After Tomorrow

SESSION EIGHT / WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2011

ARMAGEDDON and
THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Luke 21:36

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. - Jesus

Since it has been a month or so since we last met, let's review. We believe that God has clearly given us - through Daniel, Ezekiel, Joel, Jesus Himself (Matthew 24 and 25) and John, as well as others - a timetable for events in the future.

- The Rapture of the Church - when Christ calls His bride, the Church, home to be with Him and we meet Him in the air

- Those believers called home, both living and deceased (all of us now clad in our immortal bodies) will meet at the Judgment Seat of Christ (see I. Corinthians 3) to receive our rewards (if we have any)

- We will then be called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Jesus)

- On earth, humanity will be ushered into seven horrendous years known as the Tribulation.

- It will be led by Antichrist (a human being, energized by Satan himself) and his henchman, the False Prophet (who will lead humanity into a false world religion)

- There will be three distinct layers of God's wrath on earth:
  1. The Seal Judgements
  2. The Vial Judgements
  3. The Trumpet Judgements

- These seven years will be so devastating that Scripture teaches us that unless God
ended it, no person would remain alive on earth

- The culmination of the Tribulation is found for us in Revelation 16, when the nations of earth meet for final battle primarily at a place called ARMAGEDDON.

Armageddon has come to describe anyone’s worst fear of the end of the world. The prophets have described it more specifically as the final suicidal battle of a desperate world struggle centered in the Middle East. This is the final act in a terrifying series of events that are very much related to today’s headlines. This final, history-shattering battle will occur on schedule at a specific time and in its predicted location. The name “Armageddon” actually comes from a Hebrew word meaning “the mount of Megiddo,” a small tel located in northern Israel at the end of a broad valley. This site has been the scene of many military conflicts in the past and will be the focal point of this great future conflict.”

Daniel 11:40-45

And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. [41] He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. [42] He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. [43] But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. [44] But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. [45] And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

This passage from Daniel is but one of many throughout God’s Word that tells of the coming conflict. The descriptions are terrifying if one does not know Christ as Lord and Savior - knowing that he or she will not be here when Armageddon transpires, for the saints of God will have already been raptured with Christ in the air.

1 Thes. 4:13-18

And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also
believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died.
[15] I can tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet him ahead of those who are in their graves. [16] For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. [17] Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. [18] So comfort and encourage each other with these words.

A REVISIT TO SATAN’S TARGET - ISRAEL

We read ‘way back in Genesis that God chose the nation Israel in the time of Abraham as his treasure chest of eternal truth. Israel would be the nation through which Messiah, the Redeemer and Savior would enter the world. Small wonder, then, that Satan aims at this tiny nation, and the Jews around the world, with unmitigated fury. As much as Israel has been vilified, much more calamity is yet to come before Messiah returns and redeems both the people and the land for His purposes throughout eternity.

Following the Rapture comes the 7-year tribulation time in which Satan will cut loose with unprecedented anger and devastation. In Revelation 12, John writes of the hellish persecution which will seek to obliterate every Jew on the earth: Rev. 12:13-17

And when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the child. [14] But she was given two wings like those of a great eagle. This allowed her to fly to a place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be cared for and protected from the dragon for a time, times, and half a time. [15] Then the dragon tried to drown the woman with a flood of water that flowed from its mouth. [16] But the earth helped her by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that gushed out from the mouth of the dragon. [17] Then the dragon became angry at the woman, and he declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God’s commandments and confess that they belong to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit allowed John to enter even more detail in the following chapter: Rev. 16:13-14 And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. [14] These miracle-working demons caused all the rulers of the world to gather for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God Almighty.
The dragon? Satan. The beast? Antichrist. The third evil entity is the false prophet, the unholy spirit. (Verse 14) They “....cause all the rulers of the world to gather for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God Almighty.”

John saw three evil frog-like demons leap from the mouths of this unholy trio. Their effect is global as they impact rulers in almost all the world. The plan? The same as Hitler’s: to exterminate every Jew on earth. Why? BECAUSE SATAN KNOWS THAT JESUS IS COMING BACK TO EARTH TO REIGN ON THIS EARTH OVER THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID. If Jesus reigns, then Satan cannot. So Satan will do what he can to see there is no Jewish nation left.

“To defeat God’s purpose of setting His Son Jesus Christ on the throne of this earth to reign, Satan attempts to wipe out the people of the throne so there can be no earthly kingdom. To accomplish this, Satan will move nations against Israel and will bring organized military powers against the people of Israel to exterminate them through invasion. Through the Beast and the False Prophet, a summons goes forth to the kings of the earth to gather them to battle. Verse 16 says, ‘HE GATHERED THEM TOGETHER INTO A PLACE CALL IN THE HEBREW TONGUE ARMAGEDDON.’”

PROPHETCY FOR TODAY / DR. DWIGHT DAVID PENTECOST / ZONDERVAN / P 116

ISRAEL - “PRINCE OF GOD”

Were you aware that the name Israel means “Prince of God”? That’s the name God gave to Jacob and his descendants for all time.

Jesus Himself warned His fellow Jews that one of the characteristics of the last days would be global animosity toward Jews: Matthew 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

A careful study of the United Nations issues through the years reveals the enormous amount of time the delegates spend condemning Israel while at the same time extolling or accepting radicals and extremists whose theme is hate and extermination. As one observer has put it:

An automatic majority of Warsaw Pact and Third World nations can be counted on to vote in favor of any resolution condemning Israel, no matter how one-sided or unfair it is.

GRANT JEFFREY / ARMAGEDDON - APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY / P. 214
The tide against “the Prince of God” continues to escalate. Now, one by one, this year we are seeing Islamic governments such as Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, and possibly Syria lose what little moderation they had in favor of carefully-conceived efforts to replace them with extremist rulers. Little by little, Israel is being surrounded by outrageous hostility, primarily at this moment from Iran.

DIRECT QUOTES FROM IRAN’S PRESIDENT MAHASMD AHMADINEJAD STATING HIS HATRED OF ISRAEL

“Some segments of the U.S. government orchestrated the 9-11 attack to reverse the declining American economy and its grips on the Middle East in order to save the Zionist regime. The majority of the American people as well as other nations and politicians agree with this view.”

“No Zionists were killed in the World Trade Center because one day earlier they were told not to go to their workplace.”

“The Israeli regime enjoys the support of some western countries while Palestinian defenders and those opposing this regime are pressured, labeled as terrorists and anti-Semites. All values, even the freedom of expression, in Europe and the United States are being sacrificed at the altar of Zionism.”

“Why don’t we allow the subject of the Holocaust to be examined further? It is incorrect to force only one view on the rest of the world. How come when it comes to the subject of the Holocaust there is so much sensitivity?”

“The Zionists are groups of racists who have been operating under the pretext of following Jewish religion principles.”

“Israel will be annihilated and Palestinians and other regional nations will be rid of its bad omen. With Allah’s help, the new Middle East will be a Middle East without Zionists and imperialists.”

Iran is only 950 miles east of Israel. Its missiles could hit the Holy Land within minutes of launch! This is part of what Israel faces today.
Now...as we examine the actual campaign which culminates at Armageddon, let's take a
look at the combatants and their movements of armies.

First, while we speak about Armageddon or Megiddo, the whole nation of Israel will be
involved.

Joel 3:2
I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of
Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage
Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is just another name for the Valley of Armageddon.
Napoleon called this region the greatest natural battlefield on earth, saying there was
sufficient room there for the armies of the world to maneuver. Of course, he said that
long ago, before escalation of population and modern warfare; but his statement still
gives you an idea of the size of the plain.

More from Joel: Joel 3:9-17
Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let
all the men of war draw near; let them come up: [10] Beat your plowshares into
swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. [11]
Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together
round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. [12] Let the
heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to
judge all the heathen round about. [13] Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe:
come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is
great. [14] Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is
near in the valley of decision. [15] The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the
stars shall withdraw their shining. [16] The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and
utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the
Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. [17] So
shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain:
then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any
more.

Someone might well observe, "Hey, I thought the Bible says there would come a time
when we beat our swords into plowshares." It does In Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 – but
that refers to the time when Christ's kingdom is in control of the earth. But until that
time, as one commentator put it, "Keep your powder dry!" The United Nations has as its
motto the verse in Isaiah which says to beat your swords into plowshares. Their hope is
premature. Until Christ comes, men will make weapons of war.
The Apostle Paul jars us with his prophecy concerning the end time: 1 Thes. 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. In other words - despite all the wars, natural disasters and man-made crises through the centuries, we haven’t seen anything yet! Consider Joel’s warning: Joel 3:13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Today, in those congregations that call themselves “seeker-sensitive,” that is, don’t rile up anybody, Isaiah’s words would not be welcome.

Isaiah 34:1-6
Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. [2] For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. [3] Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. [4] And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. [5] For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. [6] The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah (a primarily the land of Edom east of the Dead Sea), and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea (same local).

Now the prophecies regarding Armageddon hone in on Jerusalem itself:

Zech. 12:2
Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

Zech. 14:2
For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Mark this carefully: JERUSALEM IS THE EPICENTER OF EVERYTHING THAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN! Not only do the Palestinian terrorist organizations consider the Holy City the objective, so does Satan himself. He will make Jerusalem his headquarters during the Great Tribulation (the last half of the seven year tribulation
period). So Armageddon will definitely impact Jerusalem!

“We find that this campaign of Armageddon literally covers the whole land, even as Ezekiel 38:9 says. It begins on the plain of Megiddo to the north, goes down through the valley of Jehoshaphat, includes the land of Edom to the south and the east and of course has its center in Judea and Jerusalem in the central part of the land of Israel. It is interesting to turn back again to the Book of Revelation to read: Rev. 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And then in verse 19: And the angel thrust his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. Now 1600 furlongs is approximately 200 miles. And if you will examine a map, you will find that from the northern part of Israel to the southern part, the distance is about 200 miles. So Israel will be given a blood bath of unprecedented proportion which will flow from Armageddon at the north down through the Valley of Jehoshaphat, will cover the land of Edom and will wash over all Judea and the city of Jerusalem.”

It is difficult to even imagine such carnage. Now the question arises: who are these armies?

1. THE EUROPEAN NATIONS

We know that by this time Antichrist is the acknowledged leader of much of the entire world and, in particular, is the head of the amalgamation of European nations. In Daniel 9:27 we learn that Antichrist makes a pact early in the Tribulation with Israel (remember the first seal judgment of Revelation 6:1 and 2 in which Antichrist enters the world scene on a peace platform):

Daniel 9:27

And he (Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many (Israel, among them) for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease (break the pact), and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Israel will truly believe for a short while that Antichrist is their friend and thus there will be an alliance between the Knesset and Antichrist, the leader of Europe.
2. WHAT’S LEFT OF THE RUSSIAN COALITION AFTER EZEKIEL 38 - 39

There will also be the northern kingdom (Russia). This group will certainly include the Arab states of the Middle East. The second seal of the scroll of judgment is about to be opened.

3. NORTH AFRICA - EGYPT

The third great power is called (in Daniel 11) the king of the south. This throughout Scripture is Egypt. What has occurred lately in the land of the Nile is setting the table for this eventual conflict.

4. THE FAR EAST

The fourth great coalition of nations is referred to in Revelation 16:12 as “the kings of the east.” Here we include China and other great nations of the far east.

EGYPT LIGHTS THE FUSE

Daniel 11:40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

The world powers begin to understand somehow that Antichrist is on a short leash and cannot long stay in office. Egypt, the king of the south, probably by now led by the Islamic Brotherhood, attacks Jerusalem. Immediately, the northern coalition joins in the fray. “With many ships” makes my mind register the picture of the Mediterranean Sea now filled with warships all headed for Tel Aviv and Haifa.

As a result of this attack, the Jews of Jerusalem have to flee and seek refuge somewhere else. Matthew 24:15-22

"The time will come when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about: the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the holy place”—reader, pay attention! [16] "Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. [17] A person outside the house must not go inside to pack. [18] A person in the field must not return even to get a coat. [19] How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies in those days. [20] And pray that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath. [21] For that will be a time of greater horror than anything the world has ever seen or will ever see again. [22] In fact, unless that time of calamity is
shortened, the entire human race will be destroyed. But it will be shortened for the
sake of God's chosen ones.” I remind you, these are the words of Jesus.

This all occurs about mid-way through the Tribulation, and God pours out fire upon that
Russian-Egyptian alliance. This divine retribution against the kings of the south and
north leaves Europe as the final great world power. It seems that Antichrist has won his
earthly throne and all is well. Ah, but now we read:

Daniel 11:44

"But then news from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in
great anger to destroy many as he goes.” Now the leaders of the Asiatic nations
come forth to take their place in world supremacy. Rev. 9:14-16 And the voice
spoke to the sixth angel who held the trumpet: "Release the four angels who are
bound at the great Euphrates River." [15] And the four angels who had been
prepared for this hour and day and month and year were turned loose to kill
one-third of all the people on earth. [16] They led an army of 200 million mounted
troops—I heard an announcement of how many there were.

Daniel tells us that Antichrist is livid with anger and “he shall go forth with great fury to
destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace
between the seas (Mediterranean and Dead Sea) in the glorious holy mountain.” Zech.
14:1-3 Watch, for the day of the Lord is coming when your possessions will be
plundered right in front of you! [2] On that day I will gather all the nations to fight
against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses plundered, and the women
raped. Half the population will be taken away into captivity, and half will be left
among the ruins of the city. [3] Then the Lord will go out to fight against those
nations, as he has fought in times past.

HALLELUJAH! THE DIVINE CAVALRY ATTACKS!

Rev. 19:11-21

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him
was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
[12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had
a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a
vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the
armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen,
white and clean. [15] And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he
should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth
the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And he hath on his
vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF
LORDS.

[17] And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; [18] That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. [19] And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. [20] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. [21] And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

This, dear friends, is THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST! All of a sudden the warring armies of earth find themselves attacked from "outer space," so to speak. It is the end for Satan, for Antichrist, for the False Prophet and for all those who oppose God and His Ruler, Jesus Christ. The unholy trinity and all their followers are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Every day we see the nations aligning themselves for this final conflagration. Followers of Christ do not live in fear. We await the fulness of the promises of God. How absolutely urgent that we know Jesus as Lord and Savior as the end of the age draws ever so close!

We pause next Wednesday for the annual business meeting, but convene again on Wednesday night, May 4th when our subject will be:

THE NATIONS MEET THE SON OF GOD - A CHILLING AND DRAMATIC STORY!