MESSAGE NOTES
Revelation Unveiled - Part 22
"Judgement and The Battle of Armageddon"
Revelation 15-16

Where is justice in this world? Every day we see stories of man's inhumanity to man, and something inside us says: *That is not the way God intended the world to be. When will things ever get set right?*
Jesus' message through John in Revelation is to suffering believers who are crying out, *How Long O God before Jesus comes back and makes the world right?* The message is **Justice and Judgment is coming.** One day God will judge the world, and things will be made right.

The progression of judgment in Revelation:
- **7 Seals** (Revelation 6–8): Restrained judgment (1/4 destroyed)
- **7 Trumpets** (Revelation 8–11): More intense judgment (1/3 destroyed)
- **7 Bowls** (Revelation 15–16): God's wrath is **completed. See Revelation 15:1…**

Understanding Revelation: Recapitulation
- **Recapitulation** is a common Hebrew literary style (cyclical thinking rather than a Western linear timeline). *It is the retelling of the same events from a different perspective with a different purpose, commonly involving* ***intensification****.*
- Examples of recapitulation exist throughout the Old Testament….
- In Revelation, the end of the world is not described just once; it is recapitulated across multiple visions:
  - The 6th & 7th Seals (Revelation 6:12–17; 8:1–5)
  - The 7th Trumpet (Revelation 11:15–18)
  - The end of the Interlude (Revelation 14:14–20)
  - The 7th Bowl (Revelation 16:17–21)
  - The Great White Throne of Judgment (Revelation 20:7–15)

Revelation 15…
- **The Sea of Glass Mixed with Fire (Revelation 15:2):** Those who have been victorious over the Beast (worldly empires opposed to God) can stand right next to chaos and evil and not even flinch because they have overcome.
- **The Song of Moses and the Lamb (Revelation 15:3–4):** The song is a reminder to the people from Deuteronomy 32 about being obedient to God and living His ethic and overcoming temptation and evil so they can experience the blessings of the Covenant and not the curses. They made the connection between God's deeds and
  their deeds, which 14:13 says are to bring glory to God's name and would follow them the rest of their life.
- **The Seven Golden Bowls (Revelation 15:5–8):** Angels dressed like Jesus (Revelation 1) emerge from the temple with the final plagues.

Revelation 16: The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath
- **The Intention of the Plagues:** Just like the plagues on Egypt, God pours out judgment with the desired end that people will **repent** and turn to Him (2 Peter 3:9).
- **Revelation 16:1-7… Bowls 1–3:** Sores on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshipped it. The sea turned to blood (everything dies—total intensification), and rivers/springs turned to blood and people who shed the blood of God's people are given blood to drink.
  - *"Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."* (Revelation 16:7)

I look at the world and I long for the day Jesus will return, and God will judge and make the world right. But between now and then we are to live the Great Commandment and Great Commission and our hearts should break, even for evil people who will end up separated from God in hell if they do not repent. God wants to give people a chance to come into a relationship with Him by faith and trusting in Him for forgiveness but if they don't:
  - **Can God be trusted to do the right thing?** Yes. God judges with utter integrity, perfect competence, and absolute authority.
  - **Our response:** The implication is that because God will judge with absolute fairness, we are never to take vengeance into our own hands (Romans 12:19). Choose forgiveness and compassion over vengeance.

Revelation 16:8–11… Bowls 4–5: Scorching heat from the sun and darkness on the kingdom of the Beast.

- Despite the pain, people refuse to repent and instead curse God. God does not send judgement because He is sadistic, but He wants to get people's attention so they will repent and come into a relationship with Him.
- **Message to the Church:** The only time in Revelation we see people repent is in chapter 11 when God's people step up and witness to them. Hard times in people's lives lead them to be open to us sharing our faith and how God was with us through hard times.

Revelation 16:12… Bowl 6: The Euphrates River dries up, removing the natural barrier protecting Rome from the kings of the East (the Parthians who were warriors Rome could never conquer). Jesus is using this image to show that Rome will face its end. Every worldly conqueror will eventually face judgment.

Revelation 16:13-14… The last battle between Satan and God is about to begin. The spirits of demons gather the kings for battle against God.

Revelation 16:15… But first, The Interlude: How the Church Must Live: Have you noticed how in each of the judgement passages, there have been an interlude that is a message to the church about how we are supposed to act?

How the three interludes in Revelation work together for how followers of Jesus are to live:

1. **The Seals (Revelation 7):** *Who can stand?* You can, because you are spiritually secure.
2. **The Trumpets (Revelation 10–11):** *What do I do while I stand?* Go and witness.
3. **The Bowls (Revelation 16:15):** *How do I witness?* By what you do. – By staying spiritually awake and wearing the clothes of Jesus's righteousness and ethics. (See Isaiah 61:10 and Colossians 3:12-17…) Our ethics matter. What you and I do and don't do matters, which is why God says often to the churches in Revelation, *I know your deeds…* and he says *your deeds will follow you.*

Revelation 16:16…What About Armageddon?
Armageddon (*har megiddo* / Mount Megiddo) is mentioned only once in the entire Bible. The battle of Armageddon is misinterpreted when people speculate about which nations will be represented by Gog and Magog (see Revelation 20) in a battle on the Plains of Megiddo in the Middle East. Gog and Magog were actually the names of two ancient kings who ruled in the area of Asia Minor many centuries before Revelation was written. Gog and Magog were common terms in John's day as Rabbis used them fairly frequently as a kind of shorthand to refer to enemies opposed to God. They were not used to refer to specific nations like Russia at the end of time. Also, when Futurists talk about the Physical Battle at the end of time, guess what? There is no battle that happens. There is no physical Mount Megiddo—it is a symbolic picture of a cosmic event, drawing on the Old Testament plains of Megiddo where countless battles took place.

Just like in Revelation 19:11–21 and Revelation 20:7–10, the enemies of God gather for battle, **but there is no battle**. **Why is there no battle?** Because the decisive battle was already won at the **Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension** of Jesus (Revelation 12). Satan and his forces are gathering for their execution, not a fight.

Revelation 16:17–21…Bowl 7: *"It is done!"* Satan, sin, suffering, evil, the old creation and order is finished. Judgement is here. IT IS OVER! A massive earthquake, hailstones, and the fall of Babylon (Rome and all Worldly Empires) bring hope to the oppressed that evil will not get away with it forever.

Takeaway / Application / Living it out…

1. Witnessing Through Our Actions:
Revelation 16:15 warns us not to fall asleep or be caught without the "clothes" of Christ's righteousness. **ASK YOURSELF:** *What does "staying spiritually awake" and being clothed with Jesus's righteousness and characteristics look like in my daily routine, workplace, school, neighborhood, home this week?*

2. Peace and Justice Today (Matthew 5:9; Micah 6:8):
How can we avoid the trap of letting end-times speculation make us passive about the brokenness in our world?
ASK YOURSELF: *What is one practical way I can pray for or work toward fairness, mercy, and peace in my own part of the world this week?*

I invite us to this self-reflection because there is all kinds of speculation that goes on in the American church about Armageddon. It leads some in the church to think we don't need to work to resolve the problems of the world

because they are unresolvable and will be taken care of at the end. Yet, the Bible has some real clear teachings about peace and about justice. Jesus says: *Blessed are the peace makers.* (Matthew 5:9) Micah 6:8 says: *What does the Lord require of you but to do justice love mercy, and walk humbly before your God.*

When highly speculative treatment of end-time scenarios cause Christians to neglect very clear teachings of the Scriptures about peace and justice, then something is wrong.

The clear point of Armageddon is that there is a battle going on between God and Satan; good and evil. And one day evil will be fully, finally defeated. But until then God wants his people to be passionate about peace and justice. So, pray for it and work for it here, and be a witness for Jesus through our words and our actions.