***The Sixth Bowl: The Euphrates Dries up

RV205-01***

Our subject is "The Seven Bowls." This is segment number 12 in Revelation 16:1-21.

We have seen that the fifth bowl judgment covers the capital of the antichrist which is located at the rebuilt city of Babylon, and the whole world over which he reigns, with total impenetrable darkness. The God of heaven is blasphemed by tribulation humanity because of their sufferings from the bowl plagues. We pointed out that they are a classic example of what happens when a person is wrong spiritually, and he determines that he's not going to yield when it is called to his attention. An act of sin, if not repented of, and confessed to God, will escalate into greater evils, and ultimately divine judgments. These tribulation unbelievers, obviously, will reject the truth of God's word, the Bible, and so they will escalate in their sinning against God.

The other side of the picture is that not only does sin that starts in a small way snowball until it totally engulfs you, but as a result of that, God finally moves away. He quits pressing you to believe the truth, and He allows you to believe a lie. You will receive judgment then for having chosen the lie. These people in the tribulation are not being treated unfairly. They began in a small way their resistance to the Word of God. Perhaps before the tribulation began, they were part of a large denomination that had a lot of sophistication, and a lot of fame and fortune, but which was antagonistic to the inerrancy of Scripture, and to the Word of God. Instead of correcting their action, and removing themselves from that kind of a spiritual situation, they went along with it. The correct course for being wrong is to have the courage to believe and act upon the truth when it is called to your attention. This is not a small thing. It seems a self-evident fact, but it's not so easy to do for a lot of Christians once they're in a position of error. The correct course for dealing with those in error, of course, is to hand them over to the vengeance of God, for God to deal with them. You never want to make yourself the judge to exercise the discipline.

**The Christian Right**

Unbelievers today have a great arrogance, and so they speak contemptuously of what is called "the Christian right" You're hearing that term a lot. And you're going to hear a lot in the media: "the Christian right." That's almost as contemptuous a term now as "fundamentalists." What do they mean by the Christian right? The Christian right are biblical believers – people who know doctrine, and who know what they're talking about, who can quote God with some authority. This is not popular. The Christian right is seen to be a great irritant in our society. But I do want to remind you that the Lord Jesus Christ in His day was part of the Christian right. He was not part of the Pharisaical wrongs. He was part of the Christian right. The political and religious authorities came down hard upon Him.

I had a call from the other end of the country today from a young lady who said, "I need some orientation. This thing that took place in Waco really scares me. How much was the government in fault? How much was this pressure against an irritant group who, though crazy, was minding its own business, and so on? And where are we Christians going to end up? What can we expect?" And I could sympathize with her concern because, from the highest echelons of the American government, the Christian right is a thorn in their flesh. They don't like us, and they are eager to cut us down.

Therefore, we who are right must sound forth the Word of God, and we must refuse to be intimidated and silenced. This is in the highest tradition of the New Testament church. It wasn't very long before the New Testament church found itself under the kind of persecution that may well come to us in this day. The day of Pentecost had hardly passed before the believers were hit with a persecution. There was a little lull, and then came persecution number three against the apostles (the leaders), and it was a lot more intense, and it hurt a lot more.

Please turn with me for a moment to Acts 5:17. The second persecution hits believers by the religious and the political authorities. What these forerunners (these forefathers) of ours in the Christian faith did is something we can take a lesson from: "But the high priest rose up among all his associates; that is, the sect of the Sadducees." The Sadducees were a group of religious leaders who did not believe in the resurrection. In contrast to the Pharisees (who did believe in the resurrection), the Sadducees believed that you were a dog who died, and that was it, and there was no future. Well, the Sadducees were particularly irritated because they were filled with jealousy over the fact that these simple, stupid, backward, uneducated, non-university-graduate fishermen were preaching the Word of God with such authority that people were giving them a hearing, and taking them seriously. They were saying, "How dare you nonentities act like you know something." Have your relatives every treated you like that? It's very hard to tell parents the truth about the Word of God if they don't know it. Have you found that out? Your parents look upon you and wonder who you are to think that you've got some knowledge to give them – the members of your family. As the Word of God says, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country," and in his own family.

So, here, these Sadducees (their own followers) we're listening to these simple fisherman: "Who were they? What could they know?" So, what did they do? They laid hands on the apostles, and they put them in a public jail. The apostles were preaching the Word of Life while the authorities were preaching the word of death.

That's what's happening in Washington today. The Christian right is preaching the Word of Life, and the authorities of government are preaching the words of death. They're not going to take it kindly that we are sounding forth.

In verse 19, the apostles are in jail, but an angel of the Lord during the night opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out, he said, "Go your way. Stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this life." That's an interesting phrase. What they were preaching was the gospel of grace through trust in Christ, whom their leaders had murdered. The message is the message of life, in contrast to the message of death which their leaders were giving them through the ceremonial rituals and through the laws of the Mosaic system.

So, the angel comes and opens the gate, and they didn't get much sleep. But he said, "There's an all-night McDonald's down the street where you can get something to eat. When dawn comes, be in the temple, and start speaking."

Verse 21: "And upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priests and associates had come, they called the council together, even all the senate of the sons of Israel, and sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought forth." Now this is going to become humiliating. They bring all the authorities together, the highest council. They're going to judge these men because of their speaking in the name of Jesus, and telling the people, "Our leaders murdered our Messiah. What we've been waiting for all these centuries, He arrived, and they killed Him.

So, they come into the meeting room, and all the important people are there. Then the leader of the Sanhedrin turns to the one who ushers people in, and he tells them, "Bring in the prisoners." So, the officers go to the prison. The prison is locked tight. They open the prison doors, and they report back to the Sanhedrin sitting there waiting for the prisoners to arrive. They say, "We found the prison house locked quite securely, and the guards standing at the door, but when we had opened up, we found no one inside. The prisoners were gone."

What a terrible condition! They had a judgment hall gathered to judge prisoners, and there were no prisoners in the prison: "When the captain of the temple guard and the priest heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this. But someone came and reported to them, 'Behold, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.' Then the captain went along with the officers, and proceeded to bring them back without violence, for they were afraid of the people, lest they should be stoned." They went up to the apostles, and they took them in custody: no choke holds; no beating around; no billy clubs; and, no nightsticks. They were afraid of the people. They said, "Handle these guys gently, but let's get them back into the into the judgment hall." The apostles themselves went along with it peaceably.

It is God who must ultimately protect us from Satan. His agents are everywhere. Here you had locked doors which could not keep the ministers of God (the witnesses of God) from being able to deliver their message. God opens doors. And our job is to have the courage to walk through those doors, and sound the message in spite of anything.

The contempt for Jesus Christ is livid here in verse 27: "And when they had brought them (the apostles), they stood before the council, and the high priest questioned them." Notice verse 28: "Saying, 'We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name.'" So, hated was Jesus Christ that they wouldn't even say His name: "To teach in this name. And behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Isn't that an interesting remark?

Pilate had said, "This man is innocent, and if I deliver Him over to you, and give you authorization to execute Him, you are executing an innocent man. Therefore, His blood is going to be on somebody. Whose blood is it going to be upon?" And they said, "His blood be upon us and our children." Pilate washed his hands of the matter here.

Here they say, "You're intending to bring this man's blood upon us." Have you ever had the experience where somebody else was guilty, and they're trying to lay it on you? They are the ones who are in the wrong, and they're laying it on you? Now how should you act? That takes an enormous amount of grace. It takes an enormous amount of stability to take the flak, and to just go on, and leave that individual with God: "You're bringing this man's blood upon us." And they were as guilty as they could be on that very thing" This name. This man."

Now in verse 29, Peter has to deal with a doctrinal principle. The Word of God says, "You obey your government unless to obey it would be an act of sin:" "But Peter and the apostles answered the indictment: 'We told you not to preach about Jesus. We told you not to be telling people that your authorities (the religious leaders and the Roman government) murdered our Messiah,' and Peter and the apostles answered and said, 'We must obey God rather than man.'" That's the issue. When the pressure is put upon you, you and I have to obey God rather than man. That pressure can come from the world system, but most of the time it comes from other Christians. Most of the time it comes from the religious community.

Confronted with the religious authorities, and with their crime of the murder of Jesus Christ, whom God had raised from the dead, as a testimony against them, the apostles told them the truth. Verse 30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you had put to death by hanging on the cross." That's very clear: "I'll tell you who is in error here. I'll tell you who is against God, and who is in the will of God."

Verse 31: "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." You couldn't have turned the knife any harder in the religious leaders than they did when they said that. They accused them (and rightly) that they put to death Jesus the Messiah by hanging Him on the cross. He thus became the Lamb of God that paid for the sins of the world. He is the one who was raised from the dead, who has gone as the God-man to sit at the right hand of God in heaven. That was to them blasphemy. He is Prince and Savior. He will grant repentance to those who are willing to believe, and to have forgiveness of sins.

Verse 32: "And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit of God has given to those who obey Him." What were the apostles saying? The apostles were saying, "We know what we're talking about," because the apostles knew their doctrine, and the Holy Spirit gave them courage to speak forth the truth.

**Gamaliel**

The rulers came up with a very simple solution for all this. These people are really amazing. Verse 33: "But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they were intending to slay them." Immediately, they said, "We'll fix this by killing these apostles. We'll do the same thing to them that we did to Jesus," and thinking thereby that they would silence the truth that they didn't like. But there was one old man who had greater wisdom than this. His name was Gamaliel. Rabbi Gamaliel said, "Just a minute, boys. You're playing a dangerous game. Have you thought through the logic of what you're planning to do?"

Verse 34: "But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time." He didn't want the apostles to hear what he was going to say: "And he said to the leadership of the Sanhedrin, 'Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men. For some time, Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about 400 men joined up with him. And he was slain, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away some people after him. He too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered. These were rebels, spiritual and political, who had risen. And Gamaliel's point was that when these people stand up and say, "I speak for God," and they really do not speak for God, God is going to cut them down. God's going to put them to death Himself. The point was: "Are you sure that you want to pass judgment on these men?"

I suppose that Gamaliel was thinking to himself, "We've seen an awful lot of miracles, not the least of which was how in the world did all these Houdinis get out of a locked jail cell all together, and never touched the lock. The guards were standing at the door all night. They didn't see anybody go in and out. How in the world did they manage this?" Gamaliel suspects that maybe there was a divine intervention.

Verse 38: "And so in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men, and let them alone for you. For if this plan of action should be of men, it will be overthrown. But if it is of God, you'll not be able to overthrow them, or else you may even be found fighting against God." So, the next time you are inclined to strike at truth, and at a communicator of truth, this is good advice. Just hand the person into the hands of God for judgment and vengeance in dealing, and if that individual is wrong, God will take care of it. But don't you try to exercise a vengeance by some pressure system of your own that you put on that individual, because if you are fighting against God, boy, are you in for it? You're in for it here, and there's going to be an enormous, uncontrolled sobbing at the Judgment Seat of Christ, as Christians realize the price they have paid for their stubbornness in not listening to the truth, and for their persistence in letting themselves be snowballed into sin. And Christ is going to come over and wipe away those tears and say, "Let's go on. We've got a whole eternity. What might have been will never be, but you're here."

Well, they didn't want to let the disciples go just like that. So, since they couldn't kill them, they decided to beat up on them. Verse 40 says, "And they took his advice. And after calling the apostles back into the room, they flogged them, and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then release them."

Now it's becoming very painful to be a spokesman for the living God. Now it's beginning to bring some blood, and some cost, and some physical wounding: "So, the apostles went on their way from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name." They said, "Isn't this great? Because of our stand for the Lord Jesus Christ, our religious leaders have beaten us up:" "And every day in the temple, and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching, Jesus as the Christ." Their job was to tell the truth, and they preached the Word of God.

So, in the face of opposition that is powerful and strong, we Christians may need to take a lesson from the early believers and the apostles who knew how to resist evil in their society, and who knew how to resist those who were trying to silence them. But don't do that unless you're willing to pay the price. The price can be very painful. The price can be very costly. Don't do that unless you are really willing to stand forth and take everything that comes out of a society that hates your Christ. They cannot get at Him, but they can get it.

**The Sixth Bowl**

Revelation 16:12 brings us to the sixth bowl judgment. The people of the fifth bowl, suffering the darkness that has been poured upon them, and all the pain, simply responded by cursing God – blaspheming the God of heaven. They did not repent of their deeds. They did not change their minds. So, God directs the sixth angel to walk out with his bowl, and to proceed to pour it out as the sixth judgment. Verse 12 says, "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl from the great river, the Euphrates, and its water was dried up that the way might be prepared for the kings from the East."

**The Euphrates River**

The bowl was poured out, and it was poured out upon what is called the great River Euphrates. This, of course, refers indeed to the literal River Euphrates. The Euphrates River and the Tigris River come together at the confluence below the city of Babylon about 50 to 100 miles above the Persian Gulf into which it empties. They begin up in the highlands of northeastern Turkey, where the rivers actually begin to mount.

**Babylon**

Babylon is the critical city that is so important in all of this. This is the ancient city of the Euphrates, and this river now runs through the territory of Iraq. The Euphrates River begins in the Ararat mountain range. Mount Ararat is among the mountain whose icecap and snow provide the water for the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers. Someplace through here is where the Garden of Eden was found, because the Euphrates is one of the four rivers that ran through the Garden of Eden. So, this is the cradle of humanity of mankind.

**Noah's Ark**

Mount Ararat, at 17,000-foot elevation, has a perennial ice cap on it. In the spring, the waters begin to melt, and they run down and provide an enormous amount of water that fills these two rivers. The melting snows of Ararat are the key to all of this. As you know, Mount Ararat is where Noah's Ark landed, and there is strong evidence that the ark does really exist. We had at the turn of the 20th century, firsthand eyewitness testimony of people who found the ark in a period of time when the weather was extremely warm, so that an enormous amount of ice and snow melted on Ararat. Usually that much snow does not melt, so the ark generally is not exposed. They have reason to believe that eventually it broke in two, and while one part is up at the 17,000-foot level, another part is down at about the 15,000-foot level. But we have had eyewitness accounts of people who actually walked on the ark before it broke up. They were able to go into it at the beginning of the 20th century.

When the czar was still in charge of Russia, the report was made that the ark had been found that summer. He sent an expedition, and sure enough, they found it. They climbed board. They took pictures of it. They collected an enormous amount of data and took it back to Russia, and the communists took over. We have never seen that information since. Because of communism's atheism, it was probably destroyed. But in any case, there is evidence that the ark is still up there, and it has protruded on occasion through the ice and the snow when there was sufficient melt-off to see it.

The Euphrates River itself is 1,800 miles long. This is quite a long river. It is from three to 1,200 yards wide. It has a depth that ranges from 10 to 30 feet. Half the length of the Euphrates is navigable. It flows in a southeasterly direction, and it joins the Tigris at the confluence of the two, where it becomes a much larger river, and empties into the Persian Gulf. In the spring, the Euphrates is at its maximum level due to all the melting snows to the north, and therefore it does form a natural geographic barrier to any troop movements. We're interested in this river at the moment because of the troop movements that are going to be involved here. The Euphrates, as I indicated, in Genesis 2:14, is identified as one of the four rivers in the Garden of Eden.

The Euphrates itself formed the eastern boundary of the Promised Land. In Genesis 15:18, Abraham was told that this land that God was going to give to him, which is now just a small stretch that they have today on the Mediterranean, will extend all the way up to the Euphrates River. That was to be the eastern boundary of the Promised Land, all the way to the Mediterranean Sea, down to the great Nile River of Egypt, and up here to the Arabian Desert. This is an enormous area of land, and the Jews have never possessed it all. They never had physical occupational possession of this Promised Land. God said, "You're going to be in it, and you're going to enjoy it." This is one of the reasons we know that they will yet possess the Promised Land again in its entirety.

The Euphrates River was also the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire, and it was considered the division between the East and the West. So, the Euphrates has had a lot of significance historically. And it does form, at its maximum flood stage, a very substantial barrier between East and West.

On this river was built the first human city after the Noahic flood, Babel, which later became Babylon. The Euphrates was the site of Nebuchadnezzar's magnificent capital city, Babylon, with its hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. This is the city in which Daniel lived at the time. The Euphrates here in our text is called "the Great River," because in ancient times, it was only rivaled as a river by the Nile in Egypt. Today, on the shores of the Euphrates River is being rebuilt the city of Babylon. It is being rebuilt by Saddam Hussein. A great deal of national treasure is being poured into it, and it is being built as sort of a Las Colinas, to become a commercial center. Indeed, the Bible indicates to us that this is the place that the antichrist will have his capital. It will be in Babylon, while his religious capital is back in the land of Palestine and Jerusalem.

The sixth angel pours the content of his bowl upon the river Euphrates, and what happens is that the water is dried up. This is not done by the river itself. It's an act of God, and it is an amazing thing that should happen. Now in ancient times, there were extensive networks and dams and canals which had been built to utilize the Euphrates for agriculture and urban needs. You can see how, in this kind of arid part of the world, that river water was very important, and they utilized it in ancient times. Today, Iraq has followed the same pattern. It is an enormous system of water controls and hydroelectric plants to provide a steady supply of water for the capital and for the nation. The new Babylon of the antichrist is going to depend upon this same water system which Iraq has now built. It will be important for economic needs.

Now, again, God has long ago pointed out what He plans to do in the future. One of the things that He talked about was what He is going to do to this great river, the Euphrates. We've had this in Zechariah 10:11: "And He will pass through the sea of distress, and strike the waves in the sea, so that all the depths of the Nile will dry up, and the pride of Assyria (the Euphrates River) will be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt will depart." Here, God is making a prediction that He's going to someday take this river, which was the pride of Assyria, and He's going to dry it up.

In Isaiah 11:15-16, we have another reference to this future event: "And the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. He will wave His hand over the river, His scorching wind, and he will strike it into seven streams, and make men walk over dry shod." The river is the Euphrates: "And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of His people who will be left, just as there was Israel in the day that they came up out of Egypt." Great highways, of course, are being built in this part of the world now.

So, here in the tribulation, after all the terrible things that have already happened, suddenly the Euphrates River, which has been turned previously into blood, as a freshwater area, now suddenly disappears. It is dried up completely, and this is a devastating blow to the antichrist in his capital at Babylon. Generating plants are shut down, terminating electrical supply for the air-conditioning that they need for the intense heat of the sun. The Euphrates will have, furthermore, suffered the effects of the period of drought which was imposed by the two witnesses during the first three-and-a-half years. You have that in Revelation 11:6, so the water supply has been brought below normal levels there. Then the third bowl turned it into blood, and that required extensive expensive processing to get what water they could out of that. The Ararat snow and ice fields have, by this time, been substantially melted because of the sun's rays. Consequently, there is no supply of water to keep the Euphrates build up. Furthermore, the scorching heat of the sun will step up the level of evaporation.

Probably, the final drying up will be the result of some underground quakes and earth movements which will create channels that will simply drain the water off the top. Those of you who have traveled in Yellowstone National Park know that those magnificent geysers and water features are there, as the Rangers say, because of the underground plumbing. There are underground passageways that have been created by natural processes that cause water to be trapped as the earth's inner magma heat heats the water, and finally, like in the case of Old Faithful, explodes with an enormous force to send the geyser up to 150 feet in the air on a regular periodic basis.

Some years ago, in West Yellowstone, just outside of the park, the whole side of the mountain fell off, and just swept across the river, and onto the other side. And a big monument on one of the huge boulders caused a number of campers to be crushed to death in their tents in their beds at night as the whole mountainside just gave way from an earthquake, and broke away completely. It was an awesome sight to stand there. You could see how it blocked up the water until it rose higher and higher, and it just killed the trees up to a certain level. You could just see, for a long time afterward, where the trees had been completely devastated, where the water had risen before they were able to come in there with engineers, and blow a passageway to let the water that was dammed up to start moving down again. Well, what happened in Yellowstone National Park was that some of their great geyser features stopped working. The timing was off. The pressure was not there. The magnificence was no longer there. They attributed it to the fact that the earthquake had caused changes in the underground plumbing.

**The Kings from the East**

So, this is very easy for God to do, here under the Euphrates River, to cause some underground changes and channels such that that river is just sucked under, and it's gone practically overnight. Why does God do this? He does this, it said, in order to prepare a way for the kings from the East. Literally, the Greeks says, "From the rising sun." This again is done by God. He has a purpose for drying up this river. Remember that we're near the end of the tribulation, and the kings from the East are getting restless and dissatisfied with the dominant role of the antichrist who rules over them as the world ruler, and they are beginning to want to rebel.

So, the kings from the rising sun (from the East) refers to places like China, Japan, India, and the areas of Asia. Interestingly enough, what kind of religion do these countries have? These countries are dominated by Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism, all of which attribute deity to man, and all of which are inventions of Satan, and all of which are false religions. None of these religions have a personal Creator God. They just have a universal force out there that is a divine force, and it is in all human beings, so all human beings have deity within themselves. All of these religions operate on cycles of life: you're born; you act out your life; then you die; you experience your karma; and, you get your punishment. If you were a good person, you step up to the next level. If you were a bad person, you go down. So, you can be a human being one time, and when you're reincarnated, you can be a bug the next time. Depending upon how you acted, that's your karma.

This is why, in a country like India, where Hinduism is the prominent religion, they don't feel any compassion over some poor character who's lying sick and dying in the gutter, that the carts come around and pick up every day (people who die from starvation). Why don't they want to step out and help? Because that person is in that condition to pay for his conduct in a previous life. They don't want to interfere with his karma, because if he suffers now, he'll come back better next time. What a devilish idea that is! These people, as in Japan, worship their ancestors. When they do, they're in effect worshiping demon gods. They worship spirit gods. The American Indian is into this sort of thing as well. They like to kill a powerful animal, and eat it, so that they can have the spirit of that animal in them. These are idols. It is religion, and it is all a Satan.

All of the world's religions, however, are variants of doctrines that came directly out of Nimrod's original counterfeit religion in Babylon on the Euphrates. And that religion was carried from the Tower of Babel dispersion all around the world. These Eastern kings are in rebellion against the rule of the antichrist, and they are going to come down for this great final confrontation against him. The antichrist himself, from his capital on the Euphrates at Babylon, is foreseen by Daniel. Daniel tells us the antichrist hears that there are problems in the South and problems in the East. So, he comes over quickly to Palestine, which is extremely important. This is the crossroads of three continents. Whoever has Palestine controls the Mideast oil; controls the travel; and, controls the military aspects.

What the rulers of the East do is start marching toward Israel, to take it from the antichrist, and in fact, to confront him. The king of the South comes up; the king of the West comes over; and, the king of the North comes down from what is left of Russia. And the confrontation of all of these four powers is going to be right here in Israel. So, the barrier of the Euphrates River must be removed. You might say, "Well, that's easy to do. You run a pontoon bridge across rivers. Military people do this all the time." Yes, but I have to tell you the size of this army that's coming from the east: 200 million. To get an army that large across quickly, you have to go across dry shod. You can't be going down some narrow bridges built on pontoons.

So, these eastern kings cross the Euphrates in rebellion, on the way to fight the antichrist, but they don't know that God has another plan for them. God is leading them to the field of Armageddon. As always, no doubt, God's grace is going to be there to have the gospel proclaimed to those who, in those final moments, will yet trust in Christ and be saved.

**Armageddon**

So, bowl six does simply this. It moves the world to its final confrontation on the field of Armageddon. The forces of God and those of Satan move to this confrontation. Probably, mankind's hatred against God at this time will be so intense that they'll want the showdown. They'll want to settle once-and-for-all who is going to be the king of the universe: the gracious Creator; or, the rebel Satan. Those bearing the mark of the beast still will probably be thinking that the antichrist is going to be able to deliver them from the consequences of the bowl plagues. The pain; the suffering; and, the mental anguish have now reached the point where the unbelievers are ready for the fight. They want to have this showdown. Satan himself wants the showdown, because he knows, by God's timetable, that he has only a little, short time left before God says that he's going to throw him into the lake of fire.

So, these armies move out from the East; cross the Euphrates; and, the battle is joined. Where is Armageddon? Armageddon is up in the northern part of Israel at the point of a place which is also called the Valley of Jezreel. It is below the mountain of Megiddo. Armageddon comes from the Hebrew word "HarMogadon." "Har" means "mountain," and Megiddo is the city overlooking this plain. I have stood on the upper reaches of the Mount of Megiddo, and looked down across that plain, which Napoleon Bonaparte called the greatest battlefield in the world. For 200 miles, it moves down toward Jerusalem from the Megiddo highlands.

On this plain, for 200 miles of combat, there is going to be fought the most violent battle in human history – and I mean violent. It's not going to be just an ordinary battle like we had in World War II, where bodies were blown apart by artillery pieces and so on. This is going to have weapons of such devastation, and an army of 200 million men just from the East, let alone those that the antichrist now rallies to face those from the East, and those who are in rebellion against him.

Revelation 14:19-20 told us that the battlefield would become so churned up by explosions and by the flow of blood, that it would be up to a horse's bridle. It becomes that deep. This may mean that the ground has been so churned up, which can happen with artillery pieces, and if you have rain, you have a terrible condition of mire on the battlefield. But here it'll be the blood of those who are slaughtered, mixed with the soil that's going to perhaps cause an animal to sink this deep.

The oriental army, in Revelation 9:13-16 we read, are 200 million men. They come against the armies of the Western nations led by the antichrist. Control of the land of Israel is what it's going to be all about. That is essential for anybody to be able to have a world government. Israel is the crossroads of Europe; of Africa; and, of Asia. It is the key position to control the oil of the Middle East. And without having the control of that crossroads and the oil of the Mideast, you cannot have a world government.

So, the kings of the east are coming to challenge the authority of the antichrist. They're moving toward Israel. They hit the Euphrates River. God dries it up so that it is no longer a natural barrier to them. They come across, and the size of the movement of these men is absolutely mind-boggling. Only in the 20th century have armies numbered more than a few million. The United States, during World War II, had a total of 11 million men and women in the military. That's it. On any particular operation, you would have maybe 50,000 or 100,000 troops moving into some area. But you would never have such a thought as 200 million men on some battlefield all at the same time.

**An Army of 200 Million Men**

Where could the people of the East get so many men? How could that happen? Well, one interesting observation is that you may know that in China, in order to reduce their population, they have the one-child policy. You can only have one child. If you get pregnant a second time, and you already have a child, then you are forced to have an abortion. If you do have a second child that manages to be born, then you are penalized a year's salary as a penalty for that. But in the Chinese culture, parents traditionally have looked forward to their old age with a son to take care of them. Therefore, a son is important. If you have a daughter, she's going to marry somebody else's son, and go to take care of that family.

So, in China, they have this one-child policy. What has happened? They are able to tell very effectively whether the child to be born is going to be a boy or a girl. Consequently, if it's a girl, they have often been aborting the girls so that they have another shot until they get a son. And it's not beyond the Chinese to practice infanticide. That is, if the child is born, and they got the wrong information about the sex, and it proves to be a girl, they kill it immediately, as soon as it is born.

What has this done to the normal mixture that God has implanted in the human race? There's a normal control of reproduction in the human community that ends up with 50% women and 50% men. What's happened in China is that they now have nine boys for every one girl. People who have traveled in China said that when you come to a big public square like in Tiananmen Square on a holiday season, or sometime in the evening, one of the strangest sites is that you look everywhere, and you see these hundreds and hundreds of young people, and they're almost all males. Only here and there pops up a female, because now they have one woman for nine men. That means that they have now come to where they have a 125 million young men who have no hope of finding someone to marry to have a family of their own. And what a built-in population that is for an army. And that's exactly what they do with them. They take them into the military. And China has boasted that they have an army that they can put together of 200 million. That is an interesting figure.

What are they doing? Here's where their men are going to come from. They might as well go into the military. They can't have a normal family life because there are no women for them to marry. So, when Jesus Christ returns to this earth, at the end of the tribulation, to do battle with the armies of mankind, these young men, as the result of the one-child policy of China, are undoubtedly going to form a great deal of that army that Christ meets on that field.

What happens is that these armies that have gathered (just jumping ahead a moment), when they finally gather on the field of Armageddon, and they're ready to go at each other, out in space comes Christ, and all of us coming down in the Second Coming. Now the antichrist knows that he has to form a coalition with his enemies, and they all immediately turn to fight Christ who is returning. He is the problem, and they turn against Him. What is the result going to be?

Zechariah 12:8-9: "In that day, the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David. And the house of David will be like God, and the angel of the Lord before them. And it will come about in that day that I was set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." With the spoken word of His mouth, Christ will put to death all those armies on the field of Armageddon. The antichrist and the armies of the world will thus be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Notice Revelation 9:11-16: "They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss. His name in the Hebrew is Abaddon (Satan), and in the Greek it is Apollyon. The first woe is passed. Behold, two woes are still coming after these things. And the sixth angel sounded and heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, and saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the Great River Euphrates.' And the four angels who had been prepared for that particular point in time, the hour and the day and the month and the year, were released." These are demonic angels: "They are released so that they might kill a third of mankind. And the number of the armies of the horsemen was 200 million."

John says, "I heard the number of them." Well, you can see why he said, "I heard the number." He couldn't have counted them. But John said, "I heard the number was 200 million." What is John talking about? He's seeing the armies of the East coming against the antichrist at this point in time. The point of this is to kill a third of mankind. That's 2 billion people. So, by the time even half of the tribulation is over, 50% of mankind has been slaughtered.

It is great to know that God has taken us into His confidence, as he took Abraham into His confidence in what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. And because of the reigning of the sin of the antichrist, and of those who follow in their blasphemy against the Creator God, God has now prepared for the final destruction of mankind.

In the verses which follow this sixth bowl, we come into a small set of parentheses that give us further information about the Armageddon events, and we will proceed to look at that in further detail next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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