their mouth, demons are dispatched or released to do miracles. These miracles convince the kings of the earth to gather at Armageddon to go to war against Jesus, a Jewish King who is fully God and fully man, who has come to the earth. In verse 14, they are spirits of demons performing miracles, signs, and wonders. They go out to the kings of the earth. (There are 232 nations in the earth right now.) They go out to the several hundred kings of the earth to gather them to a battle. Again, natural history does not end with a nuclear exchange or with a comet hitting the earth, and everything is oblivion.

It ends with a battle. It is the battle of the great day of God. It is the battle of the day that God has waited for. It is the great day. It is His day. He has been waiting for this battle throughout human history. Verse 16: “And they gathered them together to the place called . . . Armageddon.”

THE SIXTH BOWL DESCRIBES THE NATIONS BEING DECEIVED

Paragraph B. The sixth bowl describes the judgment of God. It is a judgment from God that releases deception on the kings of the earth. It is God’s judgment, but the judgment results are on evil leaders of the earth, being emboldened in their sin and in their pride to walk out the thing that is in their heart: to stand against God in open war.

The sixth bowl describes the nations being deceived to come to war at Armageddo, to war against Jesus. The reason this is God’s judgment: God sees the evil in the hearts of rebellious men. He wants that rebellion that is in them to be openly manifest, because it is not repented of. He sees the depth of unrepentant rebellion that is hidden. It’s as if He says, “I want to bring it to the surface. I want to bring it out in the open.” It is in that context that God is going to cleanse the earth, He is going to win the nation of Israel, and He is even going to warn the nations concerning the rebellion at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Satan’s goal in the sixth bowl: he wants to rally all the resources of the nations. Imagine 232 nations and their armies, in unity—the first time in history all of the

armies of the earth have been in unity. It is a unity to do evil. They gather together. Of course that is what the devil wants; he wants the guilt of warring against Jesus and blaspheming the Holy Spirit. We will see why in a moment why this will amount to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. He wants the guilt of this to cover the earth, and he wants to use all the resources of the earth in the battle.

WHY WOULD SATAN PRIORITIZE GATHERING THE NATIONS TO ISRAEL?

Paragraph C. The key question is this, “Why would Satan prioritize this?” Why would Satan go to such an extreme to get all the kings of the earth in one place? The next question is, “Why would all the kings of the earth do it?” If there were a call right now for all the kings of the earth, all the prime ministers, and all the presidents to show up with their armies in one place, it would obviously be ignored. It would seem ridiculous beyond measure. It has never happened in history.

Something is taking place so dramatic that every king, prime minister, or president with their national armies gather to one place on the earth. The reason they are doing it is because they are going to fight Jesus. They are going to go to war with Jesus.

What you might think of casually reading it is that they are going to war against Israel. Israel is not a threat to them. Israel has a very small, ill-equipped army that is no threat to all the kings of the earth. They are not going to this great extreme and this great expense in order to all fight a little unequipped Jewish army. They are actually gathering to go to war against Jesus in His resurrected body. That throws us off because it is so absurd. We cannot fathom such a thing. They will obviously lose, but the problem is they think He is the false Messiah. They will think about Him what we think about the Antichrist.

We know the Antichrist has great power, but he will be defeated. They will believe Jesus has great power, but they will believe He is an imposter and He can be defeated. They are actually gathering across the nations. It is the most unusual crescendo event to shift natural history to the age to come. Only God could have thought of this script. It says in Revelation 17:14: “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.” Because these

kings—the 232 kings—whatever the number would be then, a couple hundred kings, the ten are the leaders of them, will make war against the Lamb, not just against Israel. They are really warring against Israel and figuratively warring against God.

They are actually in battle with the greater David. Jesus is the greater David, the greater Moses, the greater Joshua, engaging in a real battle in the land of Israel. It says in Revelation 19:19: “The kings of the earth and their armies gathered to make war against Him.” Jesus will kill them and their blood will flow throughout the land, even over a two hundred-mile area (Rev. 14:19–20). Their blood will cover the land of Israel.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET: JESUS WILL MARCH FROM EDOM TO JERUSALEM

Paragraph D. The context in the storyline in the book of Revelation is the seventh trumpet has already happened and the rapture of the church—Jesus has come in the clouds; the trumpet has been blasted; the saints have been gathered. Jesus has landed on the earth—we do not know where. He is marching on His way up through Edom, which is the biblical ancient name of modern-day Jordan. He is on His way to go to Jerusalem, to this battle, and to the Mount of Olives, where He will split the Mount of Olives in a very dramatic series of events that are related to that.

For the nations to go to war against Jesus, He has to be on the ground. They are not shooting cannons in the sky. They are not shooting arrows or guns. They are not aiming their weapons in the sky to try and hit an army in the heavens. He is actually on the earth. It is clear in the Scripture. It is an established, clear idea from the Old Testament prophets. Much of the Church does not think about it. If you study the Old Testament prophets, the idea is very, very clear.

THEY VIEW JESUS AS A FALSE MESSIAH

Paragraph E. They are coming to fight Jesus, whom they believe to be the false Messiah. Again, we have confidence that the Antichrist will be defeated, even though he has great power. He will do great signs and wonders. We are not troubled because we know our real God; the true God has much more power than he has.

The Antichrist is going to reverse the whole thing. He is going to say, “I am the true Messiah. I had a head wound; I rose from the dead; I have an image, a statue who talks and breathes; I call fire down from heaven along with the false prophet. I am the true God. Jesus is the imposter.” He is going to do a role reversal and deceive the nations.

SATAN WILL COME AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT TO SEDUCE THE NATIONS

Paragraph F. The Antichrist is the angel of light. Satan comes as an angel of light, meaning he masquerades as that which is opposite of what he really is. He appears in history as a good angel of light—as an angel of goodness.

The Antichrist will show himself as an angel of light. That is how he will seduce the nations. He will say that Jesus is the false Messiah, while the angel of light who is masquerading is the imposter. The Antichrist with signs and wonders will convince the nations that defeating Jesus is not only necessary—it is doable.

They will say, “We must defeat Him. It is doable if we do it together. I have the power of God. We can defeat this false anointed, false Messiah named Jesus of Nazareth.”

THE KINGS WILL SEE JESUS’ SUPERNATURAL SIGN IN THE SKY

Paragraph G. Jesus said, “Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn” (Mt. 24:30). The believers and unbelievers—everybody will see Him coming on the clouds. If you read the rest of the verse, that is when the Church is raptured—the sounding of the trumpet.

This war in the book of Revelation is after Jesus is in the clouds. It is when He is on the ground. The war described in Revelation 16—that they are gathering to Armageddon. The battle is actually described in Revelation 19 when He enters into Jerusalem. What is happening here in the sixth bowl is before the battle takes place. It is after Jesus has appeared in the sky and everybody has seen Him.

Jesus is now—in the storyline of Revelation, He is on the ground. He is going to be in a moment, and He is going to be marching up to Jerusalem to engage them in battle. The underlying concept is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit at the sixth bowl. That is why it is so terrifying. It is a global blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Let’s look at the concept of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

GLOBAL BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Matthew 12:24, the Pharisees said about Jesus, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” In other words, the way that He operates in power is by the power of the devil. The devil is the one anointing him, not God.

Jesus said, “You do not really want to go there, because you are not really sinning against Me when you say that. You are sinning against the Holy Spirit who is working through me” (Mt. 12:31–32, paraphrased). They were attributing the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ ministry—they were attributing it to the work of Satan. Jesus went on to say—verse 31—His teaching is essentially saying, “If you call the work of the Spirit the work of a demon, you are blaspheming the Holy Spirit. That is the one sin you will never be forgiven of” (Mt. 12:31–32, paraphrased).

They were attributing the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ life to demons. Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet are going to convince the kings of the earth that the work that Jesus is doing is actually a counterfeit. They will say that it is false. It is not of God; it is actually of the devil. They are going to present themselves as of God. It will be the great delusion that will cover the nations before the drama concludes and Jesus takes up His throne in Jerusalem.

BLASPHEMY OF THE SPIRIT IS A FULL AND FINAL REJECTION OF THE SPIRIT

Paragraph B. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a final and a full rejection of the Holy Spirit’s ministry. It is the greatest evil that a human being can do in God’s eye. The devil comes and whispers in people’s ears. It is very common. I have prayed for many people through the years who have said, “I think I have blasphemed the Holy Spirit.” If you care about it, then you have not done it. I mean that. A person who blasphemes the Holy Spirit has no desire for repentance and they do not care at all that they have done it. If you are afraid you have done it, it is impossible that you have done it.

THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS

Paragraph C. We are going to look at one of the most overlooked prophecies about the end- times, but it is very significant and it relates to the sixth bowl. Paul the apostle prophecies about the development of wickedness in the generation the Lord

returns. It has its highest description related to the sixth bowl of what he prophesies here.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, Paul said, “The mystery of lawlessness is already at work.” That is an interesting phrase—“lawlessness” is mysterious. Lawlessness: the mystery of sin, the mystery of iniquity. What Paul is saying is it has been working throughout church history. It is going to come to fullness in the generation the Lord returns. There is something mysterious about lawlessness.

Here is the mystery: I will just lay it out. In the presence of the glory of God and Jesus’ full manifest power—in the presence of it—men will choose the devil in the presence of the glory of God. Even in the presence of the truth about Satan, they will choose him over Jesus.

It is mysterious how rebellion takes root in the heart of a man who is empowered by pride.

If a man gets into rebellion and pride, it is mysterious that even in the presence of the glory of God, he will choose darkness. You and I—we cannot figure that out. We know we choose sin, we have done plenty of sin, but we hate the sin we do. Sometimes we have blind spots in our character and we do not see the sin we do. When we do see it, we say, “Oh no, that is not what I want to do.” If we give ourselves to it even intentionally, we are grieved.

This mystery is that in the presence of the glory of God, men will still choose evil. They will still choose evil. Paul said, “You are going to see this mystery.” It has been working throughout church history, but it is going to come to a crescendo in the generation the Lord returns, particularly at the sixth bowl.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Paul says, “The lawless one”—Antichrist—“will be revealed” on the world scene. Verse 9: “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.” The Antichrist is going to operate with lying wonders. He is going to have a significant amount of great miracles, but there will be lying wonders.

GOD WILL SEND A STRONG DELUSION TO THE NATIONS

Verse 10: “And with all unrighteous deception among those who . . . did not receive the love of the truth.” That is it right there: billions will refuse the love of the truth. For this reason, here it is that God will send a strong delusion to the

nations. That is what is happening in the sixth bowl. When He dries up the Euphrates River and releases Satan to do that which is the highest thing on his heart, in terms of his strategy of the nations, God is releasing a strong delusion to the wicked. He is going to allow them to have freedom to do outwardly the wickedness that is deep in their heart. He is going to embolden them to do that which they love. He will allow them to fully walk out that which they have chosen in a consistent way in terms of resisting the Holy Spirit.

Look at verse 11: “God will send . . . strong delusion.” This is an end-time prophecy. You do not hear that prophecy quoted very often, but it is a very significant one. We find it in the sixth bowl. That is what the sixth bowl is about—that the nations would believe the lie. There is a thing called “the lie” (v. 11). (Now there is a lie all through history. The devil is always a liar.) There is a particular series of events and idea that Paul talked about as “the lie.”

In the generation the Lord returns, when the Antichrist is doing false wonders and lying wonders, he will convince the nations to buy into the lie. The lie—we get more insight in it in the sixth bowl, as to what the lie actually is. Part of the lie (the lie has many facets to it) is that Jesus is the false Messiah, and the nations of the earth must rally under the true God to fight Jesus, in the confidence that they will defeat Him. That is the lie and that is the delusion of the sixth bowl.

THE MYSTERIOUS POWER OF SIN

Paragraph D. Paul spoke about the mystery of sin, the mystery of lawlessness. As believers, born-again believers with the Holy Spirit working in our lives, we cannot imagine somebody believing that they can defeat Jesus. It is like, “What?” It is called the delusion, the lie. It is more than that. They will believe they can defeat Him while witnessing His glory in front of them.

This is the delusion; this is the lie that Lucifer bought into when he was the worship leader around the throne of God. In the very presence of the glory of God, he conceived he could challenge God and win. It is the same lie on a global, eschatological (end-time) level. A global application of the lie is that in the presence of the glory of God, they can actually defeat God. The mystery is that when the pride and rebellion of man overlap, they are fueling each other. Men are emboldened against God at a level we cannot imagine. It is when the mystery of iniquity will have its full outworking—where Satan will send the lie and God will

take His hand off of them and turn them over to a strong delusion, because it is the decision that is deep in their heart against God.

It's as if He says, "I will let you do that which you love to do. I will give you the liberty to be emboldened in all of your rage against Me." This is how human history transitions to the age to come. It says in 1 Timothy 4:1—the Spirit explicitly says, "Some will depart from the faith." Some will even leave the faith by paying attention to "deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (v. 1). There will be many manifestations of that. There already are. The full manifestation of the doctrine of demons—the highest one is when the kings of the earth are in unity for the first time in history. They are in unity about the necessity of warring against Jesus and the confidence that they will actually win and defeat Him. That will be the ultimate deception in human history.

SIXTH BOWL: GOD GIVES THE NATIONS OVER TO THEIR WICKED CHOICES

It says in paragraph E, Romans 1:26—it describes God's working with people who choose sin. You read the whole passage. Actually, it says it three times—if you read Romans 1:24–28—three times God gives men over to sin. Every time God gives men over to sin, it is because they have chosen it. He allows them to do what is in their heart. When He gives them over, what He is doing is He is taking His restraining hand off of them and allowing them to increase in their capacity to sin.

Later He gives them over again in an increased capacity. They continue to sin. In Romans 1:28, it is called "a debased mind"—a seared conscience—where they cannot respond to the Holy Spirit at all. This is what is going to happen on a global level. God will give over the kings of the earth to a debased mind. They will be emboldened to gather to Armageddon to go to war against Jesus.

PAUL REFERRED TO THE GREATEST DECEPTION AS "THE LIE"

Paragraph B. Paul referred to the greatest deception in history as "the lie" (2 Thes. 2:11). Again, there are lies the devil has been telling all through human history. Those lies are all part of the big lie. There is a lie that emerges in the hour that the Antichrist is on the earth, and the lie is related to his false signs, wonders, and miracles. Many buy into the lie.

The sixth bowl, paragraph B, is a terrifying judgment, because God is allowing the lie to sweep away people who have chosen not to receive the love of the truth. He

allows the full consequences of their choices to bear down upon their conscience. In other words, their conscience is progressively defiled and seared. They will go to the place we cannot imagine: the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of lawlessness. They will end up in a posture against Jesus that we cannot even imagine. It will be so enraged and so emboldened and so unresponsive to Jesus in the positive sense.

PROTOTYPE OF GOD SENDING LYING SPIRITS TO AHAB, KING OF ISRAEL

Paragraph C. A prototype of the sixth bowl where the devil releases lying spirits throughout the earth to win over these 230 or 240 or 250 kings of the earth—whatever the number actually is at that time—nations, and all kinds of new configurations on the world map. In 1 Kings 22, Ahab the king of Israel, a wicked king of Israel, was the recipient of a lying spirit. Ahab was asking a prophet for direction and God sent a lying spirit to Ahab, the wicked king. (Most of you do not know Ahab. You may not know it. His wife is Jezebel. You know about Jezebel.)

Ahab and Jezebel were the ones who were at war with Elijah. They were the ones killing all the prophets of God. We know about Jezebel and Elijah, but Ahab is the king. (Jezebel is the wife, the queen.) This is a man who is hardened against the Lord. He asks the prophet Micaiah, “I am going to go to battle. Will I win?”

Look at this very unusual heavenly scene in 1 Kings 22:20: up in the council of the Lord in heaven, He is asking all those before the throne, “Who will persuade Ahab to go to battle? I want him to fall. I want him to be killed in battle. Who will give him a false message?”

One of the spirits—this is an evil spirit, because we have clear precedent in the Scriptures, like where Satan could appear before the presence of the Lord (Job 1:6; 2:1). Demon spirits accuse us in the presence of God. A spirit said, “I will persuade him” (1 Kgs. 22:21). The Lord said, “You do what is according to your nature, O lying spirit. I have need of you. You can go. I will give you room to go and talk to this king” (v. 22, paraphrased).

The lying spirit, verse 22—and this spirit said: “I will . . . be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.” Ahab had a whole host of prophets. The Lord said, “Good. Persuade him. Give him boldness to go to battle” (v. 22, paraphrased). This lying spirit went forth. All the false prophets gave these powerful words. Ahab was

emboldened in his pride and rebellion. It's as if he said, "Victory is for sure." It was completely false. This is the sixth bowl in a miniature way.

JESUS TEACHES THE WAY A DEMON WORKS IN GENERATION

Paragraph F. Matthew 12:43–45: Jesus describes how a demon works in a man. The demon is cast out of the man, but then the man does not repent and the demon comes back seven times stronger. If a demon gets cast out of a person and that person continues in their sin, they will end up in a far greater bondage later. It says at the end of verse 45, "The last state of that man is worse than the first," which is a perilous situation.

Here is the point I want to make: He said, "So also shall be this wicked generation" (v. 45, paraphrased). Demons affect generations; entire generations and timeframes are assaulted by the deluding power of demons in the way that humans are. He was talking to the first century. He said, "This generation will be seven times worse, because you have rejected the Messiah. You will be demonized in delusion beyond anything you have ever experienced in your delusion right now" (v. 45, paraphrased). This principle will be walked out in a global way in the generation the Lord returns. There will be demonic activity at a global level. You say, "Why do we care about this?"

It is the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the first five bowls leading up to the sixth bowl. In all of these, God is trying to wake up the nations so they are not swept away with delusion at the sixth bowl. The judgments that precede this are actually building in intensity to wake up individuals and nations so they will not be swept away in the delusion of the sixth bowl.

Believers will read the judgments of God in the book of Revelation, and some of them will have a wrong attitude and say, "Lord, how can You be this cruel?"

The Lord might say, "You do not understand the sixth bowl. You do not understand where history is going. I will not violate the free will of the human spirit, but I will arrest the attention of the earth in an increasing way, as things are building up to the sixth bowl." When the sixth bowl happens, there will be a global blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

As I understand the sixth bowl, though it is after the rapture, we will not be here in the sense of with natural bodies. We will be with the Lord. We will be watching it all unfold. We will be witnesses of the whole thing. Once we are raptured and with

Jesus, we are forever with the Lord. He is right in the middle of this conflict. We are witnessing and participating in it at different levels. The reason it matters to me now is not so I can whisper to you as it is unfolding, “I studied this really in-depth back in the early days, back on the earth.” That is not why I am studying it. I am studying it because it makes all the other judgments—it gives a perspective to them and it gives a dimension of mercy, because this is what Jesus wants to deliver the nations from this hour of the sixth bowl.

Jesus is talking about humans, individual people, and then suddenly, surprisingly He applies all the principles to an entire generation being demonized. The fullness of that in the historical sense will be at the sixth bowl. What a terrifying passage. This whole thing makes my spirit tremble. All the principles related to this. I think, “Lord, this is so intense.”

ALL NATIONS WILL COME AGAINST JERUSALEM

Roman numeral IV. What is going to happen? The demons are going to convince the 232 kings, and all their armies, to gather to Jerusalem. This is unprecedented. You read those verses and get used to the idea. Imagine (again) talking to every prime minister, king, and president of the earth and convincing them to show up personally, and not just to send their ambassador—to show up personally and bring their armies all in one place at one time. It is an unthinkable concept. It is going to happen.

THE GATHERING OF ALL NATIONS AT THE END-OF-THE-AGE BATTLE

The end of paragraph A. Let’s just look at A. The gathering of all the nations and all the leaders of the nations to the battle of Jerusalem is one of the major themes in biblical prophecy. It is emphasized over and over. History is leading in that direction right now. The prayer movement will be dynamically connected to it.

Here is the interesting thing: God will have a role in gathering all the nations, the devil will have a role, and the sin of man will have a role. All three of them will play a part. Of course it will all be orchestrated under God’s grand purposes that will overrule everything. The devil in his rage will play into it. Man in his sin will play into it, but God is doing this as well.

People have said, “Who is bringing all the kings to Jerusalem or to Armageddon?” (Armageddon is the military staging area up north). Who is doing this? Is the devil

doing it? Yes. Is God doing it? Yes. Are men doing it? Yes. All three answers are right, and there are enough Bible verses for all of them. It is mysterious. It is terrifying. It is glorious. God is orchestrating something so vast, so in-depth.

JESUS GIVES THE NATIONS ONE FINAL TEST IN THE LAST WEEKS

Paragraph B. You can read the verses on your own in Zechariah. God will gather the nations to Jerusalem. It is God doing it.

“I thought the devil was.” It is the devil too. “How can God and the devil both be doing it?” They are. God is overruling the entire process. He says in paragraph D, “I will gather all the nations. I will bring them to the valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3:2, paraphrased). The valley of Jehoshaphat is not an actual name of a valley. It is a description of the area next to Jerusalem. The valley of Jehoshaphat—just say in your mind: “Jerusalem.”

It’s as if God says, “I am going to gather all the nations and I am going to enter into judgment with them there.”

“God, why do you not just judge the nations where they are?”

“No, I am going to gather all the leaders of the earth and all of their armies in one place at one time. The devil is going to do it. I am going to do it. We are going to have a showdown to transition human history into the millennial kingdom.”

God will cleanse the earth and remove all the leadership that is wicked in one stroke. He will do it in Jerusalem. It says in Joel 3:11–12, “Assemble and come, all you nations . . . Let the nations be wakened.” This is God speaking: “Waken nations” (v. 12, paraphrased). Actually, God is stirring their pride: “You think you can take me? I challenge you. Wake up and stand before Me and present your case to Me” (v. 12, paraphrased). He is calling the nations to wake up. He is stirring them up in their arrogance: “Come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will judge the nations” (v. 12, paraphrased).

There He goes on to describe it as the valley of decision. This is where all the nations of the earth and all the individuals of the earth will have to make a decision. Are they for Him or are they against Him?

Of course, we make that decision many times between now and then, but there is an actual historical hour where the nations will be forced to decide. God will not allow any neutrality.

Everyone has to choose one way or the other in the full sense in that hour of history. There will be no neutral ground.

THE LORD WILL GATHER THE ARMIES OF ALL NATIONS TO JERUSALEM

Paragraph E. All the nations will be brought to Jerusalem. In the process, Jesus is going to win the nation of Israel to Himself and salvation. Only Jesus could think of this strategy to win Israel to Himself. He is actually giving a 1,000-year gift of mercy. He is warning the nations at the end of the millennial kingdom who will rebel and walk this out again. He is warning them, even through these events, not to do it in that hour.

All through the millennial kingdom, they will be telling the story over and over again. At the end, even after Jesus has reigned for 1000 years in the earth, there will be nations—men will rise up and rebel against Jesus again. It is the lie. It is the delusion. It is what Lucifer believed he could do in this pride that we cannot grasp. It is the measure of this pride that Lucifer had in God's presence. This same spirit of pride will be worked in the leaders of the nations. At the time, at the end of the tribulation, and again at the end of the millennial kingdom, it will happen again.

UNCLEAN SPIRITS FROM THE MOUTH OF SATAN

Paragraph H. This is interesting that it says in Revelation 16:13 (paraphrased)—John said, “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs. They were coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.” This is very significant. It is coming out of the mouth of Satan, the dragon. This is the only time in human history that Satan has come out from behind the scenes.

He has come out in the open on the world stage. This is a radical thing. Satan is always the great puppet master behind the scenes working through the others. This is the only time on a global stage Satan comes out of his cover. This is how desperate he is. He wants all the nations rallying together and he wants all the nations brought into the guilt of standing against Jesus.

That Satan would do this tells us the extremity of the situation and the desperate nature of the kingdom of darkness. The next thing that happens to Satan after this

is he is cast into prison for 1,000 years. He is desperate here. Right now, he is behind the scenes. He is the great puppet master pulling all the strings, and no one sees him face to face. He appears to a person here and there for a moment. I am talking about on the world stage—he comes out in the open. His next assignment is prison for 1,000 years in Revelation 20:1. He goes to prison.

MEN WILL EMBRACE DELUSION BECAUSE OF THEIR ANGER, ENVY, HATRED

Paragraph J. Why is God doing this? Jesus will lure the wicked into a divine trap in order to display His power on a global level. This is what He did in a small way through Pharaoh.

In Pharaoh's day it seemed really big, but it was only a prototype of what is going to happen at the end of the age. Romans 9:17 (paraphrased): the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, Pharaoh."

The Antichrist is the end-time Pharaoh. "For this very purpose I have raised you up. For this reason, Antichrist, I have done this. For this reason, kings of the earth, I have allured you to Jerusalem, that I would show My power in you. In your resistance, you will give Me an opportunity and a context to show My power to all the earth. My name will be declared through all the earth through what I do through you" (Rom. 9:17, paraphrased).

Again, this is not just an event that happens, and then it is over. Throughout the millennial kingdom, this story will be told. It will be captured in the educational institutions, in dramas, in whatever DVDs are like 500 years from now. It will be captured. This story will be told thousands and thousands of times through every expression of society, from the education to the arts to the music—the great drama at the end. The Lord's name—He has laid out the plan with such clarity. It will be talked about; God will be boasted in for 1,000 years on the earth because of this plan.

Here, ahead of time, we are grasping it and we are proclaiming it, even before it unfolds. The Church—the forerunners—will proclaim the certainly of God's wisdom and God's victory even before the plan and the battle unfolds.

Armageddon is not actually a battle. Armageddon is a military staging area. Armageddon is a piece of land. It is referring to up in the north, the Jezreel Valley. It is about fifteen miles wide and twenty miles long—that is the staging area up

north. The great battle we typically are referring to when we talk about the battle of Armageddon is actually the battle for Jerusalem.

Armageddon is up north about sixty miles. The battle itself is down south in Jerusalem surrounding the city. I call it the Armageddon campaign, because the Antichrist puts his armies in there for the whole three and a half years.

At the end the kings of the earth join in, but there have been armies there for the whole three and a half years of the Tribulation. There has been a battle; there have been many battles in that three and a half years from the Armageddon staging area.

At the end it escalates to a global level. There are many battles in the Armageddon campaign. The chief one, the one most notable, would more accurately be called the battle of Jerusalem, when all the nations are warring to take over Jerusalem and to fight against Jesus in a direct way. You can read more on that.

JESUS' ESCHATOLOGICAL WINEPRESS

Roman numeral VI: the eschatological wine press. What does that mean? “Eschatological” just means “end-time.” When we talk of something being eschatological, it pertains to the final events pertaining to the coming of the Lord. That is what we mean in a popular definition.

There is a wine press. What is a wine press? I am not going to go through the notes, but I will just reference them. In ancient Israel, at the time of the harvest, all the grapes were harvested, and they would get a big wine vat. (I am just making this up: there are all different sizes. Maybe it is ten feet in diameter. Maybe it is three feet high and ten feet in diameter.) They put all the grapes in the wine press.

The people would get up and they would stomp. Or they would use stones to do it. They would smash the grapes. Then the wine juice, they would extract it. A big wine vat, and the people at the celebration—the wine would get all over their clothing and their garments. Maybe other times they used big stones to smash the grapes, and then they would drain the grapes off.

It's as if Jesus said, “There is going to be a great wine press at the end of the age. There is going to be a big vat. It is not ten feet in diameter. It is about 200 miles. It is—the whole of the land of Israel will be My wine vat. I am going to call all the wicked kings and all of their armies. I am going to make sure they believe they will

defeat Me. I will get them all to show up. They will all show up. I will hem them in, in My wine vat. I will trample them with My own feet. I will destroy them and their blood will flow for 200 miles” (Isa. 63:1–3; Rev. 14:19–20).

That is what it says in Revelation 14:20: “For one thousand six hundred furlongs”—nearly 200 miles from Armageddon in the north down to Edom and Bozrah in the south where Jesus is marching up. It’s as if He says, “I am going to bring all the leadership of the earth that is wicked, for the first time ever, into one place. I am going to destroy them all in one stroke. Their blood will flow through the land. It will be the celebration of the new age. All the wickedness will be dealt with. I will call it My winepress. I will trample the grapes Myself in this battle.” That is what Jesus is doing: calling all the nations to Jerusalem. They think they are going to fight Him and win. He is calling them to His winepress to shift natural history to the age to come.

JESUS WILL COME AS A THIEF: BEWARE THAT YOU DO NOT SUFFER LOSS

It is a graphic description in Isaiah, it is mentioned in Joel, and John mentions that Jesus is going to trample the winepress. The winepress is not the whole earth. The winepress is that geographical area right there around Jerusalem.

It’s as if He says, “I am going to hem in everybody. There is no escape hatch. I am going to have all the leadership together and I am going to get rid of them all at one time.” The devil is going to help get them there on the premise they can defeat Jesus. Jesus is going to get them there. He is actually going to send a spirit of delusion to get them there. They will be going for victory. He will be leading them there for their defeat. Anybody who makes it there and they go to war against Jesus, it is because they ignored His warnings between now and that time.

That could be some decades from now. The point of it is, we are listening to the Spirit, and we are obeying the Spirit. We are not going to be found unresponsive, because there will be even believers that can end up there if they do not say yes to the Lord now. They can progressively deny the Lord. That is what this passage is talking about where Jesus interrupts. He tells believers, “Hey believers, I am coming like a thief” in verse 15 (paraphrased); He is essentially saying, “You better be paying attention.” I am skipping the part of the kings of the east (v. 14). We will look at that at another time. There is a special role the kings of the east have.

Look what Jesus says in Revelation 16:15. He is describing it. He says, “By the way, Church, I realize you will have been raptured at the seventh trumpet, and this is after the seventh trumpet. I want to tell you something: if you are still on the earth at this time, it means you have been swept away by deception. I am warning you now to watch. Pay attention to Me. Keep your garments. Stay connected to Me, because there is a series of events—there is an escalation of sin, temptation, persecution, and deception. There is an escalation of sin, an escalation of persecution, an escalation of deception that even My people can get swept away in if they are not paying attention” (v. 15, paraphrased).

Jesus actually interrupts Himself. He interrupts the story—the narrative of the angel talking with John. It’s as if He breaks in and says, “If you are there in that time, that means you have fallen into the escalation of deception.” He says, “Keep your garments, because I am coming like a thief. If you are watching and paying attention, you will have no concern about that escalation of deception in that day” (v. 15, paraphrased).

It is actually—I do not study this because I am thinking I am going to be there. I am studying it because I want to understand God’s plan for the end of the age, and I want to be a forerunner and faithful witness that is trumpeting it—understanding the judgments leading up to this are redemptive so we can wake up the Church and wake up the nations, so that everybody can escape this who wants to.

THE MOTIVATION IS LOVE

Well, the Lord wins in this great battle, and He brings the nations to His winepress and He tramples them. This is the Jesus we love. He is doing it because of love. He is doing it because there is no other way to deal straightforwardly with the sin of the nations.

As I study this, my spirit trembles, but I think of the majesty of His wisdom. I think of the superiority of His love and His power, and I say, “Lord, I want to be near You. I want to understand You. I want to grasp what is going on as You unfold Your purposes across the nations. I want to be ready, watching, and waiting, keeping my garments, watching and waiting. I want to be connected to You. I want to be a vibrant spirit in connection to You long before the escalation of these events.”

Amen. Let's stand.



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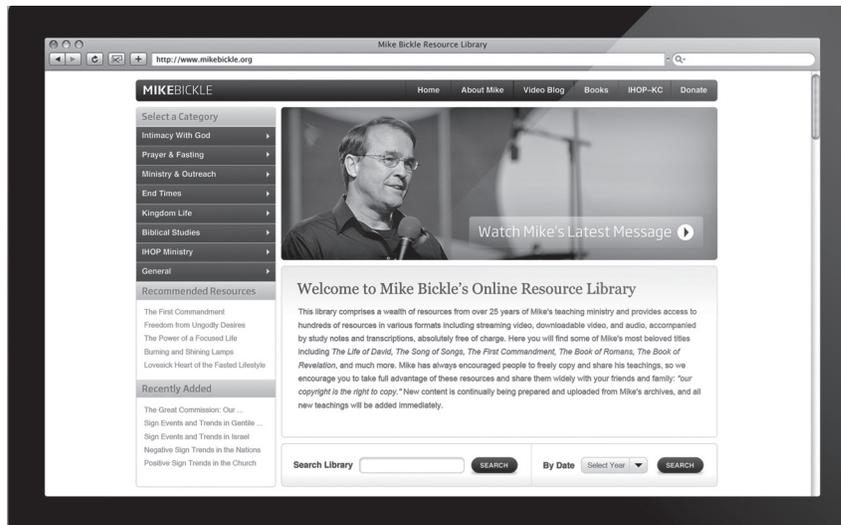
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