***God's Wrath upon the Maximum Level of Evil

RV192-01***

Please open your Bibles once more to Revelation 14:14-20. Our subject is "The Vision of Armageddon," and this is segment number three.

Once Satan had taken charge of planet earth from Adam, it was necessary for God to institute some safeguards to prevent the total destruction of mankind by Satan. So, God taught Adam the basis for personal salvation. He taught him the moral laws on which society must function, and He taught him the principles for building a civilization. Basic Bible doctrine principles were transmitted thereafter verbally from generation to generation, until they were formally preserved in the written Scriptures. Today, all human experience must be evaluated in the light of God's viewpoint in the Bible. To reject the Bible as the absolute Word of God, binding on everyone, is to degenerate to the human viewpoint and the destruction promoted by Satan.

**The Four Divine Institutions**

God also ordained, for the protection of the human race, four divine institutions. These are the govern mankind as a whole, and they apply to believers and unbelievers alike. We refer to them as the laws of the establishment, meaning the laws of government. They are the laws for the establishment of an orderly, governed society. Number one is the divine institution of volition – the freedom to choose, and to bear the consequences for good and evil for your choices. Divine institution number two is marriage – a man and a woman join together for life, under the leadership of the husband. Institution number three is the family – a father and mother rearing children into morally responsible adults. Divine institution number four is nationalism – mankind divided into national entities under civil government to maintain law and order in society.

Bible prophecy reveals to us that the world, at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, will be characterized by a rejection of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, and by wholesale violations of these four divine laws of establishment. The result will be that Satan will increasingly be able to move mankind to its self-destruction, and to a host of self-delusions. The Bible reveals that the climax of the kingdom of man will be the catastrophic holocaust at the end of the tribulation period. This end will be centered in the campaign of the battles of Armageddon, which are portrayed here in our text which is before us in Revelation 14:14-20.

So, I remind you again that we Christians now live in the final years of the dispensation of the church, immediately before the beginning of the seven-year tribulation period. This has not been true in the history of mankind before, but it is true for us. Believers today, therefore, are, in fact, spectators of the degeneration of nations of the world in preparation for the final judgment of God, terminating the tribulation period.

**Another Angel**

In Revelation 14:18, we have an angelic commission: "And another angel." This is another one of God's angels, like the previous ones in this chapter. This one has particular power over fire: "Came from the altar." As we pointed out in the previous session, John, in his vision, observes an angel of God who has authority over the fire from the altar. This fire represents in Scripture the judgment of God against evil. The fire here may be from the altar of sacrifice, which satisfies the justice of God in the temple ceremony; or, it may refer to fire from the altar of incense within the holy place, which represents the prayers of the saints, which God hears. Fire from the altar of sacrifice is what ignites the fire on the altar of incense, indicating that a believer's approach to God in prayer must be on the basis of having been justified by the sacrifice of Christ.

**Authority over Fire**

This angel, who has this authority over this fire of divine judgment, then calls out with a loud voice. Here the sixth angel now appears and directs a command to the fifth angel. The fifth angel appeared in verse 17. He has in his hand a sharp sickle. I remind you again, that verses 17-20 are a repeat of the same judgment that we read in verses 14-16. In verses 14-16, Jesus Christ has the sickle in His hand, and He does the reaping of mankind in judgment. Here the angel, an agent of Jesus Christ, has the sickle in his hand.

**The Sharp Sickle**

The sixth angel directs a command to the fifth angel to take his sharp sickle, and to put it into humanity: "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters." "Put in" means "to thrust." The Greek word is "pempo." "Pempo" is in the form of a command. This is a command that the angel is transmitting from God Himself. This is a command to the fifth angel via God's agent, the sixth angel. He is to now take his sickle, and to simply take its sharp edge, and sweep it over the field of Megiddo.

**Gather Clusters on the Vine**

He is to do this in order to gather something which is here. This is another word. The word "gather" is also imperative. It's a command. The fifth angel is to gather something, and that is "clusters (or bunches) on the vine." This is particularly identified as the vine of the earth: "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth." Unsaved tribulation humanity is pictured here on this battlefield as a vast vineyard which is to be picked. The angel here is to execute divine judgment, just as Jesus did in the image in verse 16. "The vine of the earth" is a term which refers to the followers of the antichrist. These followers of the antichrist have, by their deliberate choice, attached themselves to the antichrist instead of to the true vine, Jesus Christ, as he is described in John 15:1. Jesus says, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser."

So, here is a kind of a gross picture that the people of the tribulation would rather attach themselves to the antichrist as the false vine than to Jesus Christ as the true vine of God. The fruit of the believers on the vine Jesus Christ is good fruit, and it remains. John 15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit." It is a great honor to serve God. It is a great honor to have matured as a Christian to the point where you are spiritually discerning enough to be concerned about serving God: in all of the ways; with all of the gifts; and, with all of the abilities with which you can serve Him. That is in view of the fact that if you sit here tonight as a believer on your way to heaven, you don't have yourself to thank for that.

We learned recently that the Old Testament Scriptures, which are repeated by Paul in the book of Romans, pointed out to us that no one seeks God – not one. Furthermore, everyone deserts God and moves away from Him, with no exceptions. So, suddenly, Jesus makes it very clear: "Yes, you're in My family. Yes, you're going to be in heaven, but not because you chose Me, but because I chose you. Furthermore, I chose you for a specific reason – to appoint you to bear fruit (to bear divine good works), and that your fruit should remain, such that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you."

So, we are called as those who are the clusters on the true vine, Jesus Christ, as believers to produce divine good works. And when we do, they will remain. What the people who attach themselves to the antichrist will produce will be burned up; destroyed; and, gone forever.

Again, I want to remind us that God is a long-term planner. And in these very passages of Scripture that we are discussing here on the great battle of Armageddon, these passages were dealt with in the Old Testament for the people of God to prepare them for what was coming ahead in their own history. In Deuteronomy 32:31-35, we have Satan presented as the false vine, and his grapes as grapes of wrath which are to be crushed by God. Deuteronomy 32:31, speaking about the unbelievers: "Indeed, their rock is not like our rock." What the unsaved depend upon, in their great confidence: their intellectualism; their sophistication; their great compassion; and, their vision for humanity, based upon their human viewpoint rather than the Word of God – all that they build themselves upon is a puny pebble. It's not like our rock God.

"Even our enemies themselves judge this." Even the enemies of Israel realized that there was something about Israel's God that was infinitely superior to their gods: "For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah." Isn't that interesting, to observe here that God, in speaking about Satan as the false vine, associates him the great sin of homosexuality and lesbianism, which was the reason that God brought destruction upon Sodom and Gomorrah?

"Their grapes are grapes of poison. Their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the venom of serpents and the deadly poison of cobras. Is it not laid up in store for Me, sealed up in My treasures? Vengeance is Mine, and retribution. In due time, their foot will slip. For the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them."

If there's anything that this Scripture reminds us of, it is the fact that God judges. This is inevitable. It will come about. You and I look upon our society, and we look upon the movements within our society of the power structure, and we get blue. We get discouraged, and we get the feeling, indeed, like Elijah, with his facing the prophets of Baal, that we stand alone. But we don't stand alone. There are the powers of God, the people of God, which are moving to execute the plan of God. Certainly, we stand with our heavenly Father, who, a long time ago, has told us what's coming. And He has made it clear to us that He is going to carry through with judgment. It's very important that you remember that – that God, in His time, will judge. And that's what he said here in verse 35: "In due time, their foot is going to slip. Their day of calamity is near. It's as good as done. The things that are impending upon them are hastening down the road toward them.

Tribulation humanity and rebellion against Jesus Christ are thus destined to be cut down in death. That's going to be the end of the New Age network. All the world's unbelieving humanists, and all the world's liberals: the socialists; the sexual violators; and, the New Age human gods, are going to be plucked off the vine of the antichrist, because that's what they have attached themselves to. That's where their philosophies find nourishment. They don't find nourishment for those things in Jesus Christ. So, the vine of the earth is a codename for the final form of the cosmic rebellion against the Creator:

**The Grapes are Ripe**

The angel is told: "Put in your sharp cycle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth." Why? Because "Her grapes (the product of the vine of the earth – the tribulation unbelievers) are ripe." The verb "are ripe" is the Greek word "akmazo." The word "akmazo" means "fully developed." It comes from, and is associated with, the Greek noun form, which is "akme." And from this, we get the English word "acme," which means "the epitome." The word "akme" means "the prime point," and the word "acme" in English means "the highest point." So, what this word is telling us (that these grapes are "akmazo") is that they have reached their optimum, maturity. They are fat with juice.

**The Maximum Level of Evil**

The clusters of grapes on the vine of the earth are saturated with the juice of evil and moral guilt. Tribulation humanity is fully ripe for God's judgment. And evil will have reached its maximum level. It will have an enormous incentive to do this, of course, during the tribulation in the antichrist's world. And now God orders this vineyard cut down. Has it reached that maximum level now? No, as bad as things are, and as horrendous as things are in American society, and as disoriented as we are, it hasn't reached its maximum point of evil.

The Bible tells us that the reason for this is that God the Holy Spirit is here, indwelling Christians. And while the Christians are here, God the Holy Spirit, through those believers, puts a dampening effect upon the evil that could be experienced in our society. That's why you get it in the neck. That's why you're being cut down. That's why you're getting verbally abused. That's why you're getting snide remarks when you make a statement relative to something that is being done today in our society, on whatever level, that is incompatible with the Scriptures and with the Word of God. People bristle at that. They recoil, because they see you as a hindrance. They see you as someone who is trying to depress their vision that they have created for themselves.

Evil has not reached its "acme" position. There is a principle with God that, until evil has reached its fully right form, He does not bring judgment. Tribulation humanity will finally have reached that level. And it will have come to maximum maturity, and then God orders this vineyard cut down. So, that's what this angel is being told here, because they've gone as far as they can go.

One thing to observe, that I'd like you to notice, is that, here in verse 15, we read about the word ripe. Jesus Christ there is told to put in His sickle, because the harvest of the earth is ripe. That word "ripe" was "xeraino." That means, indeed, ripe, as being overripe – having gone to the point of decay, and actually drying up. This is the result of evil having run its course. But in verse 18, we again have the word "ripe," but in the Greek Bible, we see that it's a different word. It's the word "akmazo." This word means, as we've indicated, "to the point of maximum maturity," filled with juice, which means saturated with evil.

So, there are two reasons why God destroys mankind in the tribulation. Jesus Christ puts in His cycle and cuts them down because they're so ripe; dried up; with no life; and, completely useless. They are taken out and burned out like rubbish and trash and dead brush. In verse 18, the picture is of a vineyard, and the grapes are so full of the juice of evil that they're cut down because they've now reached their maximum maturity in that respect. What God does is give time for evil to reach its maximum divine level.

**The Amorites**

One of the places that we have that illustrated is in Genesis 15:16, where God is speaking to Abraham, a man that is very dear to God. The people of Israel are going to have some terrible times (the posterity of Abraham). And one of the nations that's going to give them a terrible time is a very loathsome group called the Amorites. And God tells Abraham that the Amorites deserve to be destroyed. But He says, "I'm not going to do it. As a matter of fact, He didn't do it for four centuries. Instead, he said in verse 16: "Then, in the fourth generation, after 400 years in captivity in Egypt, your descendants are going to return here to this Promised Land, in which you now reside. In the fourth generation, they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." He said, "I'm not going to do anything to the Amorites, but when they return, 400 years hence, I will deal with the Amorites, because then they'll be ripe for destruction."

Indeed, under Joshua, the Word of God tells us that when they came back from their captivity, and they came to the Promised Land, and proceeded to conquered the land once more from the pagans who were in it, one of the nations that was brought down and totally destroyed were the Amorites, because by then, their evil had reached a maximum level.

This is a very important doctrinal principle. Every so often, when a Christian gets into some evil practice; some evil attitude; some bitterness; some pride; some arrogance; some nose-out-of-joint situation, and nothing happens. You carry on, and things roll along. The checks keep coming in, and everything is very happy, and you think that you have no problem. You know the Word of God, and you know the principles of truth, but you act contrary to them. You may even speak against them. You resist them, and nothing happens. I'm here to tell you that the time comes when God's grace will be terminated toward you. He is very patient. He gives you a certain level to which you must rise in your rebelliousness, and then He cuts you down.

No greater example of this could be found than in a day of Noah. For 120 years, God said, I'm going to give these people a chance to change their mind. Noah, you keep preaching, and you keep getting batted down. I'll give you 120 years, and they are to make their decision." Well, at the end of 120 years, nobody changed his mind. Everyone was as opposed to the message of Noah as they were the first day he started laying the keel of that ark.

So, the principle here, that is being reiterated to this angel, is that their grapes are satiated with evil. The time has come now to cut them down. And the angel, as we shall see in the verses which follow, proceeds indeed to do this. And at that time, one of the greatest scenes of carnage ever seen on the face of this earth will take place. One reads that, and rereads it, and you have to remind yourself that you're reading the Word of God, because it seems that these things could not happen.

When this sickle cuts through, and cuts these armies at Armageddon down, what's going to be squeezed out of them, literally, is their blood, as the juice is squeezed out of a grape. I remind you again that this is a long-range plan. God is not some stumblebum who's trying to keep things straight, and who is making plans as He goes along, and who is working things out, and readjusting things, to be able to keep up with what man is doing. This is all laid out. This is all carefully predicted.

Turn to Joel 3:3. This is a fascinating preview by this prophet, centuries and centuries before the field of Armageddon is met in mortal combat. It is Joel 3:9 that is the background of what we are reading in the book of the Revelation. The prophet says, "Proclaim this among the nations (among the gentiles). Prepare a war, rouse the mighty men, let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up." Some unidentified messenger is speaking for God. He calls the gentile nations of the tribulation to prepare for war. Military forces are mobilized for the campaign of Armageddon.

This is not the end of war in our society. What is taking place in disarmament is only a temporary lull. There is going to be a monstrous nuclear holocaust in the future. And here, Joel, centuries before, because he speaks for God, and has received this information from God, is told at a certain point: "Proclaim to the gentile nations: mobilize for battle."

**Beat your Farm Implements into Weapons of War**

Verse 10: "Beat you plowshares into swords; and, your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, 'I am a mighty man.'" The antichrist and his gentiles are here told to arm themselves for battle. They are to take their farm implements, and turn them into weapons of war. Isn't this interesting? When Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace reigns on this earth, it will be just the opposite. The instruments of warfare then will be turned into tools for agriculture.

Isaiah 2:4 tells us that very thing: "And he will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many people. And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Somewhere on the United Nations buildings, they quote this phrase from the Bible: "Hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." They got the wrong verse. What they should have there is Joel 3:10: "Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears." That's where the United Nations is going to take the nations of the world – not to peace.

This is also reiterated in Micah 4:3: "And He will judge between many peoples, and render decisions for mighty distant nations (gentiles). And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war." When in the history of the world has that prophecy been fulfilled? Never. And it never will be until the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, is here to make it happen. And if mankind could learn this, they would know how to relate themselves to each other a lot better. They all still think that they can bring about peace by themselves.

Here in Joel, they're told to get their tools of war together, and the soldiers are told to psyche themselves (to view themselves) as being invincible – battle morale.

Joel 3:11: "Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations. Gather yourselves there (in the field of Megiddo), and bring down, O Lord, Your mighty ones." Here in verse 11, the antichrist is urged to gather his gentile nations on the field of Megiddo for battle with Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ is directed to bring His heavenly hosts to defend Jerusalem. So, the armies are gathered together on that field. They are placed in battle position, and they wait for the time to jump off.

Zechariah 12:9 refers to the same event when the prophet says, "And it will come about that in that day, I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." Zechariah is talking about this gathering of the gentiles under the antichrist.

Then in the next two verses, Joel 3:12-13, he says, "Let the nations be aroused, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat. For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations." The gentile nations are directed by Jesus Christ now to mass their forces in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is just east of the city of Jerusalem. There Jesus Christ promises to meet His enemies, and judge all these rebellious nations.

In verse 13, we come to the background for our Revelation passage: "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for the wickedness is great." In verse 13, the conquest of Jesus Christ is again compared to a farmer harvesting his crops which are rotting, and harvesting the grapes which are filled with evil. The destruction is compared to putting the grapes into the winepress, and there are trying maturity – maximum evil in the gentile world. And Jesus Himself begins treading upon them. What flows out of these soldiers, as Christ treads upon them, as if they were grapes in a winepress, is literally their blood.

So, we have that sobering picture in Isaiah 63:1-6 of Jesus Christ, after He gets through doing this: "Who is this who comes from Edom (southern Jordan) with garments of glowing colors from Bosra (coming probably from the south). This one, who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength. It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (This is the Lord Jesus speaking.) Why is your apparel red, and your garments like the one who treads in a winepress?" People who tread grapes with their feet in a winepress get it splattered up on their garments. Christ says, "I've trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath, and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment."

Here you have the Prince of Peace who has now become the Prince of Judgment. And you have this vivid picture of the lifeblood being squished out of these bodies, and splattering on the garments of Christ: "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come. And I looked, and there was no one to help. And I was astonished, and there was no one to uphold. So, My own arm brought salvation to Me, and My wrath upheld Me. And I trod down the peoples in My anger, and made them drink of My wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

As we shall see in the next two verses of Revelation 14, that life blood will be poured out in a degree and in a volume that is hard to imagine.

There have been battles on the face of the earth. One was in Italy, along one of the rivers, and that battle was so ferocious and so violent, and the death was so great that the river ran red with the blood of the soldiers who had fallen nearby, as it was draining off into the river. And it just continued to run red, and continue to run red. That was nothing like what is being described here in Joel, and explained in greater detail in the book of the Revelation.

The basic reason for the final tribulation destruction of the gentile powers is, of course, the enormity of their evil that are guilty of – great wickedness by God's law and by God's moral code. This is what is true of the United States today. These two agricultural images portray divine warfare against the enemies of Israel at the Armageddon campaign. It is like cutting down rotten, dried grain, and like cutting grapes and putting them into a winepress. Today, it is true, basically, that mankind as a whole does reject the Bible as being the voice of God, and they do take issue with the four divine institutions. So, they are at war with Almighty God.

These people deceive themselves by claiming that they're not irreligious, and so they're not in conflict with God. Well, of course, they're religious. The worst people in the world are those who are religious. But that doesn't mean that they are biblical. They comfort themselves by claiming that no one can know for sure what the Bible says. So, human reason must guide their conduct. So, when you point to something in the Bible, it doesn't affect them, because their human reason understands that it's superior. I'll tell you something else that will give you a clue. That is that when you refer to something in Scripture to a resister, he will respond in saying, "Well, there are plenty of other theologians and preachers who don't agree, and who have a different viewpoint."

Isn't that evidence? Nothing crushes me so much as to discover theologians and preachers who don't believe what I believe. That's not the issue. The issue is: What does the Bible say? And the Bible is not a book that is not understandable. It is an intelligible book. It's written in a language that we can grasp.

These people take courage in their evil ways from the fact that many today join them in their wicked ways, so they must be right. I can't believe how many people fall for that – that there are so many people who agree with them that they must be right.

So, we are, today, in a very wicked generation, but we are also in a period of God's grace. He is delaying His judgment so that sinners may turn to Christ and be saved from doom. Peter understood that people were going to mistake the patience and the grace of God in dealing with evil, and that they were not going to understand the doctrinal principle of letting evil go to its maximum mature point before God cuts a person down. In 2 Peter 3:8-10, Peter cautions us about that. Peter says, "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved: that with the Lord, one day is as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years as one day." Long periods of time are not long periods of time with God: "The Lord is not slow about His promises, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord (which includes the tribulation period) will come like a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and all its works will be burned up."

This is what is ahead for mankind. God is patient. Why? Because He doesn't want people to go to the lake of fire. Once the year of grace ends, however, I guarantee you that He's going to exact his just vengeance on the Christ rejecters; on the divine institution violators; and, on the Bible-haters. When God finally comes down in judgment at Armageddon, the Jews prayer in Psalm 83 will be answered resoundingly. Psalm 83 is a very sad prayer, as the Jews plead for God for His mercy and care. Finally, God will take issue on their enemies.

In Joel 3:14, we read, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near the valley of decision." There is that technical term, "the day of the Lord." It includes a period of judgment, the seven-year tribulation period; and, a period of blessing, the 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom. That is the day of the Lord. And the antichrist, and his gentile nations, are going to form a great multitude in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Please remember that the gentiles have come together to do battle because they decided to rebel at the end of the tribulation against the authority of the antichrist. So, the nations start moving toward him, who has set himself up in Jerusalem as God, in the temple there, and has made Jerusalem now his headquarters. So, the nations of the world are streaming in and moving in, and they're finally moved toward the field of Megiddo. And that is the picture that becomes one phase of the battle of Armageddon – this valley of Jehoshaphat battle. You have a multitude of human beings gather there.

Of course, when suddenly, Christ returns at His Second Coming, and they look up and they see Him, then the antichrist says, "We have to make an alliance. And they join forces with one another, and stop fighting each other, in order to fight Christ and the heavenly host of angels and church-age believers who are coming down upon them. So, the antichrist and his people have gathered here in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and it will become for them the place of God's decision.

**The Valley of Decision**

To me, that's a chilling phrase: "the valley of decision." Many times when I watch what happens to some believers, I know that God has made a decision. I know they are now bearing the consequences of the path that they have chosen to follow, and God in heaven makes a decision. When I become impressed that God has made a decision, that's it. There's no return. There's nothing more to say. There's no more effort to be put out. The plan is going to run its course.

Here God has made His decision on the agents of the antichrist and his army, and they're now going to have that decision executed upon them. It will be to be destroyed by those who came to fight the Son of God. The judgment portion of the day of the Lord is going to be brought now to its climax of the tribulation period.

**The Sun and the Moon Grow Dark**

In verse 15, we have ominous signs of impending judgment on the armies of Armageddon from the heavenly bodies. The sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness. That's going to be unnerving. The sun is supposed to be shining, or the moon is supposed to be glowing, things are getting dark, and the stars begin to flicker out one-by-one. That is going to be ominous. And it is going to be a sign, as it always is in the Bible, of impending divine judgment.

Verse 13: "The Lord roars from Zion." What a picture!

When I was in the Marine Corps, in training, every now and then, they would have you practice charges. It's kind of dumb, but they did it. And you would have some Marines who were part of the training program, in certain defensive positions, and then we were to come charging against them with our rifles, with the bayonets fixed. And we were to scream, and yell, and make all the noise we could. That was called a charge. It was a thunderous thing to demoralize the enemy that was there defending a position. And you were to come down upon him screaming and yelling. They did a lot of that during the Civil War, and particularly the South. They had the rebel yell, and it was very unnerving. It was a piercing fear in the union forces when they heard the rebel yell, and the soldiers coming in that charge, as they used to do so often in those days.

Well, here you have that very picture in verse 16. Jesus Christ is coming thundering out of the city of Jerusalem with a battle cry on His lips: "And He utters His voice from Jerusalem." And the earth and the heavens are caused to tremble by this battle cry of Jesus Christ. And you know what? In that moment, the forces of the antichrist are going to discover that the Bible is true, and that no one gets away with violating the four divine institutions.

The Jews who have survived the tribulation to the end here, we're told in verse 16, are going to find the Lord a refuge and a stronghold to the sons of Israel. They will find that God is their true refuge and strength, after all the centuries of suffering, because they have rejected their Messiah Christ. Satan, who, for centuries, has tried to destroy every Jew, will instead go down himself in the flames of defeat.

**Jesus Christ is the True Jewish Messiah**

Finally, Joel 3:17: "Then you will know that I am the LORD your God." The Jews are going to finally learn their lesson the hard way that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Messiah Savior that they have been looking for. They will know that He is their LORD. You notice how it is spelled with all capital letters in your Bible. That is, "He is Yahweh," the most sacred name of God: "He is Yahweh, their Elohim." He is their God – the God whose name, "Yahweh," is the special sacred name associated with the Jewish people. This is what God calls Himself when He deals with the Jews. And here they're going to find that "Yahweh" their God was Jesus Christ: "Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain." Once more, God will be present among the Jews in His Shekinah glory presence in Jerusalem, in the temple: "So, Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more." The Jews will never again be defiled by foreign invaders. The times of the gentiles will finally come to an end.

Is God a God of grace? Yes. Is He a God of patience? Yes – infinite patience. Is He a God of wrath who must be true to His own character, and execute justice? Yes, He is all of those things. Above all, He is a God of love. But He must be true to Himself. As the people in the tribulation will find out, the antichrist and his hosts, as predicted centuries before in the book of Joel, and then, on the images of Joel, reiterated in Revelation 13, they will discover what it is when a God of grace becomes a God of judgment. His wrath is going to be poured out, and the pictures will not be pleasant.

You can see how ignorant most of the people are that you and I know we talk about God. I guarantee you that those people would read this passage and say, "I can't believe that God is ever going to do that. I can't believe that God is going to cut people down like a farmer cuts his grain down in the field. I can't believe that God Himself is going to step on these human bodies, and squirt the blood out of them as a vineyard farmer would stomp on his grapes. And blood does flow from the human body.

I forget how much there is, but I have stood by the side of accident patients of our members. I remember one time, as a man lay, while the doctors were feverishly working over on him, and they moved something in an arm, and a squirt of blood just went scooting toward the ceiling, and just sprang over everything, and the doctor said, "Whoops," and he went right forward to seal that thing off under that terrific pressure to stop the blood from flowing.

There isn't going to be anybody on the field of Armageddon to stop this fountain display of blood flowing. And as they look upon themselves, they're going to realize what fools they were, because the day of grace will have passed. They will have upon them the mark of the antichrist, and there'll be no turning back.

Yes, God has chosen us, not because we chose Him. And this terrible future awaits the gentile world. Yes, it awaits the people you work with; the people you associate with; the people in the circle of your acquaintance; the people in your neighborhood; and, the people that your schools. These are the people who are going to be in this. We're close. We're at the end. These are the people all around us who are going to go into the tribulation. These are the people who are going to make their own decision. They will go along with the antichrist, the false vine; and, they will turn against Jesus Christ, the true vine. Thank God that, by His grace and His choice, you have been attached to the true vine.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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