

71. The Book of Revelation—16:17

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(3-2-22)

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We are currently in Chapter 16 in our study of the Book of Revelation.

As we have said, this Chapter contains the 7-Bowl Judgments—which are the last and most cataclysmic of all the previous judgments.

These judgments will be poured out in 'rapid-fire' succession on the wicked kingdom of the Antichrist.

This will lead directly to the return of Jesus Christ, the Battle of Armageddon, and the establishment of God's Kingdom upon the earth.

So far in our study of Chapter 16 we have covered the first 6 bowl judgments—they are as follows:

- **The First Bowl (malignant sores)—verses 1-2**
- **Second Bowl (saltwater oceans and seas turn to blood)—verse 3**
- **Third Bowl (fresh waters turn to blood)—verses 4-7**
- **Fourth Bowl (the sun scorches people)—verses 8-9**
- **Fifth Bowl (darkness and pain)—verses 10-11**
- **Sixth Bowl (Euphrates dries up)—verses 12-16**
- **Seventh Bowl—The Greatest Earthquake Ever**

Revelation 16:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air...

As we have said, the 7-Bowl Judgments are the last in a 'trilogy' of seven judgments (7-seals, 7-trumpets, and 7-bowls) that are poured out upon the earth and the earth-dwellers (i.e., followers of the Antichrist).

This seventh bowl is the last judgment of the final set of seven judgments—in other words, we are right at the end of the Great Tribulation at this point and the return of Christ.

The seventh bowl of wrath is poured out upon the 'air'—i.e., upon the atmosphere of the earth.

Ray Stedman—

"This judgment — particularly coming as it does on the heels of the Battle of Armageddon — probably describes the effect of nuclear warfare, which would release vast clouds of poisonous radiation upon the earth...So it may

well be that the final bowl of God's judgment is tipped by the finger of man himself—a finger that is even at this moment poised over the nuclear button. In our high-speed, high-tech, ballistic age, humankind is never more than a few minutes away from potential doom.”

If Stedman is right and verse 17 speaks of a nuclear explosion in the ‘air’ (atmosphere)—this could be the fulfillment of something God prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

I believe the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39 will happen *before* the Millennial Kingdom is established—and not at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ as some think.

Why do they think the battle in Ezekiel 38 and 39 will happen at the end of the Millennial Kingdom—because of Revelation 20:7-8:

Revelation 20:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

Revelation 20:8 (NKJV)

⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle...

When we get to Revelation 20, I will show you why Ezekiel 38 and 39 are not the same battle as the one mentioned in Revelation 20:8.

But for right now, let me say that many good evangelical scholars believe that Ezekiel 38 and 39 happen *before* the Antichrist rises to power (either right before or right after the Rapture)—but definitely *before* the 7-year Tribulation Period begins.

(It officially begins with the signing of a peace treaty between the Antichrist and the nation of Israel—Dan. 9:27).

I used to believe that too (although I still haven’t abandoned that position completely)—but tonight, I want to show you that the Ezekiel 38 and 39 battle *could* happen at the *end* of the Great Tribulation just before Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom.

In fact, I’ll go as far as to propose that it could be *because* of this very battle that Jesus *does* return to the earth (yes to establish His Kingdom but also to save Israel from the invading armies mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39).

We know that, according to the prophet Zechariah, Israel is going to be facing extinction from the armies of the Antichrist (it’s going to look that they have no chance of winning and that all hope for the survival of the nation is lost).

And in desperation they cry out to God to save them (they are right now a mostly secular nation, so this petition will mark the beginning of a national revival)—but they will pray/petition God to send Messiah Jesus to come and deliver them (they know who He is no doubt through the ministry of the 144,000).

This would fit with the words of Psalm 118—a powerful Messianic Psalm:

Psalm 118:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. ²⁶ Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

Typically, these verses are associated with Jesus' First Coming (they were shouted by His disciples on Palm Sunday as He rode up the Mt. of Olives on a donkey toward Jerusalem during His Triumphal Entry).

However, they were quoted by Jesus in Matthew 23—and the context was His Second Coming:

Matthew 23:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, '*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*' "

As we just said a moment ago, the seventh bowl judgment is the final judgment of God poured out on the kingdom of the devil and his false-Christ (Antichrist)—

Revelation 16:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "**It is done!**"

We then have Revelation Chapters 17 and 18—which are a parenthesis to the narrative. (Explain)

That means that the next chronological event that follows the statement of Jesus from heaven—"It is done!" (including the rest of Chapter 16)—is His Second Coming as recorded in Chapter 19.

I want to read some of the verses in Chapter 16 again and put them next to some Scriptures found in Ezekiel 38 and 39 to show you why I believe they are all talking about the same events—the events just prior to Jesus' return and the establishing of the Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 16:12-14, 16-21 (NKJV)

¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty... ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. ¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰ Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

Once again, the next event chronologically speaking will be the Second Coming of Christ—and then of course, the establishment of the thousand-year (millennial) Kingdom.

Now compare Revelation 16 with the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39—

Ezekiel 38:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh [from which the name 'Russia' comes], Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, ³ and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog [leader of Russia], the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and

horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.

⁵ Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops--many people *are* with you...

Ezekiel 38:1-6 not only prophecies that this invasion will take place—but it also prophesies the nations that will come together to attack Israel—

Russia, Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Libya (Libya is in north Africa west of Egypt; and Ethiopia is south of Egypt), Gomer (Eastern Germany, and the Slavic countries—the ancient historians, Herodotus, Strabo, and Plutarch, tell us that Gomer's descendants settled to the north of the Black Sea, giving their name to the ancient district known as modern day Crimea), Togarmah (Turkey and Armenia)—these are predominately Muslim countries.

Again, the Bible predicts that this battle will take place in the “last days.”

Ezekiel 38:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ After many days (*After the regathering of Israel prophesied in chap. 37*) you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword *and* gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. ⁹ You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."

As I said earlier, the timing of this invasion has been debated by prophecy experts for many years.

Does it take place—*before the Tribulation Period begins* (the final 7-years); Does it take place at the *end of the Tribulation Period* (just before Jesus returns); or does this invasion into Israel by her enemies take place *at the end of the Millennial Kingdom period* (Revelation 20:8)?

Before we go any further, let me just say—in Ezekiel 38 the Holy Spirit lists the nations of Russia, Iran, Northern Africa, and a confederation of Muslim nations all attack Israel.

➤ **The big question is—where is Israel's closest ally when this happens —America?!**

It could be we are absent because we are simply too weak and depleted militarily and financially due to wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and now possibly Ukraine to help in any meaningful way to stop these invading forces into Israel—and therefore, we can only offer flaccid and tepid denunciations against her enemies:

Ezekiel 38:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish [Great Briton?], and all their young lions [America?] will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?' " "

Or it's possible that by this point in our history, like the Roman Empire, our nation could have collapsed in on itself because of rampant immorality, corruption, social chaos and overall demonic evil having so permeated and poisoned us.

Or it could be, given our current administration, we simply won't honor our treaty with Israel to help her in this battle because our leaders in those days (possibly very soon) hate Israel and consider her as the evil occupier of Palestinian land and therefore see her defeat at the hands their enemies a good thing.

Whether one of these reasons or something else—America seems strangely absent from the final scenarios that will usher in the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to set up His Kingdom. In other words, Israel will be left to ‘go it alone’ against these very powerful enemies.

Understand, Israel already has in place what it calls “*the Samson Option.*” What is the Samson Option? —If any of its enemies attack them with any kind of non-conventional weaponry (biological, radiological, or chemical)—Israel has promised to nuke them.

Now we know that Israel will not be ‘going it alone’ against these nations—especially against Russia.

God promised that He will be fighting for Israel. In fact, He told us in Ezekiel that He will fight on behalf of His people and wipe out 5/6 of the Russian army—but that doesn’t mean He won’t lead Israel to use her nukes to accomplish this massacre:

Zechariah 14:12-13, 15 (NKJV)

¹² And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. ¹³ It shall come to pass in that day *That* a great panic from the LORD will be among them... ¹⁵ Such also shall be the plague On the horse *and* the mule, On the camel and the donkey, And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

Ezekiel 39:11-16 (NKJV)

¹¹ "It will come to pass in that day *that* I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call *it* the Valley of Hamon Gog. ¹² For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. ¹³ Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified," says the Lord GOD. ¹⁴ They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. ¹⁵ The search party will pass through the land; and *when anyone* sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. ¹⁶ *The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land.*" '

If it is true that this battle comes at the end of the Tribulation Period—notice what the prophet Ezekiel goes on to prophesy—

Ezekiel 39:17-20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: "Assemble yourselves and come; Gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal Which I am sacrificing for you, A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, That you may eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, Drink the blood of the princes of the earth, Of rams and lambs, Of goats and bulls, All of them fatlings of Bashan. ¹⁹ You shall eat fat till you are full, And drink blood till you are drunk, At My sacrificial meal Which I am sacrificing for you. ²⁰ You shall be filled at My table With horses and riders, With mighty men And with all the men of war," says the Lord GOD.

Now compare the prophecy in Ezekiel 39:17-20 with the description in Revelation 19 of the final events that take place on the earth right before Jesus establishes His Kingdom upon His return:

Revelation 19:11-21 (NKJV)

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True,

and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ¹⁸ that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great." ¹⁹ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. (This is the Battle of Armageddon mentioned in Revelation 16:16)

And then in Revelation 20 we see the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (just as after the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39 lead to Ezekiel Chapter 40 which talks about the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom)—

Revelation 20:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished [the Millennial Kingdom]. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Let me read some of the other prophecies in Ezekiel 38, comparing them with Revelation 16—which we know occurs at the end of the Tribulation Period:

Ezekiel 38:14-19 (NKJV)

¹⁴ "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know *it*? ¹⁵ Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. ¹⁶ You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are *you* he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them? ¹⁸ "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "*that* My fury will show in My face. ¹⁹ For in My jealousy *and* in the fire of My wrath [nuclear fire?] I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel...

"...and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth." (Revelation 16:18)

Ezekiel 38:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.'

"Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. (Revelation 16:20)

Ezekiel 38:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²² And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who *are* with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

"And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent..." (Revelation 16:21)

Let me close by plugging in some of the prophecies from Zechariah which I believe are talking about the same events that Revelation 16 and Ezekiel 38 and 39 are talking about—the final events leading up to the return of Christ.

➤ **The Antichrist is mentioned—Zechariah 11:17**

Zechariah 11:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword *shall be* against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

➤ **The Antichrist and his armies come against Jerusalem—Zechariah 12:1-9**

Zechariah 12:1-7, 8-9 (NKJV)

¹ The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: ² "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. ³ And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. ⁴ In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. ⁵ And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' ⁶ In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves [possibly something nuclear?]; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place--Jerusalem... ⁸ In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. ⁹ It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

➤ **The Jewish people cry out to God to deliver them from this invasion—**

Psalm 118:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray...²⁶ Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the LORD!...

Matthew 23:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, '*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*' "

- **A great awakening occurs in Israel with national mourning and repentance—Zechariah 12:10-14**
- **Jesus returns and destroys the Antichrist and his armies—Zechariah 14 (and Revelation 19)**
- **Jesus separates believing Jews from apostate Jews—Zechariah 13**
- **The Kingdom is established—Zechariah 14:16-21**

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