

Global Warming

Armageddon and the Fall of Babylon – Part II

Revelation 16:8-21

Introduction

I made a comment this past Sunday about cats and the pity I have for those who have them. I received several responses!

One response was in the form of an email that began with the words, “I know how much you like cats. Here is a timesaver on cleaning the commode that you might like to use.”

Seven Easy Steps

- Step #1: Lift the commode lid and put one cup of pet shampoo in the bowl.
- Step #2: Pick up the cat and soothe him while carrying him toward the bathroom.
- Step #3: In one swift/smooth motion, put the cat in the commode and close the lid. You may need to stand on the lid.
- Step #4: The cat will move around making ample suds. Never mind the noises, the cat is actually enjoying this.
- Step #5: Flush three or four times – this creates a wash and rinse effect.
- Step #6: Have someone open the front door of the house and be sure no one is between the bathroom and the door.
- Step #7: Stand behind the commode as far as you can, and quickly lift the lid. The cat will rocket out, race through the door and outside where he will dry himself off.

What is the result? Both the commode and the cat will be sparkling clean.

What a great tip!

By the way, I almost missed that the email was signed,

“Yours sincerely,

The Dog”

Keep those emails coming!

A conference on climate change was held in 1965 in Boulder, Colorado. Evidence was presented by leading scientists supporting the belief that small

changes in sunlight were going to trigger cataclysmic events relative to weather pattern changes.

In 1966 interest grew and an eminent scientist predicted that “a new glaciation will begin within a few thousand years.” In other words, the earth will enter another ice age. In his 1968 book *The Population Bomb* the author wrote that the increased level of carbon dioxide was making it impossible to predict what the overall climatic change would be . . . but global cooling was the consensus.¹

A *New York Times* headline in 1974 read “Another Ice Age”. In 1975 *Newsweek* magazine carried an article supported by all the experts discussing the coming freeze and that within ten years or so, food production might be unable to keep up.

All this is forgotten history, is it not? Now, the latest rage is the coming global warming.

Thanks to politicians and environmentalists who seem intent on curbing human growth and development, global warming has become dogma. The scientists who deny it, a number which has been growing more and more vocal in the past few years, are considered heretics.

One hotel that is now completely green – that is environmentally friendly – has even replaced the customary copy of the Bible in its hotel rooms with a documentary. This documentary basically announces that humankind is responsible for ruining the planet and that global warming is unavoidable.

If you have been studying along with me, you have probably picked up on the fact that until and throughout the Tribulation period – a period of time that spells the end of the world as we know it – there happen to be oceans, rivers, lakes, trees, wind, rain, sunshine, grass, greenery, wheat, barley, cattle, etc. All of this clearly indicates that the normal cycles and patterns of weather and seasons have continued until the period of time just prior to Christ’s return to rule the planet.

It is indeed interesting that instrumental global records show that the temperature of planet Earth has risen by only one degree since 1880. In fact, from 1940 to 1960 the temperature rise flattened out and

even dipped, which caused the alarm in the 1970s that we were headed for a global freeze.

I found it fascinating to read the report of one news outlet a year ago, while all the hype of global warming was becoming the new politically correct viewpoint that, in the midst of all of this, all four major global temperature tracking outlets released data from 2008 showing that temperatures had actually dropped over the last year. Note that the drop in temperature in this one year was large enough to erase nearly all the global warming recorded over the past one hundred years!

This is an inconvenient truth, is it not?

It was reportedly the single fastest temperature change ever recorded – up or down.

What was the reason for this? Solar activity, not CO₂. Solar activity – which scientists say is a larger driver of climate change than man-made greenhouse gases.ⁱⁱ

All of this points to the fact that the temperature of planet Earth seems unpredictable – it can go up or down.

If you were living in 1970, you were afraid of the coming ice age. Now, if you lived in 2007, you have been inundated with the coming drought and famine.

Frankly, it *is* alarming for those who do not believe God is providentially controlling His planet for His ultimate purposes.

This planet is governed by God and He has determined, according to scripture, that the resources of the earth will continue to sustain billions of lives until He comes to judge it. No matter what your carbon footprint happens to be, mankind will not deter, detract, ruin, destroy, or otherwise alter the earth's natural resources given to sustain life.

The enemy of Christ has his agenda. He desires to subjugate humankind to the environment. More and more we hear and read of this agenda being marketed by many who essentially view mankind as an intruder on the planet. They believe the best thing we could ever do for planet Earth is cease to exist – we are just messing it all up. So, nature is not given as God's gift to sustain human life and provide for human benefit and pleasure, it actually is more important than human life.

This is the classic application of a culture heading for collapse, as described in Romans chapter 1. Mankind denies Creator God and elevates creation to the point that they actually become the servant to creation.

Mankind is thus unable to place the rights of human life above animal life, becomes terrified by the imagined shortage of natural resources, and ultimately becomes convinced that he, as an intruding species, has ruined nature. Instead of enjoying and subjugating creation under the guidance of a benevolent Creator God, as described in Genesis chapter 2, mankind becomes the victim of nature.

I have news for mankind. According to the Revelation of God, as time winds down leading up to Christ's glorious reign on the planet, there is a coming season in which the rumors of global cooling and the speculations of global warming will both be right! The world is heading for both global warming and global cooling at the same time.

This change will not be related to CO₂ emissions, carbon footprints, or meteorite impact. It will be the hand of God actually controlling the environment so that it delivers one act of judgment after another to the human race.

How ironic this will be for humanity after idolizing creation more than their Creator. Desiring to protect their planet rather than please the true and living God, they now are decimated as nature turns monstrous.

Let us find out the details in Revelation chapter 16.

The Fourth Bowl of God's Wrath

We will begin at verses 8-9a of Revelation 16.

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.

Men were scorched with fierce heat . . .

What we have, according to these verses, is global warming – for real. God's angel does something to the sun which perhaps creates solar flares – the heat is intensified ever so slightly.

Frankly, we do not often think of the delicate balance that exists between the earth and sun. Venus, the next planet closer to the sun, has an average temperature of 867 degrees Fahrenheit. The next planet farther away from the sun than Earth averages 85 degrees below zero. The truth is, even the slightest increase in energy radiated from the sun could easily raise the temperature on Earth by 100 degrees.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to the prophet Malachi, the day of God's judgment is coming and the earth will burn like a furnace (Malachi 4:1).

What would we want to do when it is so terribly hot? We would want to take a shower or jump in a lake or pond. Remember, however, every body of water has been turned into blood.

The antichrist and his followers have instigated the blood bath of Christians martyred for their unwillingness to take the mark of the beast. In return, they will experience the wrath of God by having to bathe in blood or not bathe at all.^{iv}

Add to this bowl of wrath the natural outcome of forest fires starting all over the planet. Unless Christ returns to the earth fairly soon, the planet will go up in smoke before it is time.

These bowls are the seven bowls of wrath. These are the final series of cataclysmic events prior to the return of Christ to rule in His millennial kingdom – His thousand-year kingdom on the earth.

Thus far, we have seen the oceans, rivers, and lakes turned into blood. We have seen the followers of the antichrist plagued with painful sores breaking out on their bodies.

Now, the sun is manipulated by Creator God to intensify its output and scorch planet Earth.

Mankind responds to this like Pharaoh of old. Instead of repenting, according to verse 9b, they, with unified voices,

. . . blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

The Fifth Bowl of God’s Wrath

Another angel is summoned and the fifth bowl is poured out. Notice verse 10.

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast [the antichrist], and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,

Previously, in chapter 13, we were told that Satan gave the antichrist his throne as a gift. John writes, in verse 2b,

. . . And the dragon [Satan] gave him [the beast or the antichrist] his power and his throne and great authority.

In verse 10 of chapter 16, however, the pitiful strength of Satan’s throne is seen as no match for the throne of God. God is the One who controls the universe and when God gives the order, suddenly, the lights go out!

If this were to happen, what would you do? You would probably wait a while and then try to stumble

out of the building – but outside it would be pitch black. You would use your key remote to make your car honk until you found it, but when you turned it on, the headlamps would emit no light.

The Greek text translated “to make dark,” implies that anything that gives light no longer will. A match could be struck and the heat felt, but no flame would be seen.

This is a precursor of the coming, eternal, outer darkness for all who refuse to worship the true and living God.

What irony this is – unbelievers have loved the darkness because their deeds were evil, and God will give them a taste of it.

It is possible that the believers are not affected, just as the Israelites were not affected when the plague of darkness invaded Egypt – the children of Israel had light (Exodus 10:23).^v

Exodus and Revelation become illustrations that those who follow Satan belong to the kingdom of darkness, and those who follow God belong to the kingdom of light (I Peter 2:9)!

What does mankind do in the face of this powerful demonstration? Notice verse 11.

and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

Can any pattern be seen in this? In verses 9, 11, and 21, the response is the same.

We would think now that people would begin to connect these terrible, miraculous plagues with the God of heaven and run from the antichrist to Creator God crying out for mercy. Instead, they do just the opposite – they cling to their sin and their false savior.

By the way, this should serve as a reminder to us that miraculous signs will not open anyone’s eyes to the truth of the gospel. If someone refuses the gospel, performing a miracle in front of them will not pry open their hardened heart. Not even an empty tomb will get their attention.

Instead of falling on their faces in repentance, unbelieving humanity raises their voices and with one unified voice, curses God’s name. They want to keep their sin and their false Messiah.

The Sixth Bowl of God’s Wrath

Now, as these bowls continue to pour out the wrath of God, a shift in focus occurs.

The first five bowls of wrath were God's final call to repentance. Sinners ignore this call and are now confirmed in their unbelief. The final two bowls of wrath contain the final judgments of God on a hardened, impenitent world of unbelievers.^{vi}

Look at verse 12.

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.

The source of the Euphrates is found in the snowfields and ice cap high up on the slopes of Mount Ararat. The intense heat of the fourth bowl of wrath will have melted the snow and ice cap.^{vii}

I could not help but wonder – if indeed the Ark of Noah has been frozen in the ice cap of Mount Ararat, would the ability to see it perhaps give the world pause as they observe the symbol of Earth's destruction by water and the invitation to salvation that all of mankind refused?

The Euphrates River plays a role in both the end of human history as we know it and the beginning. This river flowed near the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14).

The Euphrates is the longest river in western Asia and it stretches 1,800 miles from Syria to Babylon before emptying into the Persian Gulf.^{viii}

The melting of the snow and ice because of global warming from the fourth bowl of judgment would swell the Euphrates River. It would have become a rushing torrent, overflowing its banks. By the way, note that the text implies that the rivers of blood have returned (at least in this case) with the melting snow, to water.

The text says in verse 12,

. . . the great river, the Euphrates . . . water was dried up . . .

The question is, "Why? Why did God suddenly dry up the Euphrates River?"

John tells us in the last phrase of this verse.

. . . so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.

There is no doubt that the raging swollen water has swept away the bridges that span the river as the armies of the east are marching toward the plain of Armageddon just north of Jerusalem. In response, God miraculously dries up the Euphrates so that the kings and their armed forces can march into His deadly trap.^{ix}

How in the world would the armies of the earth's kingdoms think they stand a chance against Creator God? We are told in verses 13-14.

And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon [Satan] and out of the mouth of the beast [antichrist] and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs;

for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Frogs have long been associated with the occult world. The Egyptians worshiped Heka, a frog-headed goddess. In fact, she was one of the oldest goddesses who was said to have demonic power.^x

This is an amazing, miracle-working demonstration unleashed by the unholy trinity of Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet. With great signs and wonders, their demonic representatives convince the world that the "God" that is doing these terrible things is capable of being overthrown.

This text is looking to the future – and last – world war as world empires gather against God and His Messianic people.^{xi}

Tucked into this scene is an encouragement to those who follow Christ to stay alert. Look at verse 15.

Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.

In other words, a believer should not live in such a way that the return of Christ becomes an embarrassment due to compromises or a life lived in a manner unbecoming to a child of God.

God says, "I am coming like a thief."

Jesus Christ said the same thing in Matthew 24 to refer to His second coming – which we know follows these bowls of wrath. The apostle Paul refers to the day of the Lord – this day of judgment – as the coming of a thief in the night (I Thessalonians 5:2).

Unfortunately, for most of my generation, when we hear the words "thief in the night," as it relates to eschatology, we think of the rapture of the church. This is primarily because a Christian film was produced in the 1970s chronicling the life of a young lady left behind following the rapture of the church. The film was entitled *Thief in the Night*.

The biblical phrase “thief in the night” actually refers not to the rapture of the church, but to the second coming of Christ *with* His church at the end of the Tribulation to set up His reign on Earth.

The phrase appears in this verse as the believers who are living through the Tribulation, not knowing the exact moment of Christ’s return, are challenged to stay faithful and prepared, with their clothes on, as it were, ready to enter the kingdom of our Lord.

Prior to Christ’s return, the armies of the world will gather to overthrow His people and His throne.

We are told in verse 16 that the kings and their armies,

. . . gathered . . . together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

“Har” means “mountain” and “Megiddo” refers to a location in northern Israel.

Mount Megiddo is a small mountain located near the Mediterranean Sea, overlooking a valley that stretches twenty miles long and fourteen miles wide. It is the perfect place to serve as the command center for the armies of the final world war.^{xii}

Some Bible scholars believe these armies intend to battle against the antichrist as they rebel against his failed rule.

The more I have studied this text, the more I am convinced that though this might have been an earlier plan, the demons sent out to perform their deceiving acts of power are so convincing that the armies will arrive to battle against the coming King of Kings.

The Seventh Bowl of God’s Wrath

As these armies gather together, the final angel steps forward in verse 17 to empty his bowl of judgment from God. Notice verses 17-19a.

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.”

In other words, “My judgment on Earth is finishing up.”

And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.

The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. . . .

Let me pause at this point to say that this earthquake is so fierce that it changes the topography of the land.

The prophet Haggai wrote about an earthquake at the end of the world (Haggai 2:6, 7, 21). This, then, is the final global earthquake that literally undoes planet Earth.^{xiii}

John writes in these verses that Jerusalem is split geographically into three sections.

The great city is not Babylon; Revelation 11 clearly identifies the great city with Jerusalem.

This fits perfectly with the prophecies of the Old Testament.

The prophet Zechariah describes these changes in detail. The Mount of Olives is split in two, and a new valley is created and a spring of water will flow year-round from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea causing the desert to blossom like a rose (Zechariah 14:8 and Isaiah 35:1).

This upheaval will literally elevate Jerusalem and flatten the surrounding region into a plain.^{xiv}

Just as the judgment of God in the flood changed the topography of the planet, so this final act of judgment will change the topography of planet Earth. In fact, some believe it will return to pre-fall conditions.

Notice the changes mentioned in verse 20.

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

What is happening?

One author wrote, “This global earthquake, described in the original language as the shaking of the earth, will set off every rift well mapped by geologists. The rifts are worldwide. The entire western coast of America will be severed. From Alaska to the southern tip of Argentina; the fault lines that take in all of southern Europe and the entire coastline of the Mediterranean, following on eastward in a broadening band of fault lines all across central Asia. The whole of this will burst wide open when the final earthquake comes.”^{xv}

However, there is purpose in this chaos.

Isaiah’s prophecy will come true that every valley will be lifted up and every mountain and hill will be made low; and the rough ground will become a plain, and the rugged terrain will become a broad valley (Isaiah 40:4).

A believing scientist wrote in his commentary on this global upheaval, connected with the prophecy of Isaiah, that God intends this judgment to not only

punish mankind, but prepare the earth for His coming.

The effects of this worldwide earthquake will return to the earth the gentle rolling topography of the world as originally created. No more will there be great inaccessible, uninhabitable mountain ranges or deserts or ice caps. The physical environment of the millennium will be a restoration of the environment and conditions on the planet prior to the judgment of Noah's flood.^{xvi}

This is amazing to ponder, is it not?

Massive eruptions and terrestrial convulsions; the redistribution of land masses, mountain ranges, and islands, and the ensuing redirection of bodies of water – imagine it. The surface of the planet will be changed and prepared for the coming kingdom.

One author said that this may very well leave Jerusalem as the highest point on the earth, making it a fitting throne for the Great King who will rule for a thousand years.^{xvii}

However, this is not all that pounds the earth into a new form. Notice verse 21.

And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; . . .

Notice the result of this in the last half of the verse.

. . . and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Have you seen any hail lately? Little marble-sized hail gets everyone's attention, does it not?

The heaviest hailstones on record weighted two and a fourth pounds and fell in Bangladesh on April 14, 1986. Ninety-two people died.

Imagine hailstones the size of golf carts pummeling the earth. By the way, this is sudden global *cooling!* Frankly, it may be the way God puts out all the forest fires!

However, there may be symbolism in this final act of judgment. Why would God send hailstones as the last act of judgment upon these people who blasphemed God?

Perhaps it was simply a demonstration of Leviticus 24 when those who blasphemed God were to be stoned to death.

This becomes a precursor to the fact that everyone will be judged according to the fullness of God's law, and everyone apart from Christ's atoning

work will face the fullness of God's wrath. And it all wraps up with an earthquake, the likes of which have never been experienced before.

I was reminded of the fact that when God delivered the law to Moses, there was an earthquake. This was perhaps to let the Israelites know that the wrath of God is ever ready to judge those who break the law.

When God the Son hung on the cross and paid the penalty for all our sin, there was an earthquake. God the Father shook the earth perhaps to let the world know He had judged His Son on our behalf, for we have all broken the law.

This time God sends the final earthquake, shaking the earth perhaps to let the world know that God's judgment is now coming, and nothing will hold it back.

This becomes an illustration that the law of God that was delivered on Mount Sinai has been consistently broken; Christ has paid the penalty for every law breaker on Mount Calvary, but those who refuse Him will eventually march against Him by Mount Megiddo and end up paying forever in a place of eternal suffering, eternal thirst, eternal fire, and eternal darkness.

Darkness was man's choice all along.

- Mankind refuses the light of the gospel of Christ.
- Mankind chooses to believe in Mother Nature and the environment and refuses the account of the Creating Agent of the Triune God, according to Colossians 1, or Jesus Christ Himself, who spoke everything into existence at the beginning of creation. Jesus' first recorded words were, "Let there be light."
- Mankind refuses to surrender to Christ who is the light of the world.
- Mankind refuses the gospel of Christ which is called the gospel of light.
- God gives mankind his wish and banishes him to a place of everlasting darkness.

I noticed one other point that I will make as we wrap up this chapter. Over and over again in the Greek New Testament is the little word "mega," which is translated most often as "great". It appears over and over in chapter 16 of Revelation. There is:

- the sound of a great voice – verse 1;
- a great heat – verse 9;
- a great river – verse 12;

- the great day of God and the battle of Armageddon – verse 14;
- a great earthquake – verse 18;
- the great city – verse 19;
- a plague of great hailstones in the end – verse 21.

This is the great wrath of God, punctuated by the use of the word “great . . . great . . . great”. Great catastrophe; great anguish – these are the climactic acts of God’s great judgment during the Tribulation.

And the words that came to my mind at the end of my study were, “Great is Your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:23).

For those of us who believe in and are hidden in Christ alone:

- great is His mercy – Psalm 86;
- great is His grace – Acts 4;
- great is His love – Ephesians 2;
- great is the salvation that we have – Hebrews 2.

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary concerning her virgin-born son, the Savior, God the Son,

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; (Luke 1:32)

Now, we are almost at the point at which this prophecy will come true, along with a host of others.

Christ will descend in great splendor and take His throne in the great city of His kingdom. And the greatness of His glory will be displayed throughout the earth.

For those who refuse Him, great things will happen – and these things will be terrible in their greatness.

For those of who believe in Him, great things are in store – and they will experience the beautiful and marvelous display of God’s great glory.

Is it any wonder that we can say with great joy, great security, and even greater anticipation, “How great is our God!”?

ⁱ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_cooling.

ⁱⁱ “Evidence of Global Cooling,” Feb. 28, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,333328,00.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Stewart Custer, From Patmos to Paradise (BJU Press, 2004), p. 177.

^{iv} Daymond R. Duck and Larry Richards, The Book of Revelation (Thomas Nelson, 2006), p. 233.

^v Robert L. Thomas, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 1995), p. 259.

^{vi} John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 2000), p. 145.

^{vii} Ibid., p. 146.

^{viii} Sam Gordon, Revelation: Worthy is the Lamb (Ambassador, 2000), p. 332.

^{ix} MacArthur, p. 146.

^x Duck and Richards, p. 237.

^{xi} Thomas, p. 263.

^{xii} John Walvoord and Mark Hitchcock, Armageddon, Oil and Terror (Tyndale, 1974), p. 176.

^{xiii} Kendell H. Easley, Holman New Testament Commentary: Revelation (Broadman Holman, 1998), p. 291.

^{xiv} MacArthur, p. 152.

^{xv} John Phillips, Exploring Revelation (Loizeaux Brothers, 1991), p. 199.

^{xvi} Henry M. Morris, The Revelation Record (Tyndale House, 1986), p. 320.

^{xvii} MacArthur, p. 153.