

## 9. ARMAGEDDON

Armageddon is a symbolic name for a famous battlefield. In Revelation 16:16 it represents a gathering of the armies of the whole world who gather to fight against Jerusalem. Satanically inspired, they are anti-Christian, anti-Israeli, anti-God, anti-Jesus forces gathering for the battle on God's great day of judgment (Ps 2:2-3, Rev 16:14).

Great numbers from the East and North will come to fight in Israel, but godless mankind will be slaughtered. Zechariah 12:1-9, 14:12-15 tells us that these armies will end up attacking one another in a world war in which the world's mega-cities are destroyed (possibly by nuclear warfare, certainly by earthquakes).

The book of Joel is concerned about the Day of the Lord. Joel 2:2-5 speaks of a mighty army, the likes of which has never been before and will never be in ages to come. Before the armies come, the land is like the Garden of Eden; after they leave, there is only a barren wasteland. It'll be a great army of cavalry, tanks, and modern weapons of warfare.

At this time, there will be warnings in the heavens, and on Earth blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will become dark, and the moon red, before the coming of the great and terrifying Day of the Lord. This is Armageddon. Joel continues his description of the judgment of the nations, which terminates in the coming of the Lord and victory for his people. There will be multitudes in the valley of judgment. Then the Lord will roar from Zion, and shout from Jerusalem, and give victory to Israel.

The Lord is calling all nations to gather their armies and come to Israel for a time of judgment. But why are all they going there? Ezekiel 38 - 39 describes an invasion of a resettled Israel in the last days by an international leader called Gog, of the land of Magog. The Israelis who have returned from many nations will transform their promised land and live there securely. Then there will be an invasion from the North, possibly a coalition of Muslim countries supported by Russia. Recent civil wars in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon have brought instability to Israel's enemies on their northern borders.

These nations will surround Jerusalem in an effort to exterminate the Jewish nation from the Earth. God will allow Jerusalem to be entered and two-thirds of the people to be defeated, but at the climax of the battle, the Messiah will return to destroy the invading armies.

At this time, the Messiah will set foot on the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4-5) and there will be a massive earthquake throughout the land of Israel. It'll set off the most extensive earthquakes ever worldwide. Every living creature and all peoples on the face of the Earth will quake at the Lord's presence. Mountains will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. Every weapon of war will be turned against fellow soldiers. God will shower the vast armies with hailstones, fire, and sulfur. Everyone will come to know that the returning Messiah is Almighty God (Ezek 38:18-23).

The effects of this *earthquake* are graphically recorded after the sixth seal is broken: The sun turns black, the moon, dark red, and the stars (asteroids?) fall to Earth. The sky vanishes as if being rolled up, and every mountain and island is dislodged. The world leaders and important people: the generals, the rich and powerful, the slave and free, will conceal themselves in caves and among the rocks in the mountains trying to escape from God and his Messiah. It is the great day of their wrath and nobody can endure it, except the redeemed (Rev 6:12-17).

When the seventh angel throws the contents of his bowl of wrath across the sky, the great city (Babylon) that has dominion over the kings of the Earth will split into three parts, and all the cities of the nations will collapse. Every island will vanish, and the mountains will no longer be recognizable. Huge hailstones weighing 45 kg. will fall on people whose only response will be to curse God (Rev 16:17-21).

This great judgment on the day of the Lord is also described by the prophet Isaiah, who says that the entire inhabited earth will be turned into a desolation to annihilate the sinners in it. God will make people scarcer than pure gold (Isa 13:6-13).

Jesus confirmed the interpretation of these prophecies and added that all the tribes of the land (Israel) will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt 24:29-30).

The prophet Zechariah's version emphasizes the siege made against Jerusalem and Judah by all the nations of the Earth. He said the Lord would make Jerusalem an unstable cup for all the surrounding armies. It will be a heavy weight, and everyone who burdens themselves with it will be crushed. The Lord will strike every horse with panic and every rider with insanity. He'll protect Judah and destroy all the nations who come against Jerusalem (Zech 12:1-4, 9).

Zechariah adds that Jerusalem will be captured, the houses will be ransacked, the women raped, and half of the city will go into exile. The Lord will inflict all of the people who attack Jerusalem. He'll cause their flesh to rot away, even while they're standing on their feet. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. The armies will panic and attack each other (Zech 14:2, 12-15).

Daniel's final vision (Dan 10 – 12) is about a great war which disturbs him so much that he mourned and fasted for three weeks (Dan 10:1-3). In Daniel's vision, he learns about Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who in 168 BC sets up an 'abomination that causes desolation'. He sacrificed a pig to Zeus in the Jewish temple and sprinkled its blood on the altar. But then the prophecy advances to the Antichrist and his abomination that causes desolation. He takes his seat in the temple and declares himself to be God, and then sets up an image of himself there. At the time of the end (Dan 11:35, 40), the king of the South (Egypt) rebels against him, and the king of the North (Antichrist) storms out against him with chariots (tanks), cavalry, and a great fleet of ships. He'll invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He'll also invade the beautiful land (Israel). Libya and Sudan will be at his feet (allies). Reports from the East and the North (Persia, Russia and allies) will alarm him and he sets out to destroy many. He'll set up his HQ at Mount Zion, but will come to his end (at the Messiah's hand - Rev 19:19-20) with no one to help him.

That is Armageddon! Let us, the redeemed, be thankful that we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.