

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 16 (PART 2)

REVELATION 16:1, 12-16 - 6TH BOWL: DEMONIC SPIRITS INFLUENCE GATHERING AT HAR-MEGEDON

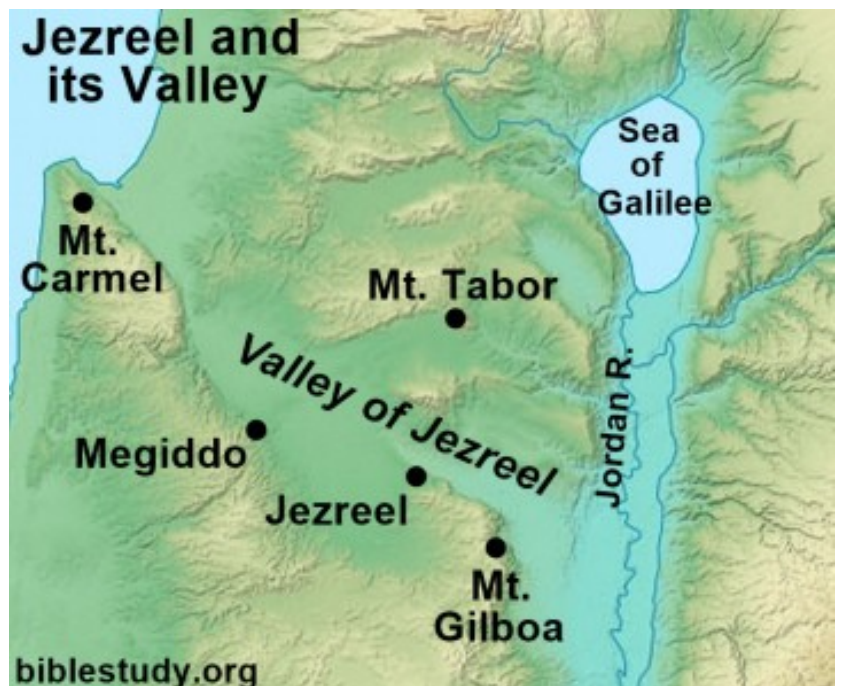
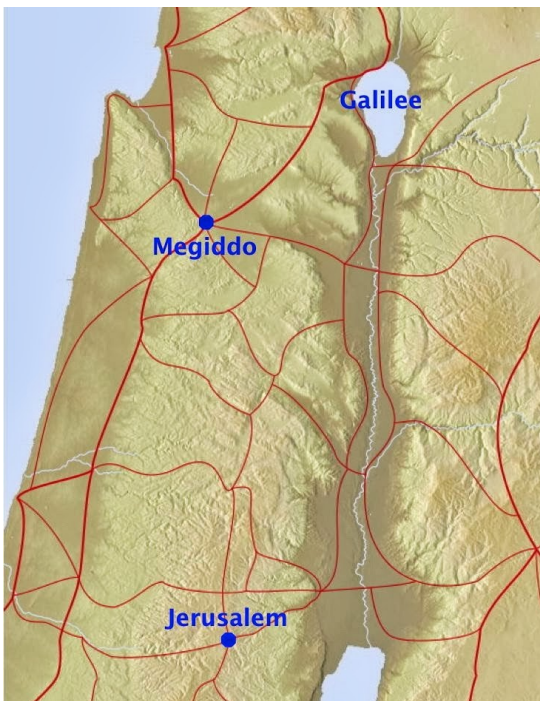
HAR - [OZ02Z], HAR: HILL, HILL COUNTRY, MOUNTAIN, MOUNT.

"HAR" MEANS MOUNTAIN, AND MEGIDDO IS THE PLACE OF THIS MOUNTAIN. MEGIDDO ISN'T REALLY A "MOUNTAIN" IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE, IT'S MORE OF A HILL THAT HAS BEEN BUILT UPON OVER AND OVER AGAIN. IT STANDS AS ONE OF THE HIGHER ELEVATIONS IN A REGION KNOWN AS THE JEZREEL VALLEY. THE JEZREEL VALLEY IS AN INTERSECTION POINT IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL (ABOUT 55 MILES NORTH OF JERUSALEM)

"IT'S BEEN CALLED THE "HEART" OF THE PROMISED LAND—A 141-SQUARE-MILE TRIANGLE IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL AREA OF ISRAEL. TODAY, THE JEZREEL VALLEY IS ISRAEL'S BREADBASKET. A BEAUTIFUL PLAIN OF FERTILE FIELDS AND WINDING ROADS, IT'S HEMMED IN BY ROLLING MOUNTAINS THAT OFFER STUNNING SCENIC VIEWS.

LOCATED AT THE CROSSROADS OF TWO INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ROUTES, THE JEZREEL VALLEY HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE FOR TRAVEL, TRADE, AND MILITARY CAMPAIGNS. THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY PASSES THROUGH THE VALLEY, CONNECTING THE MAJOR CENTERS OF EGYPT WITH DAMASCUS. THE COASTAL HIGHWAY EXTENDS NORTH FROM EGYPT TO PHOENICIA. THE GREAT FORTRESS CITY OF MEGIDDO LIES AT THE JUNCTION OF THESE TWO HIGHWAYS."

NO ONE TRAVELING NORTH TO SOUTH OR EAST TO WEST COULD AVOID PASSING THROUGH THE JEZREEL VALLEY. IT WAS THE MAIN CONNECTING POINT BETWEEN THE NATIONS, LIKE A GIANT "X" IN THE MIDDLE OF ISRAEL—A GRAND CENTRAL STATION OF SORTS. AND BECAUSE IT GUARDED THE EASIEST ROUTE TO THE FERTILE CRESCENT, WHOEVER CONTROLLED THE JEZREEL VALLEY CONTROLLED TRAVEL AND TRADE (IE., TAXES). THIS FLAT VALLEY AND UNIQUE AND STRATEGIC LOCATION—COMBINED WITH TWO NATURAL WATER SOURCES—TURNED THIS LAND INTO THE MOST CONTESTED PIECE OF REAL ESTATE IN ANTIQUITY. PERHAPS THIS IS WHY NAPOLEON CALLED THE JEZREEL VALLEY "THE MOST NATURAL BATTLEGROUND OF THE WHOLE EARTH." (VIA LOGOS.COM/GROW/IS-THE-JEZREEL-VALLEY-THE-STAGE-FOR-THE-FINAL-BATTLE/)



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MOST SIGNIFICANT FROM A BIBLICAL-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IS THIS IS WHERE A BATTLE WAS FOUGHT DURING THE REIGN OF JOSIAH. THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH FOUGHT AGAINST EGYPT (RULED BY PHARAOH NECO) AND IT WAS IN THIS AREA THAT JUDAH WAS DEFEATED AND KING JOSIAH WAS KILLED.

2 CHRONICLES 35:20-27 (NLT) - AFTER JOSIAH HAD FINISHED RESTORING THE TEMPLE, KING NECO OF EGYPT LED HIS ARMY UP FROM EGYPT TO DO BATTLE AT CARCHEMISH ON THE EUPHRATES RIVER, AND JOSIAH AND HIS ARMY MARCHED OUT TO FIGHT HIM. 21 BUT KING NECO SENT MESSENGERS TO JOSIAH WITH THIS MESSAGE: "WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME, KING OF JUDAH? I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU TODAY! I AM ON MY WAY TO FIGHT ANOTHER NATION, AND GOD HAS TOLD ME TO HURRY! DO NOT INTERFERE WITH GOD, WHO IS WITH ME, OR HE WILL DESTROY YOU."

22 BUT JOSIAH REFUSED TO LISTEN TO NECO, TO WHOM GOD HAD INDEED SPOKEN, AND HE WOULD NOT TURN BACK. INSTEAD, HE DISGUISED HIMSELF AND LED HIS ARMY INTO BATTLE ON **THE PLAIN OF MEGIDDO**.

23 BUT THE ENEMY ARCHERS HIT KING JOSIAH WITH THEIR ARROWS AND WOUNDED HIM. HE CRIED OUT TO HIS MEN, "TAKE ME FROM THE BATTLE, FOR I AM BADLY WOUNDED!" 24 SO THEY LIFTED JOSIAH OUT OF HIS CHARIOT AND PLACED HIM IN ANOTHER CHARIOT. THEN THEY BROUGHT HIM BACK TO JERUSALEM, WHERE HE DIED. HE WAS BURIED THERE IN THE ROYAL CEMETERY. AND ALL JUDAH AND JERUSALEM MOURNED FOR HIM. 25 THE PROPHET JEREMIAH COMPOSED FUNERAL SONGS FOR JOSIAH, AND TO THIS DAY CHOIRS STILL SING THESE SAD SONGS ABOUT HIS DEATH. THESE SONGS OF SORROW HAVE BECOME A TRADITION AND ARE RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF LAMENTS. 26 THE REST OF THE EVENTS OF JOSIAH'S REIGN AND HIS ACTS OF DEVOTION (CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO WHAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF THE LORD), 27 FROM BEGINNING TO END-- ALL ARE RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

2 CHRONICLES 36:1-7 (NLT) - THEN THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND TOOK JOSIAH'S SON JEHOAHAZ AND MADE HIM THE NEXT KING IN JERUSALEM. 2 JEHOAHAZ WAS TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME KING, AND HE REIGNED IN JERUSALEM THREE MONTHS. 3 THEN HE WAS DEPOSED BY THE KING OF EGYPT, WHO DEMANDED THAT JUDAH PAY 7,500 POUNDS OF SILVER AND 75 POUNDS OF GOLD AS TRIBUTE. 4 THE KING OF EGYPT THEN INSTALLED ELIAKIM, THE BROTHER OF JEHOAHAZ, AS THE NEXT KING OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM, AND HE CHANGED ELIAKIM'S NAME TO JEHOIAKIM. THEN NECO TOOK JEHOAHAZ TO EGYPT AS A PRISONER. 5 JEHOIAKIM WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME KING, AND HE REIGNED IN JERUSALEM ELEVEN YEARS. HE DID WHAT WAS EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD HIS GOD. 6 THEN KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR OF BABYLON CAME TO JERUSALEM AND CAPTURED IT, AND HE BOUND JEHOIAKIM IN BRONZE CHAINS AND LED HIM AWAY TO BABYLON. 7 NEBUCHADNEZZAR ALSO TOOK SOME OF THE TREASURES FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, AND HE PLACED THEM IN HIS PALACE IN BABYLON.

2 CHRONICLES 36:15-20 (NLT) - THE LORD, THE GOD OF THEIR ANCESTORS, REPEATEDLY SENT HIS PROPHETS TO WARN THEM, FOR HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIS PEOPLE AND HIS TEMPLE. 16 BUT THE PEOPLE MOCKED THESE MESSENGERS OF GOD AND DESPISED THEIR WORDS. THEY SCOFFED AT THE PROPHETS UNTIL THE LORD'S ANGER COULD NO LONGER BE RESTRAINED AND NOTHING COULD BE DONE. 17 SO THE LORD BROUGHT THE KING OF BABYLON AGAINST THEM. THE BABYLONIANS KILLED JUDAH'S YOUNG MEN, EVEN CHASING AFTER THEM INTO THE TEMPLE. THEY HAD NO PITY ON THE PEOPLE, KILLING BOTH YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN, THE OLD AND THE INFIRM. GOD HANDED ALL OF THEM OVER TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR. 18 THE KING TOOK HOME TO BABYLON ALL THE ARTICLES, LARGE AND SMALL, USED IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THE TREASURES FROM BOTH THE LORD'S TEMPLE AND FROM THE PALACE OF THE KING AND HIS OFFICIALS. 19 THEN HIS ARMY BURNED THE TEMPLE OF GOD, TORE DOWN THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM, BURNED ALL THE PALACES, AND COMPLETELY DESTROYED EVERYTHING OF VALUE. 20 THE FEW WHO SURVIVED WERE TAKEN AS EXILES TO BABYLON, AND THEY BECAME SERVANTS TO THE KING AND HIS SONS UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF PERSIA CAME TO POWER.

THE DEATH OF JOSIAH, IN THE "PLAIN OF MEGIDDO" (**2 CHRONICLES 35:22**), SIGNALLED THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH, AND THE RISE OF BABYLON'S EMPIRE AND THE EXILE OF GOD'S PEOPLE FROM THE PROMISED LAND.

IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION, A FINAL BATTLE IS MENTIONED WHERE THE KINGS OF THE EARTH WILL GATHER. THE LAST SIGNIFICANT BATTLE OF THIS AREA WAS THE END OF JUDAH'S REIGN AND THE RISE OF BABYLON. THE FINAL BATTLE IN THIS AREA WILL BE THE END OF "BABYLON" AND THE RISE OF THE LION OF JUDAH'S REIGN.

IN FACT, WE WILL LEARN IN REVELATION 19, THAT THOUGH THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH WILL GATHER THEIR FORCES AGAINST GOD, THEIR MARCH WILL BE FUTILE:

REVELATION 19:19-21 (NLT) - THEN I SAW THE BEAST AND THE KINGS OF THE WORLD AND THEIR ARMIES GATHERED TOGETHER TO FIGHT AGAINST THE ONE SITTING ON THE HORSE AND HIS ARMY. 20 AND THE BEAST WAS CAPTURED, AND WITH HIM THE FALSE PROPHET WHO DID MIGHTY MIRACLES ON BEHALF OF THE BEAST-- MIRACLES THAT DECEIVED ALL WHO HAD ACCEPTED THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND WHO WORSHIPED HIS STATUE. BOTH THE BEAST AND HIS FALSE PROPHET WERE THROWN ALIVE INTO THE FIERY LAKE OF BURNING SULFUR. 21 THEIR ENTIRE ARMY WAS KILLED BY THE SHARP SWORD THAT CAME FROM THE MOUTH OF THE ONE RIDING THE WHITE HORSE. AND THE VULTURES ALL GORGED THEMSELVES ON THE DEAD BODIES.

SO WHAT IS "ARMAGEDDON"? ARMAGEDDON IS THE LOCATION OF THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD'S FINAL ATTEMPT TO RESIST GOD AND HIS RULE. SPECIFICALLY, THE DEVIL'S FINAL ATTEMPT TO GAIN POWER AND CONTROL - REMEMBER THE "KINGS OF THE WHOLE WORLD" GATHER TOGETHER AFTER BEING DECEIVED BY THE DEMONS (LIKE FROGS) WHICH COME OUT OF THE DRAGON'S MOUTH.

THIS MAY BE A LITERAL EVENT IN THIS LITERAL PLACE, OR IT MAY BE SPIRITUALLY SYMBOLIC OF THE ATTEMPTS OF THE DEVIL TO FIGHT AGAINST GOD'S PLAN AND THE FUTILITY OF THAT ATTEMPT.

IN 2 CHRONICLES, MEGIDDO WAS THE PLACE WHERE THE LAST RIGHTEOUS DAVIDIC KING WAS KILLED. THE TEXT TELLS US THAT THERE WAS GREAT MOURNING AT THE DEATH OF JOSIAH. JOSIAH WAS KILLED AFTER BEING PIERCED BY AN ARROW ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO JERUSALEM WHERE HE DIED.

2 CHRONICLES 35:22-25 - BUT JOSIAH REFUSED TO LISTEN TO NECO, TO WHOM GOD HAD INDEED SPOKEN, AND HE WOULD NOT TURN BACK. INSTEAD, HE DISGUISED HIMSELF AND LED HIS ARMY INTO BATTLE ON THE PLAIN OF MEGIDDO. 23 BUT THE ENEMY ARCHERS HIT KING JOSIAH WITH THEIR ARROWS AND WOUNDED HIM. HE CRIED OUT TO HIS MEN, "TAKE ME FROM THE BATTLE, FOR I AM BADLY WOUNDED!" 24 SO THEY LIFTED JOSIAH OUT OF HIS CHARIOT AND PLACED HIM IN ANOTHER CHARIOT. THEN THEY BROUGHT HIM BACK TO JERUSALEM, WHERE HE DIED. HE WAS BURIED THERE IN THE ROYAL CEMETERY. AND ALL JUDAH AND JERUSALEM MOURNED FOR HIM. 25 THE PROPHET JEREMIAH COMPOSED FUNERAL SONGS FOR JOSIAH, AND TO THIS DAY CHOIRS STILL SING THESE SAD SONGS ABOUT HIS DEATH. THESE SONGS OF SORROW HAVE BECOME A TRADITION AND ARE RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF LAMENTS.

THE ANOINTED, DAVIDIC KING (JOSIAH) DIES IN JERUSALEM AFTER BEING PIERCED IN A BATTLE THAT TOOK PLACE IN MEGIDDO. THE ENTIRE NATION MOURNED THIS TERRIBLE EVENT. SOON AFTER THAT EVENT, JERUSALEM WAS DESTROYED AND GOD'S PEOPLE WERE OVERTAKEN BY BABYLON.

READ THAT AGAIN: THE ANOINTED, DAVIDIC KING (JOSIAH) DIES IN JERUSALEM AFTER BEING PIERCED IN A BATTLE THAT TOOK PLACE IN MEGIDDO. THE ENTIRE NATION MOURNED THIS TERRIBLE EVENT. SOON AFTER THAT EVENT, JERUSALEM WAS DESTROYED AND GOD'S PEOPLE WERE OVERTAKEN BY BABYLON.

NOW LET'S READ AN END-TIME PROPHECY FROM THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH AND THINK ABOUT IT IN LIGHT OF THE FINAL BATTLE AT HAR-MEGIDDO MENTIONED IN REVELATION 16:

ZECHARIAH 12:1-9 (NLT) - THIS MESSAGE CONCERNING THE FATE OF ISRAEL CAME FROM THE LORD: "THIS MESSAGE IS FROM THE LORD, WHO STRETCHED OUT THE HEAVENS, LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH, AND FORMED THE HUMAN SPIRIT. 2 I WILL MAKE JERUSALEM LIKE AN INTOXICATING DRINK THAT MAKES THE NEARBY NATIONS STAGGER WHEN THEY SEND THEIR ARMIES TO BESIEGE JERUSALEM AND JUDAH.

3 ON THAT DAY I WILL MAKE JERUSALEM AN IMMOVABLE ROCK. ALL THE NATIONS WILL GATHER AGAINST IT TO TRY TO MOVE IT, BUT THEY WILL ONLY HURT THEMSELVES. 4 "ON THAT DAY," SAYS THE LORD, "I WILL CAUSE EVERY HORSE TO PANIC AND EVERY RIDER TO LOSE HIS NERVE. I WILL WATCH OVER THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH, BUT I WILL BLIND ALL THE HORSES OF THEIR ENEMIES.

5 AND THE CLANS OF JUDAH WILL SAY TO THEMSELVES, 'THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM HAVE FOUND STRENGTH IN THE LORD OF HEAVEN'S ARMIES, THEIR GOD.' 6 "ON THAT DAY I WILL MAKE THE CLANS OF JUDAH LIKE A FLAME THAT SETS A WOODPILE ABLAZE OR LIKE A BURNING TORCH AMONG SHEAVES OF GRAIN. THEY WILL BURN UP ALL THE NEIGHBORING NATIONS RIGHT AND LEFT, WHILE THE PEOPLE LIVING IN JERUSALEM REMAIN SECURE.

7 "THE LORD WILL GIVE VICTORY TO THE REST OF JUDAH FIRST, BEFORE JERUSALEM, SO THAT THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM AND THE ROYAL LINE OF DAVID WILL NOT HAVE GREATER HONOR THAN THE REST OF JUDAH. 8 ON THAT DAY THE LORD WILL DEFEND THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM; THE WEAKEST AMONG THEM WILL BE AS MIGHTY AS KING DAVID! AND THE ROYAL DESCENDANTS WILL BE LIKE GOD, LIKE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD WHO GOES BEFORE THEM! 9 FOR ON THAT DAY I WILL BEGIN TO DESTROY ALL THE NATIONS THAT COME AGAINST JERUSALEM.

GOD PROMISES TO REVERSE THE FORTUNES OF HIS PEOPLE. WHEN THE NATIONS GATHER AGAINST JUDAH/JERUSALEM, GOD WILL FIGHT FOR THEM! HALLELUJAH! AND ALL OF THE ENEMIES OF GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE DESTROYED. BUT, SOMETHING INCREDIBLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN AT THIS MOMENT - LET'S READ ON TO SEE HOW THIS PROPHECY CONCLUDES:

ZECHARIAH 12:10-11 (NLT) - "THEN I WILL POUR OUT A SPIRIT OF GRACE AND PRAYER ON THE FAMILY OF DAVID AND ON THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM. THEY WILL LOOK ON ME WHOM THEY HAVE **PIERCED** AND MOURN FOR HIM AS FOR AN ONLY SON. THEY WILL GRIEVE BITTERLY FOR HIM AS FOR A FIRSTBORN SON WHO HAS DIED. 11 THE SORROW AND MOURNING IN JERUSALEM ON THAT DAY WILL BE LIKE THE GREAT MOURNING FOR HADAD-RIMMON IN THE VALLEY OF **MEGIDDO**.

GOD IS GOING TO FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE AND WHEN THEY SEE HOW HE BRINGS VICTORY, THERE WILL SURELY BE JOY (MORE ON THAT IN A MOMENT) BUT IN A REMARKABLE TWIST THERE WILL ALSO BE SORROW AND MOURNING! AND THE MOURNING WILL BE JUST LIKE THE MOURNING THAT HAPPENED IN THE VALLEY OF **MEGIDDO** (WHEN THE NATION MOURNED THE DEATH OF GREAT KING JOSIAH) - SO, WHY WILL THERE BE MOURNING? BECAUSE THE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO SEE THAT SALVATION IS COMING TO THEM THROUGH THE ONE WHO WAS **PIERCED**!!

GOD'S PEOPLE MOURNED WHEN THE ARROW **PIERCED** THEIR KING (JOSIAH), LEADING TO HIS DEATH AND THEIR EVENTUAL DESTRUCTION. YET IN THE END OF THE AGE, GOD'S PEOPLE ARE GOING TO MOURN BECAUSE THEY SEE THAT THE WAY THEY ARE SAVED IS THROUGH **THE ONE WHO WAS **PIERCED****!

ISAIAH 53:5-6 - BUT HE WAS **PIERCED** THROUGH FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS CRUSHED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHASTENING FOR OUR WELL-BEING FELL UPON HIM, AND BY HIS SCOURGING WE ARE HEALED. 6 ALL OF US LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY, EACH OF US HAS TURNED TO HIS OWN WAY; BUT THE LORD HAS CAUSED THE INIQUITY OF US ALL TO FALL ON HIM.

GOD SAVES HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS "ONLY SON" JESUS! AND EVEN THOUGH VICTORY IS COMING, THERE WILL BE SORROW AS GOD'S PEOPLE AGAIN REMEMBER WHAT IT COST.

1 PETER 1:18-19 (NLT) - FOR YOU KNOW THAT GOD PAID A RANSOM TO SAVE YOU FROM THE EMPTY LIFE YOU INHERITED FROM YOUR ANCESTORS. AND THE RANSOM HE PAID WAS NOT MERE GOLD OR SILVER. 19 IT WAS THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, THE SINLESS, SPOTLESS LAMB OF GOD.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:9-10A - FOR GOD HAS NOT DESTINED US FOR WRATH, BUT FOR OBTAINING SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, 10 WHO DIED FOR US...

WITH A FULL MIX OF GRATITUDE AND SORROW AND JOY, WE WILL SEE THAT GOD WILL BRING VICTORY OVER EVIL'S LAST ATTEMPT AT REBELLION AND IN THE END WILL BE THE SUPREME AND VICTORIOUS CONQUEROR. ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY TELLS US HOW THE STORY CONCLUDES:

ZECHARIAH 14:3-5 (NLT) - THEN THE LORD WILL GO OUT TO FIGHT AGAINST THOSE NATIONS, AS HE HAS FOUGHT IN TIMES PAST. 4 ON THAT DAY HIS FEET WILL STAND ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, EAST OF JERUSALEM. AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES WILL SPLIT APART, MAKING A WIDE VALLEY RUNNING FROM EAST TO WEST. HALF THE MOUNTAIN WILL MOVE TOWARD THE NORTH AND HALF TOWARD THE SOUTH. 5 YOU WILL FLEE THROUGH THIS VALLEY, FOR IT WILL REACH ACROSS TO AZAL. YES, YOU WILL FLEE AS YOU DID FROM THE EARTHQUAKE IN THE DAYS OF KING UZZIAH OF JUDAH. THEN THE LORD MY GOD WILL COME, AND ALL HIS HOLY ONES WITH HIM.

ZECHARIAH 14:9 (NLT) - AND THE LORD WILL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH. ON THAT DAY THERE WILL BE ONE LORD-- HIS NAME ALONE WILL BE WORSHIPED.

THE WRATH OF GOD IS GOING TO COME AND ALL OPPOSITION TO THE LORD'S REIGN AND RULE WILL BE STOPPED AND OVERCOME. GOD WILL FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE AND THEIR ENEMIES WILL BE DESTROYED. AND THOSE WHO SEE THE LORD'S SALVATION WILL HAVE A MIX OF MOURNING AND REJOICING AS THEY SEE THAT GOD'S WAY OF SAVING THE WORLD WAS THROUGH THE ONE WHO WAS PIERCED - JESUS THE ANOINTED ONE - THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF GOD - WHO IS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.