

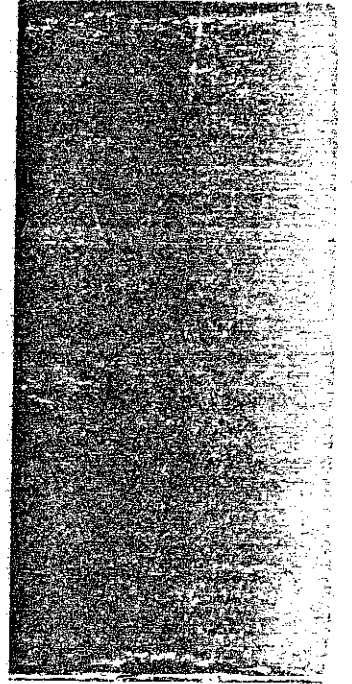
at

The

Battle

of

Armageddon



THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

"IS THIS ARMAGEDDON?" In banner headlines the newspapers of the so-called Christian segment of the world in 1917 screamed this question. With the entry of the United States into World War I, fighting by the side of her allies, the tremendous forces involved were almost unbelievable, for nearly all the nations of the world were engaged in that great conflict.

The newspaper editors took it for granted that their readers understood about the holocaust described in Revelation 16, which prophesies of a time when all of the nations of the world will be engaged in battle.

Had these editors taken into consideration the location where this last great battle is to take place--according to the information given about it in the Bible book of Revelation, they would not have thought to associate the conflict of 1917 with Armageddon. The reason is that in the same chapter of this book wherein it tells of the nations of the world being engaged in mortal combat, it is also definitely stated where this battle will be centered:

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Rev. 16:16).

There is no place on the continent of Europe by the name of Armageddon. Although more than 65 million men were mobilized in World War I, and more than eight million were killed or died as a result of World War I, yet this was not Armageddon.

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The question, "Is this Armageddon?" again came to the front when most of the nations of the world once more decided that the battlefield was the place to settle differences instead of at the peace table.

It was thought in 1918 that the world had been made safe for democracy. Peace-loving people the world over rejoiced at the founding of the League of Nations. War was outlawed! (Or so it was thought.) Utopia was here! The millennium had arrived. All differences would now be decided and settled at the peace table, and it appeared that the philosophy that the pen is mightier than the sword had finally triumphed.

Any honorable effort made toward peace, if made without deceit, is to be commended. Our Saviour pronounced a blessing on the peacemakers in His "Sermon on the Mount." The Scriptures declare:

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace (Jas. 3:17, 18).

But alas, the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning the efforts of those seeking worldwide peace without the help, blessing, and the actual presence of the Prince of Peace, came to fulfillment:

Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly (Isa. 33:7).

World War II broke upon the world as a monstrous catastrophe concocted in the mind of Satan himself. Statesmen of the world did not believe that the hysterical ravings of Hitler would long be tolerated by his followers. But to their amazement, Hitler was not only hailed as leader of his people, but as the logical one to conquer the world. Blitzkrieg (lightning war) followed, and nation after nation fell before the iron might of the German dictator.

Was this Armageddon? Were we near the end of the age? Would Jesus come at the height of this battle? According to the description of the sixth plague, as found in Revelation 16, the geographical location was also wrong for this war to be the Battle of Armageddon.

Where Will the Battle of Armageddon Be Fought?

In Revelation 16 we are told of seven plagues that will fall at the culmination of the Gospel Age. The Sixth Plague is described in vv. 12-16:

And 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. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, 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. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

This last great war is usually referred to as the Battle of Armageddon, receiving its name from the location where the battle will be fought. The Biblical name for it is, "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." The place known as *Armageddon* is famous for two great victories: one of Barak over the Canaanites, and the other of Gideon over the Midianites. It is also identified with two great disasters: the deaths of Saul and of Josiah. It is located on the great plains of Esdracel, not far from Jerusalem. The name *Armageddon* is from the Hebrew name *Megiddo*. Megiddo occupied a very marked position on the southern rim of the plain of Esdracel. Many great battles have been fought there.

Compare the prophecy of Zechariah with that of the Revelator concerning this last great battle and notice the similarity of the two prophecies:

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle... (Zech. 14:1, 2).

It would seem strange for the nations of

the world to be gathered at Armageddon if it were not for two factors to consider. First, the Lord said He would gather all nations there as we read in Zechariah 14:1, 2.

The second factor is that the Lord is to permit the unclean spirits, mentioned in Revelation 16, to "go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."

When Will It Be Fought?

The Battle of Armageddon will take place just prior to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of 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 (Zechariah 14:1-3).

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and thou shalt destroy them which destroy the earth (Revelation 11:18).

are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land (Ezekiel 38: 11, 12).

There are those who teach that this line of thinking is detrimental, for they believe that the Bible prophecies of the latter days as ones of peace and not of war. But does the Word of God affirm these assertions and predictions? Does the Bible speak of a peaceful era embracing the entire earth prior to the coming of Jesus, or the exact opposite? Does prophecy foretell of the last days preceding the return of Christ as days of peace or war? Will there be days of darkness or light? Will there be days of trouble or tranquility? Will there be days of clouds or days of sunshine? Note this Biblical account:

The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty men shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of vastness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers (Zephaniah 1:14-16).

Throughout Matthew 24 and Luke 21 the Saviour speaks of the end of the age being filled with wars, international conflicts, famines, pestilences, persecutions, false prophets, and false pretenders of the Messiah.

Paul spoke of the last days as being peri-

It is true that the world is sick of war, and even the very mention of it makes us feel apprehensive and fearful. Eminent statesmen, scientists, and high-ranking military men gravely assert that if there is another world war it may mean the destruction of man from the face of the earth. Many of these men soberly predict that there will not be as many years between World War II and World War III as there were between World War I and World War II. We are faced with these grave facts as stark realities presented to us by men of the world. If men of the world are cognizant of such pending conditions rapidly coming on the earth, surely students of the Bible can also see them in the prophecies of God's Word.

The prophet Ezekiel in the 38th chapter describes a tremendous war and speaks of certain great powers rushing madly into mortal combat. From the prophet's apt description of the conflict, it is easily discerned that Ezekiel must be speaking of the same war described by John and Zechariah.

Ezekiel places this great war at a time when Israel will have been restored as a nation, and he terms this time as "the latter years" and "the latter days":

And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that

What Nations Will Be Concerned?

ous, and gives the reasons for this condition in 2 Timothy 3:1-5:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholily, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

The spiritual decay of the human race as described by Paul brings about the condition stated by James:

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4).

These conditions are not descriptive of Utopia, but they do fully set forth the time in which we are living. Certainly the end of this age is not far away.

The nations of the world have not gathered at Jerusalem to battle since the days of the prophecies of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and John. These prophets have always spoken the truth, for all of their prophecies have thus far been accurately fulfilled. So we should have the utmost confidence in them and be assured that they have spoken the truth concerning the coming Battle of Armageddon.

Naturally we are concerned about what nations will be engaged in this great conflict, for we are intrigued as we watch the various maneuvers of the nations of the world leading to Armageddon. This is a remarkable age, and we should be thankful to be able to witness the final fulfillment of Bible prophecy. In Ezekiel 38 is a detailed prophecy concerning the actions of certain great powers of Europe, Asia, and Africa as they prepare to march to Armageddon:

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee (Ezekiel 38:2-6).

Most Bible students agree that the main character in this grim world drama is Russia, called Gog in this prophecy. Gog and his descendants settled originally in the general area and territory now known as Russia.

The allies of Russia are named in verses 5 and 6 as Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah and all his bands, and many other people. Gog is the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and there is a startling similarity in the names of Meshech and Tubal, and that of the Russian cities of Moscow and Tobolsk.

Now notice the action they will take as recorded in the 8th, 15th, and 16th verses:

After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come back into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Some have opposed the placing of Ezekiel's prophecy in these latter days, because the description of the armor does not coincide with modern-day equipment. But if we would place ourselves in the time of Ezekiel, without knowledge of modern warfare, how would

we describe the armor and movement of the troops? It is true that the prophet speaks of horses and horsemen, shields, helmets, and swords; but Ezekiel also gives us the thought that they would be clothed with all sorts of armor.

We should not overlook the possibility of Ezekiel seeing in vision the great air-coverage provided for warring troops in this age. Study carefully verse 9:

Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

As Russia and her allied nations march toward Palestine to meet their doom on the battlefields of Armageddon, other great powers will come from the east to take an active part in this last great conflict:

And 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 (Revelation 16:12).

Water represents peoples, multitudes, and nations (Rev. 17:15), so the people in the vicinity of the Euphrates would be submissive, or at least nonresistant, to the marching of the armies of the kings of the east, or of "the sun-rising," as they come to "the battle of the great day of God Almighty." China and Japan are generally recognized as kings of the east, or the kings of the rising-sun.

This will result in a great conflict, for

Ezekiel 38:13 speaks of nations or powers who will challenge the spoiling of Israel:

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

Sheba and Dedan anciently referred to southern Arabia. However, the term "Sheba" also refers in general to "the south" (see Matt. 12:42). The land which Ezekiel refers to is evidently represented by the lion, and it had colonies or "young lions." The nation which uses the lion as its symbol is England, and all the British colonies are evidently the "young lions." They are lands of the "south," including South Africa, Australia, and the South Sea Islands.

The Mediterranean Sea is called by two names on old maps: the Great Sea and the Sea of Tarshish. England has always been recognized as a great sea power, conducting her trade throughout the world by means of a tremendous fleet of ships. By her possession of the Rock of Gibraltar, England has controlled the world trade of the Mediterranean Sea. England would fit the description of the Merchants of Tarshish.

For centuries there have been no nations in southern Europe or in northern Africa strong enough to give even a token resistance to the onslaught of the tremendous power of Russia and her allies. There is only one

country that would be strong enough to successfully challenge Russia, and that would be Great Britain and her allies. As the state coat of arms of Great Britain is a lion striking with its forepaws, it is significant to note that associated with the merchants of Tarshish will be all the young lions thereof. This description would fit that of Great Britain and all of her colonies, which would include the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and some of the African colonies.

It should be further noted that Great Britain has shown a strong interest in Israel for many years. It was a British general, General Allenby, who marched his troops into Jerusalem in 1917 after the Turks had fled the city, thus opening the way eventually for the Jewish people to return to their homeland in great numbers. It was a British Jew who was the first governor of Palestine under British mandate, Sir Herbert Samuel, appointed in 1921.

Three great forces will soon be marching toward Armageddon, which will fulfill the following prophecies:

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom... (Matt. 24:7). For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle... (Zech. 14:2); And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged... (Rev. 11:18); and he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

What Will Bring An End To This Conflict?

When this battle is raging, and it seems as though the world itself will surely be destroyed, there will be something taking place that the world has never seen. The heavens are going to split asunder and roll back as a scroll is rolled together (Rev. 6:14; Isa. 34:4). Those who are unprepared to meet their God will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16, 17).

Notice how closely the prophets of the Old Scriptures agree on this point:

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every

man's sword shall be against his brother (Ezekiel 38:18-21).

Now notice the next two verses especially, for they are so similar to some found in the New Scriptures:

And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord (Ezekiel 38:22, 23).

Compare this prophecy with the one found in Revelation 16:17-21:

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the

plague of the hail; for the plague was exceeding great.

This prophecy has to do with the falling of the seventh and last plague, and it will be fulfilled when the Battle of Armageddon is at its height.

Summary

Let us briefly review what we have studied, so we may set these things in their proper order in our minds. At the falling of the sixth plague the nations of the earth will gather for Armageddon. Many of the Jewish people will have been regathered from the nations of the earth, and will be dwelling safely; evidently as a self-governed people. These great events are to occur in the latter years and in the latter days.

Russia and her satellite countries will begin the march toward Palestine, as the three unclean spirits go to the kings of the earth and deceive them into believing that the lot has fallen on them to rule the world. China and Japan will find easy-going on the way to the battlefields of Armageddon as they march to their doom in this last great conflict. The other great nations of the earth pictured to us as the merchants of Tarshish and her young lions, and Sheba and Dedan, will resist the rape and pillage of Israel. They will engage in mortal combat, and thousands will fall in battle in that troublesome time. Half of the city of Jerusalem will go into captivity, and at that time the Lord, who has been so patient for 6,000 years, will declare it is enough, and the seventh plague will be poured

out upon the earth. A part of that plague will be the falling of great hailstones, which agrees with a statement made by the Lord to Job thousands of years ago:

Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? (Job 38:22, 23).

At that time will be brought to pass the prophecy as found in Psalm 110:5, 6:

The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

Notice how Ezekiel describes the second coming of Christ at the height of the great battle:

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the face of my wrath have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a

sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother (Ezekiel 38:18-21).

The heavens are then going to depart as a scroll that is rolled together, and there shall appear the Lord Jesus Christ coming with all the glory of heaven with all the holy angels with Him.

Listen to the Psalmist as he continues the description of this great event:

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people (Psa. 50:3, 4).

Christ will put a quick end to the struggle, and He will then become King over all the earth as He sets up His kingdom. For further study of these events see our tract, "The Thousand-Year Reign of Christ."

It is our hope that this study in prophecy has served to increase your faith, and if you have not already made preparations to meet the Lord your God, that those preparations be quickly made. What we must do we should do quickly.

It is good to study prophecy and know of the things that are coming to pass on the earth. But unless we quickly begin to make preparations to meet our God, this knowledge will be in vain. If you are not ready to meet your Master in peace, now is the acceptable time. TODAY is the time to acknowledge that you need Him and desire to live for Him.

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