

## **The Last Battle: Armageddon**

**By David Feddes**

The last battle of earth will take place at Armageddon. Armageddon is the name of a place in the land of Israel, Harmageddon, the hill of Megiddo and the plain around it. Many great battles took place throughout history at that location. Right now it looks green. There are many civilizations built on top of each other in that ruin of Megiddo. It's a geographical location, and it is a symbolic place where many key battles have taken place. We are going to look at that final battle and the things associated with it, first by looking at Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, and then at some of the chapters in the latter part of the book of Revelation.

### **God against Gog**

In Ezekiel we read,

<sup>38:1</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him <sup>3</sup>and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. <sup>4</sup>And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army...

<sup>38:15</sup> You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. <sup>16</sup>You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

I want you to notice here that when Gog, who is the leader of this evil realm of Magog, this mysterious evil power, comes against God, it seems like the powers of evil are all gathering against God. But it's not really their initiative. God says, “I am bringing you. I am luring you. I am making sure that you are where I want you to be.” God is too smart to be caught by surprise, and God is too powerful not to be in charge. Long before the end of the age, God says, “Here is how it is going to go. I am going to bring on the powers of evil and let them take their best shot.”

<sup>18</sup> But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger. <sup>19</sup> For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. <sup>20</sup> ... all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. <sup>21</sup> I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. <sup>22</sup> With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. <sup>23</sup> So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

<sup>39:1</sup> “And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog... <sup>2</sup> And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel... <sup>4</sup> You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured...

<sup>17</sup> “Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, ‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. <sup>18</sup> You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth... <sup>20</sup> And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,’ declares the Lord God. (Ezekiel 38:1-39-20)

This is a gross picture of the enemies of God obliterated, and the vultures and the buzzards and everything else coming in to feast on them. In other words, Gog’s army is dead meat.

### **Forces of the future (Revelation 12-13)**

Now let’s move from the book of Ezekiel, which is an apocalyptic, visionary way of communicating, to the book of Revelation, which is a New Testament apocalyptic or visionary way of communicating with various pictures. Nowadays, we sometimes have political cartoons or symbols of things. The author of Revelation, John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote of the pictures and symbols God showed him.

Revelation pictures some terrible forces of the future. There are the demons led by Satan himself, that terrible seven-headed **dragon** as he is pictured in Revelation. Along with him are three great powers that he deploys. The first **beast** symbolizes oppressive government and the powers of persecution against God’s people. The second beast, also called the **false prophet**, pictures deceptive religion. This beast has two horns and looks like a lamb but talks like a dragon and deceives people. The third power Satan uses is **seductive culture**, also called Babylon, pictured as a prostitute riding on the first beast.

These forces of the future are already at work in the world now. That is why the Bible tells us about them, not just so we can speculate about the very end, but because the Bible wants us to know how these things are already at work. They are not yet fully released to do their worst, but nonetheless they are at work. Satan is bound and limited in many ways, but still at work. Political persecution and pressure are factors in many parts of the world. Deceptive religion attempts to fool people into false ideas about Christ or to deny Christ completely. There is always that pull of seductive culture, of money, of sexual perversion, of greed. These are forces of the future, and Revelation 12 and 13 talk about those forces to help us understand our own time as well as the approaching future.

At the end of time they will reach their full realization. The beast, elsewhere in the Bible called "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2) becomes a final, terrible world ruler. He has his religious flunkies to help him along and a great civilization that sucks people in.

The book of Revelation introduces these evil powers in Revelation 12 and 13. Then the rest of Revelation shows us a couple of things. It shows us repeated visions of how well things turn out for the people of God. It also shows us repeated visions of how badly things turn out for the enemies of God. When you read Revelation from chapter 12 through the end of the book, you should not think that it is all a single sequence, that now here is one set of events, and once you have seen that set of events, now a whole brand-new set of events, and then another whole brand-new set of events. Instead, it is the same battle being portrayed again and again from different angles.

### **Various visions, one Judgment Day**

Armageddon, the last battle, is often how we think of the final confrontation of good against evil. But Revelation 14 pictures the great harvest of the earth where an angel swings his sickle. Revelation 16 pictures the battle of Armageddon. Revelation 19 pictures the rider on the white horse, Christ riding in and wiping out the beast and the false prophet. Revelation 20 pictures Satan leading out the nations and Gog and Magog, and God and Christ obliterating the forces of evil.

I believe the best way to understand these visions of Revelation is to understand them as giving different portraits of the same basic set of events, but sometimes focusing over here and saying, “Here is what is going to become of Babylon.” Then it does a flashback again and focuses on what becomes of the beast and the false prophet. Then it does a flashback again in Revelation 20 and describes what happens to the worst of them all, the dragon. It tells of Satan, of his release to go out and do his worst, and of his destruction. To understand those, I think it helps to understand overall what is going on. There is one great second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and one devastating defeat of all of his enemies gathered to battle against him.

In short: Harvest of the Earth (14:19) = Battle of Armageddon (16:14-21) = Rider defeats Beast (19:11-21) = Last Battle Against Satan (20:7-10) These different visions are picture the same final conflict, but from different angles and with different emphases on what is happening to various enemies.

**Revelation 14** pictures a series of angels announce judgment. Here are some of the quotations: “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come” (Revelation 14:7). “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great” (Revelation 14:8). Notice that it already talks about the fall of Babylon in chapter 14. It is going to talk about Babylon's fall again in chapter 16, and again in chapters 17 and 18. This is not a one-time thing where we say, “Okay, the fall of Babylon is over, we are not talking about that anymore.” It is repeated again and again. “The smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever” (Revelation 14:11). The burning of the beast's worshipers is a theme comes up again and again. At the end of Revelation 14, we read, “An angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath” (Revelation 14:19). The harvest of the whole earth is one picture of the final battle and the final judgment.

Jesus himself used that picture of harvest in his story of the wheat and the weeds. At harvest wheat is gathered into the barn, but weeds are burned. Jesus explained, “The harvest is the end of

the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. " (Matthew 13:39-43). During his earthly ministry Jesus spoke of the harvest of the earth, and in Revelation Jesus gave John visions of this. So one picture of final judgment is this great harvest of the earth.

**Revelation 15 and 16** describe visions of seven angels with seven bowls containing seven plagues, which are the final wrath of God upon the earth. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them **the wrath of God is finished**" (Revelation 15:1). These plagues are the same final judgment as Revelation 20 and the other chapters of Revelation, because it says "with them the wrath of God is finished."

"One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:7). As those bowls are poured out, there are echoes of the plagues on Egypt and other great judgments of God throughout history. People get painful sores. The second bowl turns the sea to blood. The third turns the rivers to blood. Then the sun scorches. Then there is a plague of darkness. Then the Euphrates River is dried up. This plague of the river drying up opens the way for all these hostile forces to cross over against the people of God. Then there is a dreadful plague involving an earthquake and hail. Some of that should sound familiar, because in Ezekiel 38–39 you also hear about a terrible earthquake and hail and other such things.

Revelation 16 portrays the evil forces gathering to attack:

"The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon."

"The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe." (16:12-21).

All of that devastation is the result of three words from the throne: "It is done." Calling Armageddon "the last battle" is almost misleading. It's not much of a battle. It is supposed to be a battle, all the enemy forces have gathered and prepared to fight, but then God simply speaks

those three words, “It is done,” and everything falls apart. The voice that made the universe can unmake it, or anything in it, in a moment, and that is what he does. That is what happens to the forces of evil. Elsewhere in the Bible, God says, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens” (Hebrews 12:26). The only thing that is going to remain is what cannot be shaken. Make sure that you already have now, in this life, the things that cannot be shaken, because everything else is going to shake, and it is going to shake so hard that nothing is left except what is unshakeable.

**Revelation 19** gives us yet another vision of the end. This is the vision of the rider on the white horse whose robe is dipped in blood, whose name is the Word of God, who has a name inscribed on him, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When he rides forth, it means doom for the beast and for the false prophet. This vision again includes an echo from Ezekiel 38–39, an invitation for the vultures and the magpies and the buzzards and all the others to come, because there is going to be some good eating here. “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, ‘Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh” (Revelation 19:17–21).

The beast and the false prophet are thrown straight into hell. The beast is going to be some sort of great and terrible ruler at the end of time. Revelation says his number is man’s number, 666. There are different ways of trying to figure out what that adds up to because in they sometimes used letters of the alphabet to represent numbers. I’m not going to get all that. I will say this, however. Seven is the number of completion and fullness, so a triple six is a man’s number. It always falls short of that fullness and perfection. On the other hand, if you add up the Greek letters of the name Jesus, it turns out to be 888, more than perfection, more than fullness. Whatever calculations and computations anybody does, the number of a man is never going to add up to perfection, and the number of Christ is always going to be more than the fullness of all perfection. That means, of course, that the antichrist, the false prophet, and all the forces of evil combined have zero chance of success against the power of the Lord.

**Revelation 20** portrays another vision of the end: “When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea” (Revelation 20:7–8). Notice that this is the very same event described in slightly different words in Revelation 16:14, where demonic spirits perform signs and go abroad to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. Gog and Magog are the ones mentioned in Ezekiel. “And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of

fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:9-10).

Revelation 20 is where the camera zooms in on the devil. You have had previous cameras zooming in on what happens to Babylon, then zooming in on what happens to the beast and the false prophet. It is still the same battle, but now the camera is zooming in on the dragon himself.

When we look at the last battle and at these various passages about it, I am not going to speculate about which nation on earth now might be the leading candidate to be Gog. There have been some who said that the Hebrew word *rosh*, meaning head, sounds a lot like Russia. That was convenient if an American did not like Russia much, but it is poor interpretation to based anything on how a Hebrew word happens to sound to English speaking people. There is a lot of speculation about who these various nations might be, but there's no use speculating. When it happens, it will be recognizable to the people of God.

### **Armageddon = the last battle**

What happens with the last battle, which is hardly a battle at all? The Lord's overwhelming presence makes a very quick end of his enemies. In Ezekiel, as well as in the battle of Armageddon described in Revelation 16, you have an earthquake like no earthquake that has ever happened, where everything is shaken and everything falls apart except those who belong to God. You have hailstones and fire from heaven depicted in these passages in Ezekiel as well as in Revelation. You have a bloody banquet for birds and beasts of the slain.

I want you to follow this carefully. In Ezekiel 38-39, these things happen to the evil armies of Magog, which is a realm or a nation or some entity, and their leader, Gog. In Revelation 14-19, these same things (being overwhelmed by the Lord's presence, an earthquake, hailstones and fire, and the bloody banquet) all happen to Babylon and its leader, the beast. So Babylon and Magog are one and the same. The beast and Gog are one and the same. In Revelation 20, Satan gathers Gog and Magog for battle, but they end up in hell.

There are outstanding Christians and fine scholars who believe that Revelation 20 is an entirely different set of events than those described in Revelation 14-19 or in Ezekiel 38-39. I think they are mistaken about this. What I want you to notice is that the things said of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 parallel Ezekiel 38-39, AND the judgments in Revelation 14-19 also parallel Ezekiel 38-39. This means that the last battle of Revelation 20 (against Gog, Magog, and Satan) is the very same as the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16 and the defeat of the beast and false prophet in Revelation 19. These are not different events a thousand years apart. I'm not bashing fellow believers who think differently. I am just trying to explain why I am not persuaded of a thousand-year gap between the judgment of the beast and the judgment of Satan.

Again, the Harvest of the Earth (14:19) = the Battle of Armageddon (16:14-21) = the Rider defeats Beast (19:11-21) = the Last Battle Against Satan (20:7-10) These are different visions of the same ending: Christ coming to judge God's enemies.

Revelation 12-16 introduces us to these evil forces of the future and tells us some things about them and says that they gather at Armageddon.

Then in Revelation 17 and 18, the camera swoops in and tells you what becomes of Babylon, the prostitute. Babylon is the same as Rome because Babylon is on seven hills. Babylon, Rome, Magog, and the prostitute are all lumped together. Remember, this is political cartooning, not trying to tell you exactly which nation is which, because Babylon is in one part of the world, Rome is in another, and the final city that is the capital of the evil empire might be in a different geographical location than either of those. I do not know. But Babylon, Rome, Magog, and the prostitute all stand for a final seductive culture. The most important thing to know about it is that it is doomed: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!" (Revelation 18:1).

After talking about the fall of Babylon and God's judgment on it in Revelation 17-18, Revelation 19:11-21 pictures the judgment of the beast and the false prophet when the rider on the white horse returns. The beast is the same person elsewhere called antichrist, elsewhere Gog, elsewhere the man of lawlessness. This is the head of the final oppressive government. He has his sidekick, the second beast, the false prophet, which is the final deceptive religion.

This power of the future is already active in the present. "For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work" (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Scripture says, "As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come" (1 John 2:18). So you have to be alert all the time. "And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time" (2 Thessalonians 2:6). Right now those forces are present in some sense but are being restrained. When the restraint is lifted, Satan does his worst and these powers do their worst. "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). That is what the last battle amounts to.

As I said before, it is not much of a battle. He brings the lawless one to nothing by the appearance of his coming. As the Bible elsewhere says, "Earth and sky fled from his presence" (Revelation 20:11). The lawless power is already at work. It is on a leash until the end is near. The lawless one will be unleashed in full force near the end. He will then be wiped out by Jesus appearing (Armageddon).

Revelation 20 then describes the final judgment of Satan himself. We have seen the camera zoom in on Babylon and zoom in on the beast and the false prophet. Now it backtracks and zooms in on that old dragon. In Revelation 12, that dragon wanted to swallow up the woman and could not, and the dragon was cast down. We have not heard much about the dragon for most of Revelation after that. It has mostly been his flunkies and his minions that we hear about. Now Revelation gets back to the dragon. What becomes of him?

"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle... but fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:9-10).

The harvest of the earth (14:19), the battle of Armageddon (16:14-21), the Rider's defeat of the beast and the false prophet (19:11-21), and the last battle against Satan (20:7-10)--these are all part of what the Bible speaks of as the second coming of Christ, or the day of the Lord, or the day of judgment. This is a day that Christians long for and pray for. There is something terrible but also wonderful about that day. Here I am not focusing on all the wonderful promises that the Lord is bringing to fulfillment in creating the new heaven and the new earth, because first there is a great cleanup project that needs to be done. First we need to understand that great warning that God says, "I have been holding things back."

We sometimes wonder why God does not get rid of the powers of evil. The Bible says that he is patient and doesn't want people to perish (2 Peter 3:9), that he does not want to separate the wheat from the weeds yet because he does not want to destroy any wheat (Matthew 13:29). The Bible says that those last days will be so terrible that even the elect would perish if that were possible, but it is not (Mark 13:20). The elect cannot be lost any more than God can be defeated. In the meantime, God is patient with evil. If God were to appear in his full force and full power, the earthquakes would come, everything would disintegrate, fire would swallow up everything, and that would be the end of the story. So we live in a time when God has not unleashed that kind of appearing and that kind of judgment on the earth. It is a time for those who have not yet turned to him to do so while we have the opportunity, because everyone who does not have their name in the Lamb's book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire along with all these other enemies of God (Revelation 20:15).

### **The millennium is now**

You might wonder, What about that thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20? How can the defeat of Satan not be a thousand years later than the defeat of the beast and the false prophet? The answer, I believe, is that the millennium is now. We are living in the period when Satan is bound and cast down and restrained.

We are living in the period when Christ's reign is already underway. Jesus announced that the kingdom of God is near. He came to bring God's reign in his first coming.

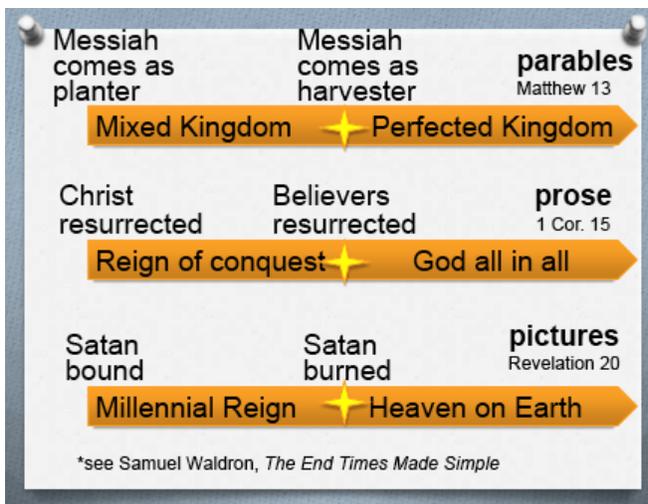
"The first resurrection" has already happened for millions of people. Jesus said, "A time is coming *and has come* when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5:25). There is a resurrection that happens right inside you when you hear the voice of the Son of God and receive new birth. There is also a first resurrection that happens in a sense when the soul of a believer leaves this life and goes to be with Christ in heaven and starts to share in his reign. John wrote in Revelation 20 about souls reigning from heaven. Even though the powers of evil were killing many Christians in his day, John was saying, "Do you think they are defeated? No, they are ruling right now. They are already raised to thrones." Many antichrists have already gone out into the world because the power of wickedness is already at work. Therefore, millions of faithful believers have already refused the beast's mark even before the beast shows up in his final form. Millions have already come to life and are now reigning with Christ on heavenly thrones.

When you see the harm Satan does in our world, you might wonder how anyone could say we live in a period when Satan is bound. Here is what Jesus said: “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?” (Matthew 12:28-29). Jesus also said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you” (Luke 10:18-19). I have been talking about what is going to happen at the very end of the world, but do not forget what has already happened in the coming of Jesus. Already Satan has been bound and limited. Already Jesus has given his people authority to tread on the great serpent. We need to participate in that binding of Satan right now and in that reign of Christ right now, in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (John 12:31-32). Notice that Jesus was talking about this two thousand years ago. He said, “This is happening now.” The word “driven out,” by the way, comes from the same Greek root as casting Satan into the pit in Revelation 20:3.

The Bible also says, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). Jesus is already in the process of destroying much of the devil’s work. “By his death he destroyed him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). A great day is coming, but let us also remember that a great day already came in the first coming of Jesus Christ. A major blow has already been dealt to Satan. He has already been cast down and bound for a very long period.

We might find it hard to believe that we live in an era when Satan cannot deceive the nations. We might think, "That can't be right. Satan is deceiving the nations all the time." But he is not deceiving them in the sense that he was before the first coming of Jesus. Before Jesus came, God’s purposes were largely focused on the nation of Israel. Only they had the Scriptures, and only they really knew the Word of God to any degree. With the coming of Jesus, the gospel spread to nation after nation after nation. Satan no longer had the nations trapped in darkness. He was not deceiving those nations completely, and so the gospel continued to spread.



Another way of thinking about this is that Jesus expresses certain truths in his parables, the apostle Paul expresses the same truths in his prose, and Revelation expresses these same truths in pictures. What you have is a two-stage process of the coming.

In Jesus' parables, first the Messiah comes as a planter, and the kingdom is mixed, the wheat and the weeds grow together. Then he comes again as the harvester for the harvest of the whole earth. You go from a mixed kingdom to a perfected kingdom.

In Paul's prose, especially in 1 Corinthians 15, he talks about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and says that through Jesus' resurrection he is already reigning and will keep reigning until he has put all his enemies under his feet. There is a reign right now in which Jesus is reigning, and then at the end believers are going to be resurrected as Christ was previously resurrected, and God will be all in all. So there is that two-stage pattern in the prose of Paul's epistles, the first coming and the second coming.

In the pictures of Revelation 20, Satan is bound during this millennial reign of Christ. Jesus is reigning now and where is limited. Eventually Satan will be released from these limits for a short time, in which the powers of evil do their worst. But Satan goes from being bound to being released briefly to being burned in the lake of fire. The millennial reign, which is now, gives way to heaven on earth when the new Jerusalem comes out of heaven from God. Those are the blessed promises of God for his people.

### **The Second Coming: Judgment Day**

Here's a brief summary of the cluster of events at the end of the age, culminating in Jesus' return.

Near the close of the present millennium, Satan will be released and Antichrist unleashed.

Then Jesus will come again with his angels. His coming will be loud and visible; it will not be a secret rapture. Nobody is going to wonder what happened to missing people. Everyone will hear the voice of the archangel and see the dazzling face of Jesus.

Dead believers will be resurrected. Living believers are going to be transformed. Together they will be caught up to meet Christ. In old times, when a king was coming back to his rightful throne in his own city, a delegation would go out to meet him and welcome him. The Bible says that when Christ comes in power and glory, while the nations are shaking, while his enemies are tottering and being crushed, his people will be rushing up to meet him and to welcome him in the clouds on his way to the earth.

As God's people receive glorified resurrection bodies, God's enemies will perish at Christ's appearing. All the unbelieving dead will then be resurrected, not to glory but to punishment. They will be judged according to God's books. God has books that record everything anyone has ever done. You do not want to be judged by the content of those books. If you are going to be judged on the basis of how good you have been and what you have accomplished and how worthwhile you are and how much you deserve heaven, you are doomed. There is no hope.

But there is another book, the Lamb's book of life. How does your name get in that book of life? God writes that name in the book of life. If your name is in that book of life, you are a person who has repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus, in his dying to pay the penalty for your sins and take the punishment for you, and in his resurrection to give you eternal life. He is the only one who qualifies anybody to be in that book of life. It is absolutely important that your name be found written in the book of life. We do not want to be judged according to God's books that simply record what we have done.

Satan and all of God's enemies will go to hell, the lake of fire, the place of all who are not in the book of life.

Finally, Christ will present his church to the Father. Heaven comes to earth, and believers reign.

This cluster of events is what the various visions of Revelation are picturing.

### **Heart response**

One difficulty with a message like this is brain strain. It may seem complicated. Your mind works hard, trying to sort out how to understand or critique what was just said and how those passages fit together. Your view of some part of the scenario might be slightly different from mine. As we reach the end of the message, let's put brain strain on hold and just take to heart the vision of Armageddon.

The enemies of God, added all together, massed under the supervision of Satan himself, with every last demon in the universe chiming in, and every wicked unrepentant person alive on earth, with all of the most powerful weapons of war they can bring together against God's people, will last a millisecond when the face of Christ appears. That is what we need to understand here. We need to understand how great God is.

One of the worst things that can happen to us in this world is that this little event or that petty person is seen by us as something overwhelming, or this hardship in our life, or that attack of the evil one. These things are not as big as they might seem. On that day, even we Christians are going to be embarrassed, I think, by how we thought certain things were big and powerful and overwhelming. On that day, we are going to say, even of Satan himself, "What was the big deal about him? That was sure easy. God did not have much trouble defeating him, did he?"

The only thing that enable Satan to be active or anybody else among the wicked to be alive is that God has a reason for letting them go on a little longer the way they do. When we see God, when we see Jesus in all his majesty, we are going to realize that all of the galaxies in the universe and all the knowledge of the universe are packed into this one person who shows up in all his glory.

The first time Jesus showed up, he was a baby in a manger, a carpenter, a guy down the street that didn't seem special, a convict hanging on a cross and getting buried in a borrowed grave. What is so great about him? But when Jesus comes again, the wicked will cry for the mountains to fall on them and the rocks and hills to cover them and hide them. Hide them from what? Hide

them from the face. Hide them from the voice. They cannot bear the face shining with infinite light. They cannot bear the voice that called the whole universe into existence and now says, "It is done. That old, fallen universe is done. I have a new heaven and a new earth. Those whose names are in my book of life are going to inhabit my renewed creation, and everybody else is going to get what they wanted. They are going to get to live forever without me."

You do not know what it is like to live without him, because every good thing in your life has come from him. You have no idea what it is like to live without God. The fiercest atheist in the world has zero notion of what it is to live without God, because you live in a beautiful universe. Despite all of its problems and weaknesses, Christ still upholds it. He still keeps so many good things. He still sends so many good gifts from heaven. The Bible says he does that so that we will reach out for him and find him, "for in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Without him, you have nothing and nowhere but a lake of fire.

There are only two kinds of people, those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, "Thy will be done." That is what happens in Armageddon. God says, "You wanted to oppose me. You wanted to have it out with me. You now have your wish. You wanted God as your enemy. You have him as your enemy forever. I am against you, O Gog." When those words come straight from God's mouth at the end, "I am against you," it is done.

Friends, if you are not right with God, this is going to be a reality. Get right with him before that day comes.

If you have been troubled by the enemies of God or by the troubles in your own life, realize there is only one person in the whole universe who is worth worrying about. As Jesus himself put it, do not worry about those who can destroy the body and cannot do anything after that. Worry about him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. If we worried about God, all of our other worries would seem as nothing. When you are right with God, you do not need to worry about God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. You do not have a brain until you know that there is only one person worth worrying about.

Once you gain true wisdom, the fullness of wisdom in our Lord Jesus Christ, then you know that you have been justified by faith. You have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. You pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Come again and bring that new heaven and that new earth where righteousness dwells, where the river of life flows, where the tree of life is sweet to the eating and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, where we walk streets of gold, where we dwell forever in joy." That is what God is preparing for those who love him. Our entire life is a path toward that. It is either the path to life or the path to damnation. Walk the path that leads to life.

## **Prayer**

Dear Lord, we pray that you will not only give us intellectual understanding of details in your Word and of various visions, but also a heart response to the greatness, the power, the majesty, the splendor of the Lord, and the squalor and weakness of the powers of evil. May we even now

see through the eyes of the prophet. May we even now see with the vision of your Word and stop worrying about evil and start trusting more and more in you.

Until that great day comes, Lord, may we be found faithful in our own generation, walking with you, spreading the good news, the news that changes many of your enemies into friends, so that they too can welcome the day of your appearing rather than trembling or fleeing from it. We pray, Lord, that many more people even in our world today will come to know you as the mighty God, the Creator, the Savior, the one who lives and reigns forever. We pray that we will be ambassadors for you wherever we go, that your love will be seen in us.

We know, Lord, that we battle not with the weapons of this world, not with guns and bullying and imprisonments and persecution of enemies. Those are not the weapons you want us to use. Help us to use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and on the left, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and to live holy and pure and loving and tender and compassionate lives, so that people around us may see your light and be drawn to you during this day of mercy. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **The Last Battle: Armageddon**

**By David Feddes**

### **Slide Contents**

#### **God against Gog**

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him <sup>3</sup> and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. <sup>4</sup> And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army... (Ezekiel 38:1-4)

#### **Gog's plot is in God's plan**

<sup>38:15</sup> You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. <sup>16</sup> You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

#### **Wrath and earthquake**

<sup>18</sup> But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger. <sup>19</sup> For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. <sup>20</sup> ... all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.

#### **Sword, hail, fire**

<sup>21</sup> I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. <sup>22</sup> With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. <sup>23</sup> So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

#### **God drives Gog into a trap**

<sup>1</sup>”“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog... <sup>2</sup> And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from

the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel...<sup>4</sup> You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. (39:1-4)

### **Gog's army is dead meat**

<sup>17</sup>“...Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, ‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood.’<sup>18</sup> You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth...<sup>20</sup> And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,’ declares the Lord God. (Ezekiel 39:17-20)

### **Forces of the future (Revelation 12-13)**

- Demonic power
- Oppressive government
- Deceptive religion
- Seductive culture

### **Armageddon: The Last Battle**

Harvest of the Earth (14:19) = Battle of Armageddon (16:14-21) = Rider defeats Beast (19:11-21) = Last Battle Against Satan (20:7-10)

### **Angels announce judgment**

“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come.” (14:7)

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.” (14:8)

“The smoke of their torment goes up forever ... these worshipers of the beast.” (14:11)

The angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. (14:19)

### **Seven angels with seven bowls containing seven plagues**

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished... one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (15:1,7)

Painful sores, seas become blood, rivers become blood, sun scorches, darkness, Euphrates River dried, earthquake and hail.

### **Evil forces gather for battle**

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. (16:12-14)

### **Assembled at Armageddon**

(“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” (16:15-17)

### **Devastating wrath**

And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people. (16:18-21)

### **Invitation for vultures**

I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. (19:17-19)

### **Utter defeat**

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were

slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (19:20-21)

### **Utter defeat**

<sup>20:7</sup> And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

*Echoes 16:14. Demonic spirits, performing signs ... go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.*

### **Devil's doom**

<sup>20:9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, <sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

### **The last battle**

- The Lord's overwhelming presence
- An earthquake like no other
- Hailstones and fire from heaven
- Bloody banquet for birds and beasts

In Ezekiel 38-39, these things happen to the evil armies of Magog and their leader, Gog.

In Revelation 14-19, these things happen to Babylon and its leader, the beast.

In Revelation 20, Satan gathers Gog and Magog for battle, but they end up in hell.

### **Armageddon = the last battle**

- The judgments in Ezekiel 38-39 are pictured in Revelation 14-19.
- Gog and Magog's defeat in Ezekiel 38-39 is pictured in Revelation 20.
- This means that the last battle of Revelation 20 (against Gog, Magog, and Satan) is the very same as the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16. These are not different events a thousand years apart.

### **Armageddon: The Last Battle**

Harvest of the Earth (14:19) = Battle of Armageddon (16:14-21) = Rider defeats Beast (19:11-21) = Last Battle Against Satan (20:7-10)

## **Forces of the future (Revelation 12-16)**

- Demonic power
- Oppressive government
- Deceptive religion
- Seductive culture

## **Judgment of Babylon (Revelation 17--18)**

Babylon = Rome = Magog = prostitute = final seductive culture

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! (18:1)

## **Judgment of Beast and False Prophet (Revelation 19:11--21)**

Beast = antichrist = Gog = man of lawlessness = final oppressive government

Second beast = false prophet = final deceptive religion

## **The lawless one**

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. (2 Thess 2:7-8)

1. Lawless power already at work
2. Lawless power on a leash till end is near
3. Lawless one unleashed and revealed
4. Wiped out by Jesus' appearing (Armageddon)

## **Devil's doom**

When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle... but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (20:7-10)

## **Armageddon: The Last Battle**

Beast = antichrist = Gog = man of lawlessness = final oppressive government

Second beast = false prophet = final deceptive religion

## The millennium is now

- We are living in the period when Satan is bound, cast down, and restrained.
- We are living in the period when Christ's reign is already underway.
- "The first resurrection" has already happened for millions of people.
- Millions have already refused the beast's mark, have come to life, and are now reigning with Christ on heavenly thrones.

## Binding Satan

"But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?" (Matt 12:28-29)

"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you." (Luke 10:18-19)

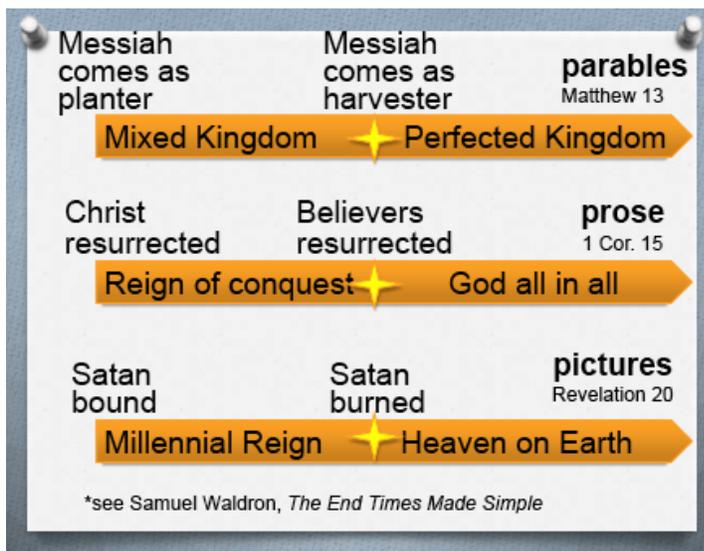
## Casting out Satan

"Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." (John 12:31-32)

- **cast out** is the same Greek root as "casting" Satan into the pit in Rev. 20:3

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

... that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2:14)



## **The Second Coming: Judgment Day**

- Near the close of the present millennium, Satan will be released and Antichrist unleashed.
- Loud, visible coming of Jesus with angels.
- Dead believers are resurrected, living believers transformed, and are caught up to meet Christ.
- God's enemies perish at Christ's appearing..
- All unbelieving dead are resurrected and judged according to God's books.
- Satan and all God's enemies go to hell.
- Christ presents his church to the Father, heaven comes to earth, and believers reign.