

MiniStudy ARMAGEDDON WHAT IT REALLY IS

Prepared by Richard H Sedhacik

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the *God Family*. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there *is* to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Almost everyone has heard of "Armageddon." World leaders and scientists have used this biblical term when speaking of the threat of nuclear warfare and the annihilation of mankind. Yet few know what Armageddon really is.

Let's begin to understand how this term fits into Bible prophecy - especially with regard to the dramatic return of Jesus Christ.

1. In what are the future punishments of God upon rebellious, sinful mankind "filled up"? Rev. 15:1.

The seventh or last trumpet (Rev. 11:15) not only heralds the return of Christ *to* earth, it also announces a series of punishments from God upon a rebellious world - the terrifying "seven last plagues." (The seven last plagues, among other events prophesied yet to occur, will be covered in more detail in future ministudies.)

2. How are these plagues symbolically pictured? Rev. 15:7. Upon what will these vials be poured out? Rev. 16:1. Will they cause great plagues and suffering upon unrepentant humans? Verses 2-11.

Despite this severe but righteous punishment from God (verses 5-7), **the** nations will adamantly refuse to repent of their sins.

3. What will occur when the sixth symbolic vial of God's wrath is *poured out*? Verse 12.

The great river Euphrates, which flows for some 2,200 miles from Turkey to the Persian Gulf, will be dried up. This supernatural intervention in the ecosystem of the Mideast, performed by God's angel, is only a prelude - a setting of the stage for momentous events yet to come.

4. Meanwhile, *will* earth's nations be joyful that Christ has returned, or will they be angry and actually attempt to fight Him? Rev. 11:15, 18, 17:12-14. (Recall that the "Lamb" refers to Jesus Christ - John 1:36.)

5. Who will have incited the nations to fight against their Creator God? Read Revelation 16:13-14, noticing what else is to occur after the sixth vial is poured out.

The word *devils* in the King James Version ought to be rendered **demons**. There is one fallen archangel (Isa. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-17) called Satan the "devil," but there are many fallen angels (II Pet. 2:4, Rev. 12:7) of lesser rank called **demons** in the Bible.

Notice that these spirits directly influence the leaders of nations. They will deceive them with miracles, stirring them to a fever pitch of hatred to fight the "invaders from outer space" - Christ and His *army* of angels, who will by this time already be in Jerusalem with the resurrected saints.

6. Are these demons clearly responsible for gathering the armies of all nations together? Rev. 16:14, 16. (Note that the proper translation of the Greek in verse 16 should read as follows: "And *they* gathered them together." In this particular case the context must determine who is really doing the gathering. Modern translations correctly render "he" as "they.")

Satan the devil and these demons will especially work through human leaders such as the "beast," the political-military leader of the 10 nation end-time revival of the Holy Roman Empire, and also through the false prophet, the great religious leader who will have universal influence and appeal because of his satanic charisma and power. These all will work together and will influence the world's **political and military leaders**

to mobilize their forces in an attempt to fight Jesus Christ.

7. Exactly where do the devil's demons cause the armies of the nations to be gathered together in preparation for the great battle against Christ? Read verse 16 again for the answer.

The nations will marshal their armies at a place called "Armageddon." *Armageddon actually*

comes from the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name *har Megiddo*, which simply means "the hill (or mountain) of Megiddo." This is the site of the ancient city of Megiddo, which is about 20 air miles southeast of the modern *part of Haifa and* approximately 55 miles north of Jerusalem.

Anciently, Megiddo was one of the royal cities of the Canaanites. The city was not fully occupied by Israelites until the time of King Solomon (I Kings 4:7, 12). Solomon fortified the city (I Kings 9:15). Megiddo and the valley of Megid

do (which is part of the larger Plain of Esdraelon)

became a strategic site. Megiddo was the most important fortress city that guarded the strategic passes of the Mt. Carmel area. The other cities were Jokneam and Taanach. Megiddo, in the middle, was flanked by the other two fortresses (each about five miles apart).

For Israel, Megiddo and the Plain of Esdraelon became the battleground of the centuries. Time after time the blood of battle was shed there. Over and over again the 13-acre mound of Megiddo was retort fled. Today the site is nothing more than an unoccupied, silent mound of historic rubble. Occasional tourists and archaeologists visit its rocky face, but it is not a major military site at this time.

But Megiddo is a symbol.

It is a symbol of war and human conflict. It overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel and stood at one of the great crossroads of the ancient world. And as the prophecy of Revelation 16 indicates, Megiddo and the Plain of Esdraelon will become the rallying point for the greatest concentration of military might ever assembled.

Political and military leaders from the world to the east of the river Euphrates will be supernaturally induced to direct their armies to march on modern Israel to participate in the fight against Christ. But who will compose this conglomeration of military might?

Which nations lie to the "east" of the great Euphrates valley? To the northeast lies the Soviet Union with its vast armies and great mili

tary strength. South and east of Russia. in China,

wait even more millions of infantry in constant military preparedness. Separated from China by the Himalayas lies teeming India with its starving millions and a turbulent political scene.

These "kings of the east," stirred up by the devil's demons, will lead their armies to Megiddo. With the surrounding plain as their rallying point, these armies will then be confronted by yet another great military establishment - the combined might of a united Europe!

Prophecy tells us that "ten kings" (Rev. 17:12•14) will comprise the modern, end-time revival of the ancient Holy Roman Empire, uniting in a political, military and religious alliance of incredible power. A vast and mighty army will be formed and will find its way into the Middle East - perhaps on the pretext of protecting Israel from the threat of communist domination. And oil will undoubtedly be a major factor prompting any such maneuver.

The army of this "beast" power will confront the armies of the "east." But instead of fighting each other in a battle that would end in the extinction of all life on earth, they will, ironically, unite their forces and march toward Jerusalem in an attempt to destroy their common "enemy" - Christ and His army of angels!

8. What is the name of the ensuing great, climactic battle between God and man? Rev. 16:14, last part.

You will notice the battle is not called the "Battle of Armageddon" - it is called the "battle of that great day of God Almighty"! This last great battle will involve the armies of the Lord of armies (hosts) Himself.

9. Exactly where does the Bible say this battle will take place? Joel 3:1-2, 9-14. Compare verse 13 with Revelation 14:18-20 and 19:15. Also notice Zechariah 14:1-4.

"Jehoshaphat" means "judgment of Jehovah" or, more correctly, "judgment of the Eternal." The focal point of the battle will be in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, also called the "valley of decision" in the Bible. This valley is a deep ravine having steep sides. It borders the city of Jerusalem on the east. The Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is situated between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, is now known as the Kidron Valley_

10. How is this great climactic battle pictured? Rev. 19:11-21. How does Zechariah describe the frightening manifestation of the righteous wrath and might of God in fighting against those who will oppose Him? Zech. 14:12.

This is the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" described by John in Revelation. And it could happen sooner than you might think! LI