

# Revelation 19:17-19

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*An angel calls for birds to gather. The kings, commanders, and warriors of the antichrist are about to be slain, and there will be a “great supper” for the vultures, crows, and so on. The “beast” (the antichrist) and all his armies assemble to fight Jesus.*

*Then John says I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”*

The word translated *angel* means “messenger” and can refer to human or angelic beings. In this case, it seems likely this is an angelic figure, since he is said to be *standing in the sun*. This might indicate that John is viewing a figure standing in mid-air, with the *sun* as his backdrop. The *angel* calls the *birds which fly in mid heaven* to assemble to a battleground, because there is about to be a large assembly of human carcasses for them to feast upon. This appears to be similar to the prophetic call to the birds in Ezekiel 39:17.

The *birds which fly in mid heaven* likely refers to birds of prey, such as eagles and hawks, as well as scavengers such as vultures. These are birds that fly high in the sky (*mid heaven*), looking for a meal. The angel gives them a divine invitation to assemble, indicating a massacre is afoot.

The angel is predicting this carnage to be inflicted upon *kings*, as well as *commanders* and *mighty men*. These army leaders who assembled to oppose Jesus will all fall to the might of Jesus, who is descending on His white horse, followed by His armies. Also in the carnage will be the *flesh of horses* and of the riders, including *free men and slaves*. These are the ones who will be squashed like grapes in a wine press.

John reports *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army*. The *beast* is the ultimate anti-Christ. Some things the Bible says about the beast:

- He is ...the “man of lawlessness,” “the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4)
- He is the one who “makes desolate” and creates the “abomination of desolation” spoken of in Daniel 9:27-28, and referenced by Jesus in Matthew 24:15.
- He is the one to whom “ten kings” cede their power, creating a world dictator and tyrant over the world. These “ten kings” give “their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:12-13).

- Through the false prophet, he prohibits anyone to buy or sell anything unless they have taken his mark, which appears to require an oath of loyalty and perhaps a recognition of his claim to being a deity (Revelation 13:17).
- It is he who will speak “blasphemies against God” (Revelation 13:6).
- For this season of time, “All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain” (Revelation 13:7).
- For a season, the beast is given “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.” (Revelation 13:7)
- It is this beast who will “make war with the saints and to overcome them” for a season (Revelation 13:7).
- He will require that he be worshipped (Revelation 14:11).
- He will also behead those who refuse to take his mark and worship him (Revelation 20:4).

The *beast* has gathered with *the kings of the earth*. This shows that the *beast* has become the leader of all the earth’s leaders. This fits with what we learned in chapter 17, where the “ten kings” ceded their power and authority over to the *beast*. The “ten kings” could refer to ten literal nations. It probably also refers to a complete world dominance, as the number ten is used in the Bible to picture exhaustive or consistent behavior, as in these verses:

- “Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times” (Jacob speaking to his father-in-law in Genesis 31:7, also in 31:41).
- “...yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice” (God speaking to Israel in Numbers 14:22).
- “These ten times you have insulted me;” (Job speaking to his friends in Job 19:3).
- “As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.” (Speaking of Daniel and his friends in Daniel 1:20).

So likely here the “ten kings” includes reference to a complete domination of the *beast* over the secular realms of the earth. This would explain why here the *beast* is gathered with what appears to be all *the kings of the earth* rather than just ten nations. That the phrase *kings of the earth* refers to the nations of the earth is shown by the addition of the phrase *and their armies*.

Their purpose in their gathering is specific. It is to *make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army*. It could be that this group of *armies* of the earth is the same as those gathered in the Valley of Jezreel (Revelation 16:13-16). The Jezreel Valley is called by other names, including Armageddon or Har-Magedon, which translates as “Hill of Megiddo”. The Hill of Megiddo overlooks the Jezreel Valley and they became synonymous. This valley is in northern Israel, near the ancient city of Megiddo. In ancient times it was a frequent battleground, as the city of Megiddo was highly strategic, being a sort of toll booth for the two primary trade routes connecting the Far East with Egypt. The “King’s Highway” and the “Via Del Mar” (Way of the Sea) came close together in the Valley of Jezreel.

Chapter 16 tells us that “unclean spirits” will exert supernatural influence to gather together the armies in the Valley of Jezreel. This could be a gathering place to muster the beast’s forces for an assault on Jerusalem. If so, the phrase describing the beast as having gathered *to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army* could refer to the beast making an assault upon Jerusalem, and attacking God’s chosen people (Romans 11:1,26). Perhaps God considers this assault upon Jerusalem as an assault on Him.

Jesus will by this point have extracted many believers from the earth, having caught them up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Accordingly, there will likely be an awareness of a cosmic conflict. It seems that those who resist Jesus are aware of Him, but choose to defy Him, as evidenced by leaders of the earth trying to hide from the wrath of the Lamb of God (Revelation 6:15-17). Satan and his unclean spirits might cause these leaders to expect the heavenly invasion, and gather them in Israel to confront Him upon His return to earth.

This scene in Revelation 19 fits with Zechariah’s description of Jesus’s return to earth, where He will set foot on the Mount of Olives:

“Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”

(Zechariah 14:3-4)

Jesus could return, set foot on the Mount of Olives, then direct His vengeance upon the attacking armies. He could also slay them while in the air, then land upon the Mount of Olives. We are not given details of these events, no “movie,” only some “still shots” and a description of the outcome. The apostles were told by the angels that Jesus would return to the Mount of Olives, just as He departed (Acts 1:11).

This passage speaks of God’s justice being meted upon “those nations” who invade Israel at a time that is still future to us.

(There will come a time when various references to “still in the future” will become obsolete. At that time, the authors of thebiblesays.com do not expect to still be stewarding the site, but hope to have met Jesus in the air. If this site is still running, then you have the opportunity to be a saint by refusing the mark of the beast and being a faithful witness. So please adjust as appropriate.)

There is another, similar battle that will occur at the end of the thousand year reign which Jesus initiates after the beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, and Satan is locked away into the abyss (Revelation 19:20; 20:1-4). After the thousand years, Satan is released for a time and succeeds in getting the nations to gather against Jerusalem, King Jesus’s capital once more (Revelation 20:7-8). Revelation 20:7-8 mentions Gog and Magog, which are also mentioned in the battle discussed in Ezekiel 38-39. This passage in Ezekiel 38-39 could include a prophesy about either or both battles. The Bible includes many detailed prophetic descriptions

that demonstrate God's foreknowledge, but are only fully understood in hindsight. The prophecies of Daniel would provide an apt illustration of this, particularly chapters 11 and 12.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>17</sup> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup> so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."**

**<sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies who sat on the horse and against His army.**