

What Is ARMAGEDDON?

Is it a place? An event? Is it the end of the world as we know it? Who will it involve? Few know what Armageddon means. What does the Bible really say? Now you can understand!

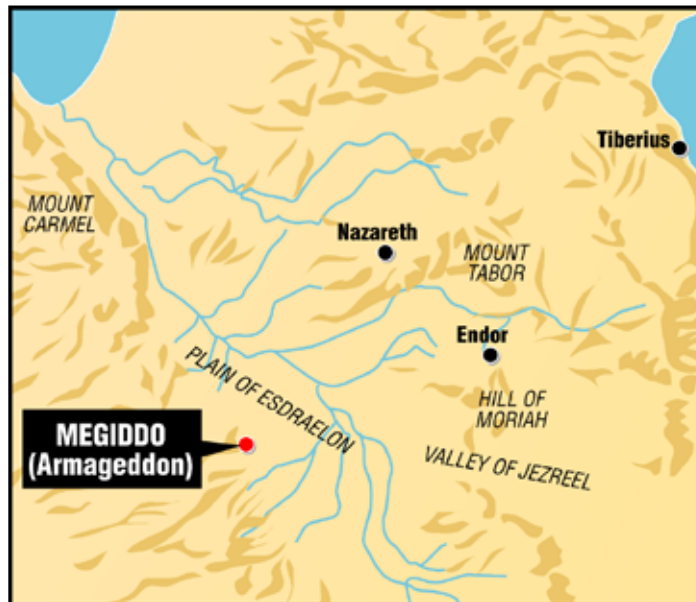
BY DAVID C. PACK

NEARLY EVERYONE has heard of *Armageddon*! Hundreds of authors have written books on the subject, and dozens of movies have been produced depicting the “final battle between good and evil.” Generals, scientists and world leaders also use the term, generally to reference the possible annihilation of mankind through nuclear, chemical or biological means.

Some thought Armageddon would be the final battle of World War I. They were *wrong*! Others thought World War II would end with this battle. They were also *wrong*! More recently, during the Gulf War, thought-to-be Bible experts were announcing, “Armageddon is here!” Again, they were *wrong*!—as have been *many* other scenarios.

What exactly *is* Armageddon? Is it a place or an event? Who will take part in it? What does the Bible *really* say?

Over 1,900 years ago, while exiled on an island off the Greek coast, the apostle John recorded what would happen—culminating in *our time*! In vision, he was thrust forward in time into the “Lord’s Day” or “Day of the Lord” (1:10) and was given messages regarding “...things which are, and things which shall be hereafter” (1:19).



Most of what John saw in vision was foreign to him. He had to record

things in a way that could be understood. For instance, how would someone from the first century describe a helicopter gunship? What about a jet—or nuclear explosion? Jesus would have inspired him to use symbols or items familiar to him.

Important History

A certain amount of historical background on the subject of Armageddon must precede proper understanding of this improperly understood subject.

Surprisingly, the Bible mentions Armageddon in only *one* verse: “And He [God] gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). Though the New Testament was written in Greek, Armageddon is not a Greek word. It comes from two *Hebrew* words—“har” and “megiddo.” *Har* means hill—or sometimes figuratively hill country.

Megiddo, or Megiddon, was a royal city of the Canaanites until Joshua captured it (Josh. 17:11). Located on the southern edge of the great plain of Issachar (also known as the Plain of Esdraelon and Valley of Jezreel) (Josh. 17:16), it was given to the Israelite tribe of Manasseh (I Chron. 7:29). Megiddo was a fortified city that guarded the strategic passes around Mt. Carmel.

Now for two of several vital points. Grasp them. (1) God brings certain people (armies) to Megiddo, and (2) the Bible says Armageddon is a *gathering place*, not an *EVENT*—and not a *BATTLE*

(Rev. 16:16). When the Bible speaks of Armageddon, it is *not* referring to either the end of the world *or* the final battle between “good and evil,” as so many believe. This is critical to understand—and it will soon be obvious.

The site of Megiddo is within the borders of the modern state of Israel, about 60 miles north of Jerusalem and about 20 miles east of the port city of Haifa. The location of up to 30 different cities over thousands of years, Megiddo is today little more than a 15-acre pile of rubble on a hilltop.

In ancient times, this area included a main highway between Africa and Asia. It provided a natural gathering place due to the flatness of the surrounding topography. Archaeology shows evidence of frequent, extremely heavy defense facilities there through the centuries, and involving many periods of development. I have carefully walked the area, and seen this.

Megiddo is a famous setting for several great slaughters through history. The first was when Joshua overthrew it in the 1400s BC. Later, when Deborah was judging Israel, she ordered Barak into battle there against the Canaanites, led by Sisera. Every soldier in Sisera’s army was killed. (This story is in Judges 4 and 5.)

The well-known defeat and slaughter of 120,000 Midianite soldiers by the army of Gideon *may* have also taken place near Armageddon. Judges 7 describes how God first reduced Gideon’s army from 32,000 to 300 prior to this battle.

I Kings 9 describes how King Solomon turned Megiddo into a fortified stronghold that housed hundreds of horses for his fleet of chariots. The foundation of his enormous stable is still visible today. I have also walked through and studied these.

When Jehu, king of Israel, wounded Judah’s King Ahaziah in battle, Ahaziah fled to Megiddo, where he died.

The Egyptian king Pharaohnechoh came to the aid of the Assyrians and defeated the Israelites led by Josiah at Megiddo—where Josiah died (II Kings 23:29-30).

This valley has also seen military conflict in *modern* times. On September 19, 1918, British General Edmund Allenby won a decisive battle there in

World War I, defeating the Ottoman Turks. This led directly to the birth in 1948 of today’s nation of Israel.

Because Megiddo is identified as a place of historic conflicts, and because more battles have been fought there than at any other place in the world, it has become emblematic—like Waterloo, Gettysburg or Normandy.

More Background

The Bible foretells a period of seven trumpets blown, each heralding its own terrible event. Throughout history, trumpet blasts have been used as warnings of imminent danger, such as war or another calamity (Zeph. 1:16; Jer. 4:19; Ezek. 33:2-6).

However, the seventh (or last) trumpet will announce to the world that Jesus Christ is coming to establish God’s rule on Earth. Man’s way of governance is ending. Also heralded by this final trumpet are the seven *last plagues* (also bowls or vials of wrath) God will use to punish a *rebellious* mankind. Revelation describes seven angels who “pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Rev. 16:1).

When the first vial is poured out, “there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast” (vs. 2). These belong to the great, false church-state system. (More on this in a moment.)

The *second* plague mirrors what the Egyptians suffered before the Exodus: “The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and *every living soul* died in the sea” (vs. 3).

The next three plagues involve the rivers and fountains turning to *blood*, the sun becoming so hot it *scorches* people, and darkness and pain becoming unbearable. After all these plagues, men will continue to “blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repent not* of their deeds” (vs. 11).

The last generation before Jesus’ Return is so vile, corrupt and contemptuous that God will subject them to the *worst punishment possible*—and they still will not repent.

The Important Sixth Plague

The sixth of the *last* plagues sets the stage for the final battle to resist Christ

at His Return. Forces of spiritual wickedness—demons—are released to gather armies to bring about destruction and devastation on the inhabitants of Earth. Notice how these armies are able to gather: “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” (Rev. 16:12).

The Euphrates River originates in Turkey and flows southeast through Syria and Iraq, finally reaching the Persian Gulf. God will cause this river to dry up, enabling, it says, the “kings of the east” to easily cross into the Holy Land. But this is just a prelude—the setting of the stage for even *more* significant events to come.

Verse 13 continues, “I saw three *unclean spirits* like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [Rev. 12:9—the devil], and out of the mouth of the beast [the civil end-time ruler possessed by the devil], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [the also possessed religious leader with the Beast].” We saw Revelation 17:5 calls this Babylon the Great.

Whose Battle Is It?

Revelation 16:14 states, “For they are the spirits of devils [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*.” So then this is GOD’S battle! These “spirits of devils” are fallen angels who followed Lucifer (now Satan) in rebellion against the Creator long ago (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-17; Rev. 12:4).

Now let’s read Revelation 9:11 as we continue to understand events building toward Armageddon: “And they [the final revival of the Holy Roman Empire] had a *king* [a supreme ruler] over them, which is the *angel* of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon.”

The aforementioned leader will be accompanied by a *religious* leader who, with the power and influence of the devil, will perform mesmerizing, *counterfeit* miracles. When peoples of the earth witness these, they will be deceived into thinking that this false

system is of God—and will fight what we saw they will think to be *invaders from outer space!* The Beast and False Prophet will drive their religious-political-economic-military system toward final confrontation.

The World Scene

Let's understand what will then be the world scene. By that time, the revived Holy Roman Empire—the Beast of Revelation—will have already conquered some parts of the Middle East. It will have established a foothold in Jerusalem. This “king of the north” (Dan. 11:40)—the same as the fourth beast of Daniel 7—will invade the Middle East under the *pretense* of bringing peace. *Oil* will also likely be a factor in prompting the Beast system into seeking control of the region.

Notice what Daniel says: “But tidings out of the *east* and out of the *north* shall trouble him [the Beast]...” (11:44). Remember that the Bible reckons these directions from Jerusalem. While the Beast's army is in the holy land—*other* military giants will move in to oppose it.

What big countries today are *east* and *north* of Jerusalem? Russia, China, India and Japan! It is likely that these, with possibly other nations in the region, will compose the massive *200-million-man* army mentioned in Revelation 9:16. Read this verse. Again, all indications are that oil will be a key factor for this war machine from the East. Ezekiel 25:4 and 10 call this army the “men of the east.”

The world will have come to the point in world events that Jesus referred to: “And except those days should be *shortened*, there should no flesh be saved [left *alive*]...” (Matt. 24:22).

Thought-to-be Enemy

As these armies position for war, an unlikely “enemy” arrives on the scene—Christ. Mankind will see Christ this way! And here is why: “The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

Christ appropriates for God the nations' governments and lands without asking permission!

Now realize this! There is no battle foretold at Armageddon! What happens is called THE BATTLE OF THAT GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY! Again, this is GOD'S battle! This last great clash will be fought by armies that will have *already gathered* at Armageddon. These two major forces will obviously see Christ coming out of the clouds. Considering *Him* a threat, they will join forces, forming an alliance to fight their common adversary. These men will be angry. They will not submit to God's government. Repeating for crucial emphasis, these will think JESUS Christ is in fact the “ANTI-christ.” The result? They will “make war with the Lamb” (17:14).

Christ's feet will rest on the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem. Notice Zechariah: “Behold, the day of the LORD comes...For *I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle* [not Megiddo]; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half 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. And His feet shall stand *in that day* upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount shall cleave in the midst thereof...” (14:1-4).

Again, where will this battle of the Lord take place? Let's read from Joel: “Proclaim you this *among the Gentiles*; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your *plowshares into swords*, and your *pruninghooks into spears* [the opposite of the famous Millennial prophecy in Micah and Isaiah]; let the weak say, I am strong. *Assemble yourselves*, and *come* [from Megiddo], all you heathen, and *gather yourselves together round about*: there [outside Jerusalem] cause Your mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up [again, from Megiddo] to the *Valley of Jehoshaphat*: for there [outside Jerusalem] will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow [great slaughter is coming]; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the *valley of*

decision: for the Day of the LORD is near in the *valley of decision*” (3:9-14). Compare this with Revelation 14:19-20.

Valley of Decision

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is also known as the “valley of decision.” This valley lies *just east* of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives—not 60 miles north at Har-Megiddo. I know. I have also been there and walked *this* valley. Today, the Jews use this area, called the Kidron Valley, as a burial ground.

Jehoshaphat means “the Eternal judges” or the “valley of the judgment of the Eternal.” King Jehoshaphat overthrew the people of Moab, Ammon and Mt. Seir when they came against Jerusalem. God fought without Jehoshaphat lifting a finger. Let's read: “You shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand you still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you” (II Chron. 20:17).

When “tomorrow” came, *every one* of the enemy was *dead!* God had done the fighting and wiped them all out!

What about this last battle? What will be the final outcome? Let's continue in Zechariah 14: “And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth” (vs. 12).

The God of the Bible pulls no punches in choice of language!

Graphic Picture

Revelation 19 says much more—and it is graphic: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True [Jesus Christ], and in righteousness He does judge and *make war*... And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should *smite* the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron...And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to *all the fowls that fly* in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the *supper* of

the great God...That you may *eat* the *flesh* of *kings*, and the flesh of *cap-tains*, and the flesh of *mighty men*, and the flesh of *horses*, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great...I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse [Jesus Christ], and against His army” (19:11, 15, 17-19).

So then, let’s understand! Vast mil-lions will actually *fight against Jesus Christ!* They will *not* view His Return as reason to rejoice, because, many of them serving a different Christ—“another Jesus”—they will not recog-nize the *true* Christ.

Grasp this! Puny human beings, who think they can oppose God because they have man’s most advanced weap-ons of war, will be *utterly destroyed* by Him. What happens will be quick and

decisive, with the armies left in com-plete destruction.

Note what happens first: “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone...[Now what happens to the army?] And the rem-nant were slain with the sword of Him [Christ] that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were *filled* with their flesh” (19:20-21).

This description is truly horrible. While many dismiss it as allegory or impossible-to-understand symbolism, its message is *real*—and the events it describes are real!

We have seen that the final battle to end man’s rule on Earth is *not* named

after Armageddon. Nor will this battle be fought there. Rather, it happens outside Jerusalem. Christ is not going to bring the battle to the individual nations—the battle will *come to Him*. The armies of the world will literally march 60 miles south to be executed by Christ as He arrives on the Mount of Olives—“in that day.” Now recog-nize all these events will take place in *our lifetimes*—and **SOONER** than you think!

You have learned the **TRUTH** about the battle *at Jerusalem*, only *thought* to be at Armageddon. Consider. There will be two sides. On one will be the men of the east and all who took the mark of the Beast. On the other are Jesus Christ and His armies of angels.

All who *truly* want to follow and obey God still have time to qualify to join Christ in what only *begins* with a terrible battle. □

R024

110627

Copyright © 2002, 2008, 2010 The Restored Church of God

All Rights Reserved

Printed in the USA

THIS ARTICLE IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE AND IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD.

It is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of the Church and others who have elected to support the work of the Church. Contributions are welcomed and gratefully accepted. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support this **WORK OF GOD** around the world are gladly welcomed as co-workers in this major effort to preach the gospel to all nations.



HOW TO CONTACT US

The Restored Church of God
P.O. Box 23295
Wadsworth, OH 44282
USA

The Restored Church of God
P.O. Box 4064
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3
CANADA

Phone: (330) 334-2266
Fax: (330) 334-6513

www.thercg.org
e-mail: info@thercg.org