

# **ARMAGEDDON - WHY, WHEN, WHERE?**

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## ARMAGEDDON - WHY, WHEN, WHERE?

“**A**rmageddon” is a Biblical term which originated in the Bible where it only occurs once, yet it is well known by the world. Movies, videos, DVDs and books etc have borrowed the name for their titles and themes. In most minds the word conjures up the idea of a great battle involving many nations - a holocaust and great destruction. World scientists and leaders use the word when speaking about nuclear war and great loss of life.

The passage in the Bible where the word Armageddon occurs is Rev. 16:14-16, and refers to all the nations of the world being gathered “to the battle of that great day of God almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And they gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew language Armageddon.”

This passage speaks about all the nations of the world being gathered into a place called Armageddon in the Hebrew language, for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. There are several points to notice in this. Firstly:

### WHY?

**T**he passage tells us why Armageddon takes place. The purpose is for a battle. Not the usual battle between nations, but a battle between God and the nations - a battle in which God himself will be directly involved and engaged - “the battle of the great day of God Almighty.” Armageddon will be a war in which God fights against the nations - a day of reckoning for nations. It will involve Divine intervention and judgement, for “God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness ...” (Act. 17:31).

### WHEN?

**T**he same passage in Rev. 16:15 tells us when Armageddon takes place. Jesus says it will be the time when “I come as a thief.” On a previous occasion Jesus used the same language in relation to his second coming (Matt. 24:42-44). Also see 1 Thes. 5:1-4. Armageddon clearly involves the second coming. It occurs at the time of the return of Jesus to the earth, which is a major theme in the Bible.

The battle of Armageddon will be the greatest (the “mother”) of all battles, but it will be the war that ends all wars. Once the battle is over and Jesus reigns as king from Jerusalem, all nations “shall beat

their swords into plows, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa. 2:4).

## WHERE?

**R**evelation 16:16 tells us where Armageddon takes place. It is “a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.” This statement informs us that Armageddon is a Hebrew name. It is a “place” where the Hebrew language is spoken.

Hebrew, of course, is the language spoken by Israel - the language in which the Scriptures were originally written. This reveals that Israel, the land of the Bible, is the geographical location of Armageddon. This is the land to which the nations will all be gathered in the end time for a humbling encounter with the Lord.

The land of Israel is clearly the focal centre of the Armageddon prophecy. This is not surprising because Israel is the centre of Bible prophecy as a whole. It has been estimated that two thirds of the Bible is prophecy, and four fifths of that relates to Israel. The other one fifth relates to other nations, but only those whose movements and activities affect Israel, and contribute to the countdown to Armageddon.

## OTHER REFERENCES

**A**lthough the word Armageddon only occurs once in the Bible, it should not surprise us that the battle it involves is referred to in other prophecies in the Bible. And an investigation of them reveals a number of interesting things. Some of the key prophecies are in Ezk. 38. Dan. 11:40-45. Joel 3. Zech. 12-14. There are others but these are the major ones. It soon becomes evident from a careful reading of all of these prophecies that they have the same major points in common with the Armageddon passage in Rev. 16. All agree that:

1. It involves a great battle between God and the nations.
2. It occurs in the end time at the coming of the Lord.
3. It takes place in the land of Israel.

By carefully comparing these prophecies and paralleling them, other interesting details emerge which they all have in common as well. For example: A great earthquake of unprecedented magnitude will occur. The vortex or epicentre will be the land of Israel where the great battle occurs, particularly around Jerusalem; but the whole earth will be terribly shaken. It will be a global convulsion affecting every nation and country upon the planet; resulting in mountains tumbling,

cities collapsing and islands sinking and disappearing. The Mount of Olives will split in half; the hill country to the north and south of Jerusalem will be levelled into a plain and the site of Jerusalem will be heaved up to a greater height. The nations gathered against Jerusalem will be thrown into utter disarray and panic (Isa. 2:10-22. Ezk. 38:18-23. Zech. 14. Rev. 6:12-17, 16:18-21).

## THE CAUSE

**T**he most significant feature of the Armageddon prophecies is the cause of the battle i.e. the motive for the nations being gathered to the land of Israel. The motive is to invade and destroy the nation of Israel and slaughter the Jews (Ps. 83). The invading nations are anti-Israel and they want to destroy Israel and occupy her land.

All the end time prophecies are therefore very clear about one thing, namely: the Jews had to be back in their land before the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ could take place. The fact of the matter is that the return of the Jews and re-occupation of their land and especially the city of Jerusalem, acts as a prelude and catalyst for the invasion which leads to the battle of Armageddon.

The Islamic nations maintain that the land and city of Jerusalem belongs to them, and they will not rest until they can seize it from Israel. This has resulted in the ownership of Jerusalem becoming a burdensome issue to the nations, causing much controversy. Reference is made to this in Bible prophecy. Zech. 12:3 refers to Jerusalem becoming a “burdensome stone for all nations” resulting in severe injury being inflicted upon all who gather against it (i.e. to take it away from Israel). And reference is made in Isa. 34:8 to “the controversy over Zion” (Jerusalem) which will result in “the day of the Lord’s vengeance” (Armageddon) when He will execute judgement upon the nations.

So then, the return of the Jews and the re-occupation of their ancient capital city of Jerusalem are vital signposts along the road to Armageddon. The countdown to Armageddon could not begin until these events occurred. They are clear signs that the countdown has well and truly begun and that we are living in the last lap of human history, the era of the second coming of Christ!

## TWO BATTLES

**I**t is important to understand that the invasion of Israel by the nations and their battle against the Jews, will not be the battle of

Armageddon. No! The battle of Armageddon takes place after that and as a result of that. The prophecies speak of two battles. The first is between Israel and the nations who invade and attack her. The second is between the Lord and those nations. After a time of enemy occupation, the Lord intervenes to destroy the enemy and deliver Israel.

On four occasions in the past (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973), Israel has successfully repulsed and defeated enemy forces (Islamic confederacies) which invaded and attacked her. However, in the end, a much more powerful confederacy will invade, overwhelm and defeat Israel. According to Zech. 13:8, two thirds of Israel's population will be killed, and there will be a purging of the final third. The enemy will occupy the land for three and one half years (Dan. 12:7). This period of occupation will be a time of great tribulation at the end of which the Lord will come to do battle and establish His power and authority in the earth (Matt. 24:21-31).

### **EZEKIEL 38**

**T**he prophecy in the thirty eighth chapter of the book of Ezekiel would be one of the better known prophecies in the Old Testament that relates to the subject of Armageddon. It speaks of nations being gathered into the land of Israel in the end time and of the Lord doing battle with them, unleashing His judgements upon them in the form of a great earthquake, fire, torrential rain and hailstones; resulting in panic and mutual slaughter. Verses 8 and 16 provide important time markers, telling us that the battle occurs in "the latter years" or "latter days." Elsewhere, in Dan. 2:28, the same period is applied to the second coming of Christ.

Ezk. 38:8 further defines the latter years as a time in history when the Jews have been re-gathered to their land which was desolate and barren due to centuries of neglect while they were dispersed, but which they have restored.

In Ezk. 38:1-6 some of the nations involved in the invasion of Israel are actually mentioned by name. Some are old names not used today, and others are as familiar as in ancient times.

### **GOG OF THE LAND OF MAGOG**

**T**he leader of the confederacy is referred to as "Gog," which is not a name but a title - a symbolical title. It means "high," "exalted," "towering like a mountain." It is an appropriate title because it is

evident from other Scriptures that he will have a very high and exalted opinion of himself. He will be anti-god and anti-Israel, very arrogant and conceited, held in very high esteem by the nations. For a time he and his armies will become a huge obstruction like a mountain to Israel. Gog is referred to elsewhere as “king of the north” (Dan. 11:36-45); “beast” (Dan. 7. Rev. 13. 17:8-18. 19:19-21); “man of sin” (2 Thes. 2). In the end time, the identity of this man will be confirmed by the fact that the numerical value of his name will add up to 666 (Rev. 13:18). His name will obviously be in a language in which the letters of the alphabet have numerical values, as for example the Greek language.

Ezk. 38:2 says that Gog comes from “the land of Magog.” Most authorities agree that the land of Magog was around the Caspian and Black seas area which is southern Russia today. This is consistent with Ezk. 38:15 which says Gog comes from “the far north parts.” Israel is the geographical centre of the prophecy and the areas of the Black and Caspian seas are certainly north in relation to the land of Israel. For this reason, Gog is referred to as “the king of the north” in Dan. 11. (There is a substantial Muslim population in this part of the world).

### CHIEF PRINCE

**E**zk. 38:2 also says that Gog will be “chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.” The Hebrew word translated “chief” is Rosh and some commentators believe it should not be treated as a title by rendering it “chief.” They maintain that it should be treated as a proper noun and regarded as a name. Hence, some translations render it: “Gog ... prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal,” and point out that “Rosh” was the ancient name for Russia.

Mesech, and Tubal occupied areas south of the Black sea in Asia Minor, which is also north of Israel. A substantial Muslim population also occupies this area today.

Other nations that will be under Gog’s command and confederate with his forces when he invades Israel are mentioned in Ezk. 38:5. They are: “Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Libya, Togarmah (Turkey), Gomer (above the Black sea).” Today, these are all Islamic countries.

Other prophecies relating to nations which will be hostile towards Israel, mention trans-Jordania, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and Egypt (Ps. 83. Dan. 11:41. Joel 3).

When you put all these prophecies together, Israel is seen to be surrounded by a double ring of hostile nations, near and far, who desire her destruction.

Let us at this point pause for a moment to consider how amazing

these prophecies are. For many centuries, from a human point of view, they looked impossible and quite ridiculous. For example, let us go back to when the English translation of the Bible was circulated around 1611 during the reign of King James. At that time the Jews were dispersed throughout the world and their land was possessed by the Ottoman Turks. They were a powerful empire which dominated the Middle East and North Africa, and encroached on eastern Europe.

In those days in the seventeenth century, the prophecy in Ezk. 38 which says Turkey would be part of a confederacy that would invade Israel after the Jews returned and restored the land, would seem absurd. Turkey had already invaded and possessed the land, but the Jews had not returned at that stage. No Jewish state existed. The nation was non-existent. So how could Turkey invade Israel when Israel did not exist as a nation? And how could the Jews ever expect to return to their land while the Turks occupied it? Even up until the early twentieth century it seemed so impossible, that even some Bible scholars couldn't believe it. But time has vindicated the prophecies. The Turks were driven out of Palestine in 1918 and the Jews have since returned and restored their land.

## PERSIA

**T**he same applies to Iran (Persia) referred to in Ezk. 38:5 as part of the confederacy of nations led by Gog to invade Israel. This also in times past was very hard to believe. For centuries, right up to 1978, a monarchy ruled in Persia, and the Shah was pro west, not anti-Israel. The prospect of Persia joining an anti-Israel confederacy and invading was unthinkable and untenable. In order for such a prophecy to take place, some big changes would have to take place in Persia. A revolution was inevitable. The Shah and the monarchy had to go.

Diligent students of Bible prophecy had believed and taught this for centuries. It was not a case of being wise after the event or of squeezing history into the mould of prophecy. Three weeks before the Shah was forced into exile by the revolution inspired by Ahotolla Khoemini, which gave rise to the rule of Islamic fundamentalism, I gave a public lecture on the subject of the Middle East in Bible prophecy. Regarding Persia I said: "The days of the Shah's regime are numbered. If the Shah understood Bible prophecy, he would have good reason to be a worried man."

Even though we were expecting it, we were all surprised how quickly it happened. And since it happened, Iran has become increasingly hostile towards Israel, to the point of publicly proclaiming a desire to see her exterminated. She supports terrorist

organizations against Israel and it is not difficult to see her willingly joining a confederacy of nations to invade Israel.

## **ETHIOPIA**

**E**thiopia is also mentioned in Ezk. 38:5 as taking part in the invasion. As in the case of Iran, a monarchy also existed in Ethiopia for centuries. Haile Selassie was the last emperor and he was pro-west and pro-Israel. (He actually claimed to be a descendant of Solomon who was king of Israel around 950 BC).

But, in spite of the long unbroken history of the monarchy and connection with Israel, Bible prophecy indicated that it wouldn't last and would dramatically change in the end time. And this is precisely what has happened. Haile Selassie was overthrown by the military in 1974 and the monarchy departed with him, resulting in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and its anti-Israel policy. It is now not difficult to see Ethiopia forming part of a confederacy which will invade Israel in the end time.

## **LIBYA**

**I**n Ezk. 38:5 Libya is mentioned as a partner in the anti-Israel coalition. For centuries Libya was just an insignificant desert country - weak, uninfluential and of no account or influence in world politics. Right up to the twentieth century, the suggestion that Libya would join an invasion of Israel, would have seemed ludicrous. Not only did the Libyians not have anything against Israel, but up until the twentieth century the nation of Israel did not exist for them to have anything against, let alone invade.

But once again, an amazing synchronizing of events has taken place, to bring about changes required to fulfil the prophecy. Libya suddenly came into prominence due to the discovery of vast oil deposits, and that changed everything in terms of position, power, prestige and influence among nations. And almost as suddenly, in terms of historic time, Libya adopted an extremely hostile attitude towards Israel, mainly due to Islamic influences and sympathy towards the Palestinians.

Over a period of time, Libya has used her oil wealth against Israel. She has sent soldiers to support some of the attempted invasions of Israel in the past. She has also set up camps to train commando units and terrorists, and purchased weapons to be used against Israel. Libya has very close connections with Iran and the P.L.O. Such connections were to be expected in view of the

confederation predicted in Ezk. 38.

### **SHEBA AND DEDAN**

**N**ow, not all Islamic countries will join the invasion of Israel. Some will disapprove of it and be exempt. Ezk. 38:13 predicts that diplomatic interrogation will be forthcoming from some of them, questioning the intentions of the anti-Israel confederacy and expressing suspicion and disapproval of its movements. This is how Ezk. 38:13 reads: “Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all the young lions, shall say to you (Gog): Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your armies to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to seize great spoil?” Some have emphasized the “oil” part of “spoil,” pointing out that a huge deposit of oil has recently been discovered off the coast of Israel, which would be a big temptation to nations in a world of dwindling oil supplies and escalating prices.

Regarding “Sheba and Dedan”: They are the ancient Biblical names for nations in Saudi Arabia. And, interestingly enough, the few Islamic countries that are not anti-Israel or anti-west, are on that particular continent today. It is not difficult to imagine them questioning any move made by other Islamic countries to invade Israel and take over the Middle East.

### **EGYPT**

**U**p until as late as 1973, Egypt was the leader of the Islamic nations against Israel and the main initiator of invasions and wars. Colonel Nasser, a former president, constantly expressed his hatred towards the Jews and his avowed intention to exterminate them. Prior to the 1967 war with Israel, the Cairo radio constantly played martial music and preached anti-Jewish propaganda inspiring hate, expressing the intention to drive the Jews into the sea. But within six days of declaring war, Egypt and the other Islamic nations who supported her, were defeated by Israel.

Colonel Nasser died without success and Anwar Sadat succeeded him. Under his presidency, Egypt, along with other Islamic nations made another attempt to invade Israel on their “Day of Atonement” in 1973. This resulted in it being called “The Yom Kippur” war.

Being caught off guard on a sacred rest day, Israel initially struggled to get the upper hand, but eventually at some cost defeated the enemy. They surrounded the Egyptian army in the Sinai desert and boxed them in. Colonel Sadat accepted a cease fire, much to the

disgust of the Islamic world. As a result relations were not the same between Egypt and the Islamic world. Sadat went even further than a cease-fire with Israel. He embarked upon a policy of peace and goodwill with Israel. It was an amazing and unexpected turnaround that made headline news around the world. He took the initiative to do the unthinkable - to visit Israel and participate in the Camp David peace proposals set up in the U.S.A. by Jimmy Carter who was president at the time. As a result, a peace treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel.

The anti-Israel nations, especially Libya, never forgave Egypt for allowing this to happen. They cut off relations with Egypt and the rift became wider and wider between them. And so even though they shared the same Islamic faith, Egypt became alienated from Libya and other Islamic nations, and became regarded as a traitor and enemy. This later led to Sadat being assassinated in 1981 and he was succeeded by Hosni Mubarak who honoured the peace treaty with Israel during his time in office as president.

But after thirty years as president, Mubarak's dictatorial rule wore thin in the end and his people rose up against him, forcing him into exile in 2011 amidst much jubilation. The army took over until order could be restored, promising democracy and free elections. The Islamic brotherhood, whose goal is to turn Egypt into an Islamic state, are ever rallying for support and are gaining in strength. It is not surprising therefore that there are signs in Egypt of a desire to cancel the peace treaty with Israel. It is not difficult to see Egypt becoming anti-Israel again and forming part of an Islamic invasion force that sets out to destroy Israel. This is indicated in a prophecy in Joel 3:19 which refers to Egypt being violent towards Israel in the end time. During the decades after the peace treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel, the situation seemed to contradict Bible prophecy. But, as is always the case, it is just a question of time and Bible prophecy will be vindicated.

### **ISRAEL DEFEATED**

**E**zk. 38 makes no reference to Israel being defeated when Gog and his army invades. But Ezk. 39:23-29 reveals that they will be defeated. It refers to God hiding His face from them due to their sins, and giving them into the hand of their enemies, resulting in many of them being killed. This is confirmed in Dan. 11:40-41 where reference is made to many in the glorious land (Israel) being overthrown when the king of the north invades. And v45 refers to him planting himself (setting up his headquarters) on the temple mount at Jerusalem.

Dan. 12:1 goes on to say that this time of invasion and occupation

by the enemy will be “a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation until that time.” Jesus referred to it as “great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24). He was obviously quoting from Daniel’s prophecy. Jesus also made it clear that this time of distress in the land of Israel will be due to God’s wrath upon His people for their sins (Lk. 21:22-23). It will be a repetition of AD 70 when the Romans destroyed the nation, only worse.

Zech 14:1-2 declares that when all nations gather against Jerusalem, “the city shall be taken, the houses looted, the women raped and half of the remaining population will be deported.” It is also stated in Zech 13:8-9 that two thirds of Israel’s population will die, and the remaining third will be purged. On the basis of a possible population of nine million at the time of the invasion, this would mean that the number of casualties would exceed six million - more than those who died during the holocaust.

Joel’s prophecy also refers to the “northern army” (2:20) which invades the land of Israel. He says there are multitudes in the army - too many to count: “A great people and strong, the like of whom has never been from old, nor will be again after them. A fire devours before them; and behind them a flame burns: The land is as the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them ... Before them people are in anguish; all faces grow pale ...” (chapter 2).

## **PROFOUND AND DRAMATIC CHANGES**

**I**srael will unquestionably be overpowered. The final invasion will be an entirely different scenario from the previous invasions in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. On each of those occasions, Israel successfully repulsed the enemy and gained decisive victory. As a result of this there has developed a self-confident attitude bordering on arrogance among many in Israel. The majority put faith and hope in their own strength to survive instead of God. Atheism is common in Israel and the population is as grossly materialistic and immoral as any other western nation. It is some years now since Israel legalized homosexuality so it is not surprising that the capital city of Jerusalem is described as “the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Rev. 11:8).

But the end time invasion will bring about profound and dramatic changes. We read in Dan. 12:7 that the three and a half years tribulation period will have the effect of “shattering (breaking) the power” of Israel. It will have a huge humbling effect, bringing them to

an end of themselves and looking beyond themselves for help and deliverance. There will be no other nation to look to or call upon for help. Isa. 63:5 predicted that there will be no one among the nations that can help; God's arm alone will be able to save in that day. The nation of Israel will be completely isolated. Not even the U.S. A. will be at her side or able or willing to offer support.

We read in Ps. 34:18 that "The Lord is near those who are of a broken heart, and He saves those who have a crushed and contrite spirit." This is the condition of heart to which the remnant of Israel will be reduced as a result of the invasion which will devastate their land and cities and destroy all the restoration work they have accomplished over the decades since they returned.

In his prophecy of these end time events, the prophet Joel calls upon the people to turn to the Lord with all their heart and repent, for He is gracious and merciful, and will answer and be jealous for His land and pity His people, and will remove the northern army and drive him away.

Ultimately, this is what will happen. God will raise up prophets like Joel and of the calibre of Moses and Elijah who will fearlessly call upon the remnant of Israel to repent and call upon the name of the Lord for help and deliverance. "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance ..." (Joel 2:32).

## **ISRAEL'S EXTREMITY - GOD'S OPPORTUNITY**

**I**srael's extremity will be God's opportunity to manifest His power and saving grace not only to Israel, but to the whole world. He will do this by entering into battle with Gog and his armies. This is what the battle of Armageddon is all about, and it involves the second coming of Jesus Christ. All the major prophecies in Ezk. 38, Dan. 11, Joel, Zech. 12 and 14 which predict the end time invasion of Israel, also predict the Lord's intervention and the battle that ensues against the enemy:

Ezk. 38:18-23: "But on that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, my fury will be roused. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my blazing wrath I declare, on that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ... all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. I will summon every kind of terror against Gog says the Lord God, (causing so much panic that) every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and

bloodshed I will enter into judgement with him and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones (over 50 kilos in weight: Rev. 16:21), fire and brimstone. In this way I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself and make myself known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the lord.”

Dan. 11:45-12:1: “And he (Gog) shall plant his palatial tents between the seas (i.e. between the Mediterranean and dead seas) in the glorious holy mountain (i.e. Mount Moriah, the temple mount); yet he shall come to his end with no one to help him. For at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who has charge of defending thy (Daniel’s) people (i.e. the Jews): And there shall be a time of trouble such as never was ... and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

“For I don’t want you brethren, to be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the full number of gentiles come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Rom. 11:25-27).

In passing, it is interesting to note that Dan. 11:45 indicates that Gog planting himself on the temple mount occurs just before divine intervention. The apostle Paul no doubt had this in mind when he taught in 2 Thes. 2 that the last sign of the Lord’s coming will be the man of sin sitting in the temple. Other prophecies teach that a Jewish temple will be built on the temple mount at Jerusalem in the end time. The man of sin will sit in it as a deliberate and blatant act of desecration. He is therefore referred to as an “abomination.”

We read in Joel chapter three that when the time comes for the Lord to do battle with the occupying forces of Gog, he will gather them “into the valley of Jehoshaphat (Jerusalem) and will enter into judgement with them on account of my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and divided up my land ... Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of threshing: For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of threshing. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion and utter His voice (thunder) from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: But the Lord will be the hope and refuge to His people and the strength of the children of Israel.”

Zech 14: “Behold, the day of the Lord comes when the spoil taken from you (the Jews) shall be divided before your very eyes. For I will

gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be captured, the houses looted, the women raped, and half of the inhabitants of the city shall be deported, but the remainder (remnant) of the people shall not be taken away 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 of Olives shall split in two; half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half toward the south, and there shall be a very great valley from east to west ... The Lord my God shall come, and all the holy ones with him ... And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ... And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will smite all the people who have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day that a great panic caused by the Lord shall be among them, causing them to attack one another.”

Zech. 14:16 goes on to say that the surviving civilian population of the nations which came up against Jerusalem “shall go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” If any nation refuses, the Lord will either send the plague upon them or withhold the rain (v17-19).

Rev. 19:11-21 also relates to the battle of Armageddon. It depicts Jesus coming with his armies to do battle with the beast and his armies and putting them to death with the sword. An angel is also depicted calling all the birds of prey to “come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, 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 and bond, both small and great.” The marginal reference in most Bibles indicate that these verses relate to Ezk. 39:17-20 which refers to the destruction of Gog and his armies. This reveals that the beast is Gog!

### **VERY DEMORALIZING AND HUMBLING**

**A**s has been pointed out, the defeat and destruction that will be inflicted upon Israel by the invading forces will be very demoralizing and humbling. However, it will be even more humbling when they realize, as a result of seeing his nail pierced hands and feet, that the one who comes and delivers them is the one they despised, rejected and crucified, accusing and condemning him as a false messiah. When the reality of the magnitude of this historical blunder

hits them, along with the fact that in spite of how badly they treated him, he still cared about them enough to come and deliver them; they will be cut to the heart and overwhelmed with emotion. Such love and grace will be overpowering. It will be the most poignant scene imaginable, foreshadowed by Joseph delivering his brothers in spite of their evil treatment of him resulting in a great outpouring of tears (Gen. 44 and 45).

The end time scene involving the Jews coming to the realization that their Messiah and deliverer is Jesus, is depicted in Zech. 12:9-10: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and of supplications (prayers): and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him like those who mourn for an only son. They will mourn bitterly, like those who have lost their first born son.” The following verses say that all the Jewish families will go aside for a time of profound weeping and mourning.

But in the context of this fountain of tears, the following verse (Zech. 13:1) says: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened up to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.” The remnant of natural Israel will be restored to God.

But there will be no tears of remorse or regret, or a need to be cleansed from sin to all who have faith to believe that Jesus is Messiah before they see him at his return. Such people constitute his church, the spiritual “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) and have been cleansed from sin through the blood of his sacrifice on the cross. “There is therefore no condemnation to them” (Rom. 8:1). They look forward to his return and reigning with him in his kingdom from the new Jerusalem, and will therefore “love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). They will be filled with joy unspeakable because he will change their mortal bodies that they may be fashioned like his glorious immortal body (Plp. 3:20-21). And when our mortal bodies become immortal, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54). Even so come Lord Jesus!



## APPENDIX

**M**any authorities say Armageddon (“Har-megiddon” in Hebrew), means mountain of Megiddo, which has a commanding view of the long and fertile valley of Jezreel. The mountain at Megiddo is a mound or hill, which is what is often signified by the word mountain in the Bible.

Some have linked Armageddon with “the valley of Megiddon” in 1 Chr. 35:22, Zech. 12:11, which is a large plain known as the plain of Esdraelon, near the mound of Megiddo in northern Israel. It is south west of the Sea of Galilee, about 25 kilometres inland from the Mediterranean Sea, and about 90 kilometres north of Jerusalem. Many notable battles have taken place there in the past. It has been one of God’s great battle grounds for the judging of the armies of the wicked. There Barak defeated the Canaanite armies of Jabin with their 900 chariots of iron. There the Midianites and Amalekites and children of the east were routed before Gideon and his 300 men. There Saul and Josiah both met their deaths. Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Turks and Arabs, have pitched their tents in the valley of Megiddo. Napoleon Bonaparte is said to have stated after his first sight of this valley: “This is the ideal battleground for all the armies of the world.”

Zech. 12:11 compares the mourning of grief and sorrow over king Josiah who was killed in battle at Megiddo with the mourning of repentance that will take place as a result of the victory gained in the battle of Armageddon by king Jesus!

Connecting Armageddon with Megiddo has led many to the conclusion that the area of Megiddo will be the location and scene of the great battle of Armageddon, and much attention has been focussed on this geographical area. But this view creates some problems. Firstly, it is impossible to conceive of “the kings of the whole world” (16:14) being able to fit into the limited area of Megiddo with their armies to engage in battle. Ezk. 38:9 says the invading forces will be like a cloud to cover the land. Joel 3:14 says there shall be “multitudes, multitudes,” and it seems that the army of two hundred million referred to in Rev. 9:16 reveals the number that will be involved.

The second problem is that the general consensus of the teaching of the prophecies concerning the end time invasion of Israel, is that Jerusalem is the geographical centre of the battle, due to the invasion forces being gathered there, for which reason this area is also the focal centre of Christ’s return. (Ezk. 39:11. Dan. 11:45. Joel 2:9, 20, 32. 3:2, 12, 16-17. Zech. 12. and 14).

## ALTERNATIVE VIEWS ON ARMAGEDDON

**I**n view of this, several suggestions can be offered. For example: Armageddon is not to be understood in a geographical sense but symbolical. Conjectural derivations from the Hebrew word such as “har migdo” have been suggested by some, which is said to mean “his fruitful mountain” and is applied to Jerusalem. But Armageddon is “har-megiddon” not “har-migdo.”

Others see Armageddon as designating not so much a place but an occasion - an occasion involving destruction. This is affirmed on the basis that the Hebrew word “harma” means destruction. However, as already pointed out, Armageddon in Hebrew is “har-megiddon” not “harma-.”

Another popular view is that the word Armageddon is compounded of 3 Hebrew words: “arma” which is derived from “arema” signifying “a heap of sheaves;” “ge” from “gai” a valley; and “don” from “dun” - judgement. On this basis it is said that Armageddon signifies “a heap of sheaves in a valley of judgement,” and describes the scene in Joel 3:12-14 which likens the judgement to a harvest. This is the passage which refers to the invading forces as “multitudes, multitudes in the valley of threshing” i.e. “the valley of Jehoshaphat.”

“Jehoshaphat” means “judgement of Yah,” and the valley is believed to be the valley of Kidron on the east side of Jerusalem. Joel 3:12 says it is there that the Lord will sit to judge all the nations. Hence, the command will be given to “swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe” (v13). The same scene is presented in Rev. 14:17-20.

So then, in the same way that “Sodom” in Rev. 11:8 is used symbolically to describe the moral and spiritual state of Jerusalem, not the geographical location of the original Sodom down in the Dead Sea area, some believe that Armageddon describes the end time battle at Jerusalem, not the geographical location of Megiddo in northern Israel which was notorious for battles in the past.

However, in reply to this, it should be pointed out that Rev. 16:16 does quite specifically state that Armageddon is “a place.” The Greek word for “place” is “topos” and means a location. “Topography” is derived from it and relates to the physical features of a region. The word has very much to do with physical geographical location.

Viewed in this light, there are several ways of looking at Rev. 16:14-16.

1. The reference in v14 to the nations being gathered to “the battle of that great day of God Almighty,” refers to the battle at Jerusalem. But the gathering to “Armageddon” in v16 refers to a gathering of

forces to the area of Megiddo prior to, and in preparation for the battle at Jerusalem. Rev. 16:16 does not actually say that the battle takes place at Armageddon (Megiddo). It is verse 14 which refers to the battle and it has been assumed that it occurs at the place called Armageddon in v16.

Megiddo could therefore simply be the staging area for the armies. Or, because Rev. 16:14 only refers to the kings of the world being gathered, and makes no mention of their armies, perhaps Megiddo will be the “staging ground” from which they control and direct their troops in their attack against Jerusalem.

2. According to Ezk. 38:9, the invading forces will cover the land of Israel, and Joel’s prophecy likens them to plagues of locusts. It is not difficult to imagine this if there are two hundred million of them. According to Rev. 14:20, the judgement of God against the enemy will cause the blood shed to extend from the city of Jerusalem for a distance of 330 kilometres, which would encompass northern Israel, including the area of Megiddo. Jerusalem will be the vortex of the judgement, but the forces of the enemy will be spread out well beyond the city throughout the land.

Even Joel 2:20 implies that there will be forces stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea. The fact that Isa. 63:1- teaches that the Lord will be attacking and destroying the enemy on the eastern side of the Dead Sea as He heads to Jerusalem, indicates that the forces will extend that far. The divine judgement will clearly not be confined to the area of Jerusalem. Wherever the forces of the enemy are, including the northern area of Megiddo, the wrath of God will fall as He goes into battle.