

Armageddon: What? Where? When?

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Armageddon has caught the imagination of man. Every great war or threat of war always raises the awesome image of Armageddon. Again and again that word occurs in the literature of the world. After World War I, for instance, a motion picture was made called "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," which depicted World War I as being the final war of mankind. Then, when World War II took place, the world was shocked by the blitz of Britain and then the release of the atomic bomb. Many folk said, "This is it – this is Armageddon."

From that day down to the present hour there has been a real uneasiness in the hearts of men about the future. A great number of books have been written by outstanding scholars in this connection. Armageddon is an event that has captured the imagination of every student of Scripture and, of course, a great many sensational things have been said about it.

To bring our subject into focus, let us consider two key passages of Scripture referring to Armageddon:

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. 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. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown.... (Daniel 11:36-41)

I shall break off the reading at this particular juncture and turn to the Book of Revelation:

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver,

and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. (Revelation 9:13-21)

These are two rather unusual passages of Scripture dealing with our subject, the time of Armageddon.

The Word of God depicts a war in the dimensions of a real global conflict. Actually, World War I and World War II do not meet those specifications. Though they were the largest wars that have taken place in the world, they should not be called “world wars” because in World War I most of South America and most of the Orient were excluded. In World War II a few more nations were involved, especially in the Orient, but by no stretch of the imagination could it be called a *global* conflict. However, the war that is depicted in the Word of God beggars description as to its vastness, the number of nations that are engaged, the size of the armies that participate, the intensity of the conflict, and the issues that are involved in it.

The general public has a rather hazy conception of Armageddon as it is presented in the Word of God. To begin with, a world war in Europe is not Armageddon because that is not to be the location of it. There is a hazy conception and different interpretations as to the place, the time, the forces involved, and the purpose of it.

Place of Armageddon

One commentator made this statement: “It is some place of a spiritual nature.” Now that, my friend, is not exegesis! It doesn’t tell you one thing – “some place of a spiritual nature” is even self-contradictory. The Scripture is much more definite than that.

It seems, however, that all commentators agree that Armageddon is the ultimate and final victory of God over the opposing forces of evil. Or, to put it in good old Americana, it is when our side wins. That is the way a great many folk look at Armageddon.

Now let’s see what the Scriptures have to say. You may be shocked, if you don’t already know, that Armageddon is mentioned only one time by name. There are many references to it, as we shall see, but the only time it is given a name is in Revelation 16:16: “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

Let us go back and begin at verse 12 in this very interesting section:

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16)

Note the phrase in verse 14: “the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” The word *battle*, according to Dr. M. R. Vincent, an outstanding Greek scholar, means more than a single battle; it

means *war*. If you want a more accurate scriptural term, it is the War of Armageddon. It is a conflict that cannot be put in a single battle context.

The word *Armageddon* itself means “hill of Megiddo.” The Scriptures refer to the *hill* of Megiddo and to the *valley* of Megiddo and to the *town* of Megiddo. This very famous area is the place where Josiah was slain, the place where Saul was slain, and the place where Ahaziah was slain. In the Book of Joshua, Megiddo is listed among the towns taken by Israel when they came to the Promised Land. Deborah and Barak fought at Megiddo, and Gideon fought the Midianites in this particular area.

The Valley of Megiddo is part of the Plain of Esdraelon. The Plain of Esdraelon is about twenty miles long and fourteen miles wide. I have pictures that I took of it, and you can easily see across it. Also, I visited the very interesting ruins of Solomon’s stables at Megiddo. He reconstructed Megiddo as one of his chariot towns, and that is where he stabled his horses. They were extensive stables!

The geographical location of this area is quite interesting, for out of Lebanon there extends what is known as the Great Rift, beginning at the Dog River and then turning south. In that Great Rift is the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan Valley, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea. Then the Rift continues on down through that area and even extends into Africa. The armies of the great nations of the past have marched there. At the entrance of the Dog River is what is called “the calling cards of the nations.” Carved in a rock cliff are the inscriptions of the great rulers who have marched through there and left a record of their exploits. I spent an entire morning at that remarkable place. Nebuchadnezzar came through there, the Assyrian forces came through there, the armies of Egypt came through there, as did all of the other great nations and great generals. Alexander the Great penetrated the land there, which enabled him to take Asia. Napoleon came through there and declared that great plain to be the finest battlefield in the world. General Allenby came through that valley, and by knowing the topography of the land he was able, without firing a shot, to take Jerusalem from the thousand-year rule of the Turks.

The final conflict, however, is not confined or localized to Megiddo or the Plain of Esdraelon. The Word of God has a great deal to say about it.

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. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. (Zechariah 14:2, 3)

It is very important to see that the culmination of the War of Armageddon will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. (Zechariah 14:4)

Remember that there is that Great Rift that runs north and south through that whole area. Now God says that when the Lord Jesus comes, the entire topography of the land will change. Instead

of the valley running north and south, it will run east and west from the Mediterranean Sea on into the Dead Sea. This will be a tremendous transformation of the topography of that land!

There is more information given in the twelfth chapter of Zechariah in which Jerusalem is mentioned twelve times and the expression “in that day” is used seven times. Let me remind you that the expression “that day” in the Old Testament is a reference to the Great Tribulation and the Millennium which is to follow it.

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. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. (Zechariah 12:2, 3)

Now let me call your attention to something that is exceedingly strange. Although the fulfillment of this prophecy will not be until the end times, we have noted something that has been going on for years. Every nation in the history of the world that has attempted to control Jerusalem has been destroyed or has gone into decline. The day that Great Britain took the sphere of influence over the land of Israel and began to control Jerusalem – from that day to this – we have seen the decline of Great Britain from the first-rate nation of the world to the third-rate nation it is today. Personally, I do not think this is an accident. God said through Zechariah that He would “make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people.” and I think that God wants us to keep our hands off that nation. I hope my nation will do that, by the way. A great many people think we ought to intrude in the affairs of Israel on one side or the other, but Israel is a sensitive spot on this earth as far as God is concerned.

In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. (Zechariah 12:4, 5)

I'll not be tedious by quoting the rest of that prophecy, but it will pay you to read the entire chapter. Not only is it fascinating, but it is a picture of a great day that is yet to come.

Another prophet, Isaiah, sheds more light on the War of Armageddon by telling us that it will extend down into the land of Edom:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (Isaiah 63:1-3)

Bozrah is a city of Edom, and the old interpretation of the “dyed garments” is that it pictured Christ in His crucifixion. However, it has nothing to do with His first coming because it is the

blood of His *enemies* that has stained His garments, not His own blood. He is coming from the War of Armageddon, as He is the One who will end it.

In the prophecy of Joel we find that the War of Armageddon will also extend to the Valley of Jehoshaphat which is east of Jerusalem:

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 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. (Joel 3:1, 2)

This reveals the fact that the War of Armageddon is not confined to one local spot but is spread over the entire Near East. Not only that, but in Ezekiel 38:9 we are told that when Russia comes down they will come down like a cloud to cover the land; so the entire land is involved:

Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. (Ezekiel 38:9)

Time of Armageddon

Into what time frame does the War of Armageddon fit? I say this very cautiously because this is a subject about which many Bible expositors disagree. I believe that we have to put the War of Armageddon into the context of the Great Tribulation period. There are fine expositors who say that it takes place *before* the Tribulation; others say it takes place *after* the Tribulation; but I can't see that it could take place any time except *during* the Great Tribulation period, and for me the Book of Revelation makes that very clear:

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Revelation 16:14)

Now "that great day of God Almighty" begins with the Great Tribulation period. This corresponds with the Hebrew way of reckoning days, by the way. Remember that at the creation of the earth, God marked off the creative days by saying, "The evening and the morning were the first day.... The evening and the morning were the second day," etc. While you and I begin a new day when the sun comes up, God begins it when the sun goes down. And the "great day of the Lord" begins in darkness, the darkness of the Great Tribulation. The prophet Joel confirms this by saying that the Day of the Lord is "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness" (Joel 2:2). Several other prophets express that same concept because they consider it rather important.

Many of us believe that in the middle of the Great Tribulation period Russia will come down into the land of Israel, and that triggers the conflict described in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

The Antichrist will come to power on the program of *peace*. Even in our day the world wants peace desperately, and it will accept anyone who would be able to bring global peace – I don't think it would care if the man came from heaven or hell. The United States has spent billions of dollars throughout the nations to try to bring peace in the world. A great many folk

hang onto the United Nations with one faint hope that maybe it will bring peace. As I interpret the Scripture, for the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation the Antichrist will succeed in establishing global peace. But out of the north Russia will trigger the War of Armageddon by coming down and invading the land of Israel, according to Ezekiel 38. God will intervene on behalf of His people and will destroy the invaders:

And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. (Ezekiel 38:22)

This naturally stirs up a turmoil throughout the world. The peace that Antichrist had settled down on the world was a false peace. In the summary of these prophetic events (see Revelation 6) the rider on the white horse of peace is followed by the rider on the red horse of war.

Forces Involved in Armageddon

A great many forces are involved. All nations are going to march against Jerusalem. Let me quote Revelation 16:14 again:

For they are the spirits of demons, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Revelation 16:14)

The armed forces of every nation of the world will march against Jerusalem. There will be no help for the people of Israel in that day. In our day we have seen them look to Russia and get no help there, and they have looked to other nations and have been turned down. May I say to you that in that future day they will look to the north, the east, the south, the west and find no help in any direction. Then they will have to look *up* for the first time.

The thing that makes the War of Armageddon brand new, different from anything yet that has happened on this earth, are the forces that come out of the East. This is *new*. The Orient has not been involved except in World War II, and we did not fight them in the West – we fought them in the Pacific. Japan did not move out of the East into the West at all; she made no motion in that direction.

The thing that makes this extremely interesting is that the Book of Revelation says that this is something that will take place in that day. Notice the ninth chapter of Revelation again:

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.
(Revelation 9:13, 14)

That river has been a *boundary*. In fact, the meaning of the name *Hebrew* is “the man from the other side.” Abraham is called a Hebrew in Genesis 14:13, which means he came from the other side of the Euphrates River. That has been the boundary between the East and the West. If Kipling was accurate, “East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,” the

Euphrates River has been the separating point. Now God says He is going to pull the rug out and is going to let the hosts out of the East march beyond the Euphrates for the first time.

Note Revelation 16:12. “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” That’s the white man’s dilemma today, I can assure you, because in that area is the majority of the population of the world. You put India and China together and let them march out there before us, and you will see that the white man is outnumbered. The East has never moved so far into the West. Oh, Genghis Khan came, Solomon came, but they were stopped. Islam attempted to come up into Europe, but Charles Martel stopped it. They also attempted to come through Australia and were stopped there. But the Orient so far has never yet moved. Why? Well, I don’t know. Napoleon said that China was a sleeping giant, and God pity the generation that wakes it up. Well, we have waked it up. And out of the Orient will pour these multitudes in this final conflagration. May I say to you, it is breathtaking to comprehend.

Let me turn to the eleventh chapter of the Book of Daniel and lift out three verses here:

And at the time of the end [not the end of the time but the time of the end, meaning the Great Tribulation period] ***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. He shall enter also into the glorious land*** [that’s Palestine], ***and many countries shall be overthrown.... But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him*** [that’s Antichrist who is troubled by this gigantic movement out of the East]: ***therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.*** (Daniel 11:40, 41, 44)

We find marching at this time something that actually is tremendous. They’re marching from every direction against Jerusalem. I am not at this point going to attempt to fill in details. It’s breathtaking to begin with, and you may say this is oversimplification to leave it like this, but I’m going to leave it. I’d rather do that than to do what was done a number of years ago. A man of God, a man whom I respect, an excellent preacher, went out on a limb in prophecy. He identified the king of the south as Great Britain and named Mussolini as Antichrist! That sounds absurd in our day. And that’s the danger of trying to nail down specifics, especially in a day when we are not told to try to figure out all the details. Let’s keep in mind that the true believer is not looking for the battle or the War of Armageddon or for the time of Armageddon. We are “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). I’ll leave it at that particular juncture.

Purpose of Armageddon

The War of Armageddon is, first of all, a great rebellion against God. Consider this language:

And they worshipped the dragon [Satan] ***which gave power unto the beast*** [Antichrist]: ***and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth***

speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. (Revelation 13:4, 5)

Forty-two months is the last half of the Great Tribulation period. During that period Antichrist is a world dictator, and it is the worst period the world has ever seen.

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear.
(Revelation 13:6-9)

And then he goes on to say:

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.... (Revelation 13:10)

The message to God's people who remain on the earth in that day (God have mercy on them!) is not to resist – this is Satan's day. God is taking His hands off for this brief period of time. This is hell's day on the earth, because God will let Satan have that. It's a rebellion against God. The rebellion of man began as just a little pimple on the surface in the Garden of Eden. Now the sin of man leads to the man of sin and to humanity's great running sore of rebellion against Almighty God.

During that period they are going to try to exterminate every vestige of God on the earth. They are going to drive Him from His universe if they can. Naturally, they are going to come against the city that has represented God down through the ages. And at this particular time there will be 144,000 witnesses from the tribes of Israel. The church (meaning every true believer of the church age) is gone. The church will have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air and will be with Him in heaven during this period. On the earth there will be these witnesses, and their headquarters will be Jerusalem. So, for those men from every quarter who want to get rid of God, the starting place will be Jerusalem, of course, and the target will be those who are witnessing for Him. If they can destroy the witnesses, they will have gotten rid of God on the earth. By the way, that's exactly what multitudes are attempting to do even at this very moment.

Now we may not be able to pinpoint the beginning or the course of Armageddon, but we sure know how it's going to end.

End of Armageddon

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. 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. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in

fine linen, white and clean. 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. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)

This gathers up all the prophecies that tell about all nations being gathered against Jerusalem. Christ is coming to the earth. He is coming to put down the rebellion that is here on this earth. One of the purposes of His coming and one of the reasons that Armageddon must take place is that there is rebellion in the heart of man today. Rebellion is actually being held back a great deal, although it may not seem like it. The Spirit of God is hindering evil, but when He is removed for that brief Great Tribulation period, the rebellion will break out on this earth in a tremendous way.

A former president of the United Nations General Assembly, Dr. Charles Malek, a Christian from Lebanon, made this statement: "If I were asked to choose between the dialectical materialism of the Soviet and the practiced commercialism of the West, I'm not sure I would choose the Western brand.... We have lost the sense of the eternal battle raging between Christ and the devil." And Armageddon is the consummation of that rebellion. Christ's return to the earth brings it to a conclusion. We have lost the sense of there being a struggle going on in the world today. However, the pitched battle between light and darkness, between right and wrong, between God and Satan, between that which is good and right and that which is evil and wrong will culminate in this tremendous War of Armageddon.

Christ is going to put down this rebellion that is in the heart of man. It is quite interesting to note the men who have led in rebellion and their final reaction. Let me give you a remarkable quotation from George Bernard Shaw that is rarely used. Near the end of his life he wrote an article entitled "Too True to be Good" which contains this paragraph:

The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, have led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshipers in the temples of a thousand creeds, and now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith.

How tremendous!

Oh, my friend, the battle between light and darkness has been and is raging, but it seems that Christians are asleep. There is a war, there is a conflict, and many of us have run for cover. Let me quote from Bertrand Russell who wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* way back in 1951:

Before this century ends, unless something unforeseeable occurs, one of three possibilities will have been realized. The end of human life, perhaps of all life on our planet. Second, a reversion to barbarism after a catastrophic demonization of the population of the globe. Third, a unification of the world under a single government.

He called it all unforeseeable, and to him it was, but he sensed what was coming. Scripture teaches that one world government is coming, and it will be as godless as it possibly can be. But Christ is coming to put down rebellion. You see, Armageddon is necessary.

The second reason Christ is coming is to get glory to His name. He is going to declare to a rebellious and Christ-rejecting world that He is God and that He is holy! And I say reverently that it is about time He is doing it, because the world has about forgotten Him. Often I think of a line from the New York play of many years ago entitled "Green Pastures." The man who portrayed God said something thing like this, "As I look down at the earth, it looks like my children done forgot all about me." Certainly He is not being given the glory due Him. Rather, He is being blasphemed in every way possible in my own country as well as throughout the world.

Mankind needs to be reminded that God created this earth and made it a wonderful home for human beings. Who would want a home on the moon – or on any other planet out there in space? A fine looking fellow many years ago gave me a deed to a lot on the moon! He really did! Friend, I have that lot up for sale today, and I'll be very happy to make you a good price. In our exploration of space we have not found in this vast universe another place where human beings live. Yet here on this earth they are in rebellion against their Creator! If I were God (forgive me for saying it – I don't mean to be irreverent) I would look over this great universe, populated with created intelligences who praise My name, and when I would see little men down there lifting their midget fists against Me, I'd lean over the battlements of heaven and say, "I'm through with you – poof!" I'd blow them out of existence!

But, my friend, thank God He is not doing that. He *loves* this little earth. He loves the human family. He loves us to the extent that He gave His Son to die for us down here! He is patiently dealing with us, but He must get glory to Himself.

Why does God permit Russia to come down against His people? And why does God destroy the enemy? This is not senseless. Listen to God's reason:

And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen [the Gentiles] may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. (Ezekiel 38:16)

Russia's godless leaders have been blaspheming God for years, and people ask, "How do they get by with it?" I remember as a boy when I swiped my first watermelon. I actually thought that lightning would come out of heaven and strike me dead. But, you know, after you do that about half a dozen times, you come to the conclusion that God is not going to do anything about it. That is the feeling of mankind at the present moment. They think that God is not going to do anything about their rebellion. God's name is being blasphemed, and God is going to get glory to Himself. Listen to Him again:

So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. (Ezekiel 39:7)

He hasn't done that yet, but He is going to do it. This world must know that He is God, that He is *holy*, but that He is also the *Savior*.

Now, I conclude with this question: How else but by force should God put down mankind's rebellion? If you are one who likes to criticize God for what He does, how do *you* think He ought to do it?

Suppose that Jesus came back to this earth tomorrow, like He came some two thousand years ago, the man of Galilee, the carpenter of Nazareth, the gentle Jesus. Suppose He goes to the Kremlin, knocks at the door and says to the man in charge, "I'm Jesus. I'm here to take over." Do you think they would say, "Wonderful, we've been waiting for You!"? No, more likely they would put Him before a firing squad in the morning. How do you think He could take over Russia today? He would have to break them with a rod of iron, would He not? Suppose He goes to France. Would they turn over the reins of government to Him? Suppose He goes to Rome. Not long ago I went over the Tiber and listened to a man speak. Although I could not understand what he was saying, I was told that he was telling the world how they ought to do it. Suppose Jesus knocks on the door of the Vatican. The man with the long garment would come to the door, and the Lord Jesus would say, "I'm here to take over." What do you think he would say? I think he would say, "Now look, You've come a little too soon. I am doing so well that I don't really need You." Suppose He comes to the United States and stops by the Democratic headquarters or the Republican headquarters and says, "I am here to take over." I am sure they would say, "We have all our candidates for the next presidential campaign; we don't need You." Suppose He comes to the World Council of Churches today and says to Protestantism, "I'm here!" Would they receive Him? Perhaps you think they would. Then why don't they receive Him today? My friend, when He comes the second time He will come exactly as He said – "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).

He is a potentate, a despot. When a despot comes to power, he bowls over all opposition. Whether you like it or not, Jesus Christ will be the dictator on this earth someday. But, my friend, when He is, He will be a benevolent, wonderful dictator, and the earth will be a safe and good place to live. That is the plan in the mind of God. He has a glorious purpose for this earth. He is not going to turn it over to Satan with his minions and to evil men. The Lord Jesus is going to take it back to Himself and rule on this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the Good Shepherd who has given His life for His sheep. The Lord is my Shepherd; His rod and His staff they comfort me. That rod will someday break down all opposition. That is a great comfort to us who are His own.

But if you are not going to yield to Him now, you will in that day when "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and ... every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10, 11).

This is a day when God is not moving to put down rebellion. I am very frank to say that He is permitting it to escalate. Do you know why? It is because He is patient, longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all might come to the knowledge of the truth.