

ARMAGEDDON/APOCALYPSE – FACT OR FICTION?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word Armageddon? Catastrophe? The world's final battle? Nuclear warfare? Most often this term elicits an emotional feeling of anxiety to outright panic. It is often linked with another popular term, Apocalypse. For many people, it focuses on the end of the world.

Therefore, it is essential for us to have a clear understanding of these two terms and how they apply to our lives today. So, let me take you on an adventure of removing the misconceptions and providing some reality to these terms. We'll begin with the word "**Apocalypse.**"

THE APOCALYPSE - If you were brought up Catholic, you recognize that this term refers to the last book of the Catholic Bible, "The Apocalypse," which Protestants call "The Book of Revelation." It is the same book in both Bibles. The Greek word "apokalypsis" means "revealing" or "disclosure." The Book of Revelation is the "revelation of Jesus Christ."



Figure 1 - Photo from rickyjohnministries.org

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place" (Revelation 1:1). The Father gave a revelation about the future to His Son, who gave it to an angel, who in turn gave it to John the Apostle. John then wrote that revelation and sent it to the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 1:1-3).



Figure 2 - The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse - wallpapercave.com

Within this revelation, we learn that one day this world, as we know it, will come to an end.

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is going to return to this earth, set up His Kingdom and reign from the City where God has placed His Name. Yes, there will be a final battle as various nations come to attack Jerusalem and the Lord will intervene. Consider the words of the Prophet Zechariah – *"The Lord will go out and fight against these nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south."* (Zechariah 14:3-4).

The Apocalypse offers both good news and bad news. Yes, there is destruction and devastation. Many people will die during those latter days, but there is also a message of hope in the Apocalypse. Our Lord is going to return to this earth and rule with a righteous and just government. There will eventually be peace throughout the world as never before since the Garden of Eden. *"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. . . The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest"* (Isaiah 11:6,8). And the best news of all is the promise of a new heaven and earth and a new Jerusalem (Revelation 21-22). But what about Armageddon?

We hear a lot about Armageddon today, whether from movies, politics, novels or from some pulpits across the country. But what is Armageddon? Is it merely a novelist's imagination, or is there something or someplace that is called Armageddon? Allow me the privilege of taking you on an adventure into reality.

Despite what you see in the movies, read in the novels, or hear from the mouths of politicians, there is an actual Armageddon. It is located in the northern part of the Galilee in Israel. This name refers to both a city and the Valley of Jezreel. The word Armageddon is a corruption of two Hebrew words: (1) Har (Mount) and (2) Megiddo. Armageddon refers to the Mountain or Mount of the city Megiddo. The term is found in the Book of Revelation, *"Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon"* (Revelation 16:16).



Figure 3 - Photo of Megiddo & Jezreel Valley - www.netours.com

For a city to be significant at that time, it needed three qualities: (1) A high elevation for protection, (2) an essential water source, and (3) located on a significant trade route. Megiddo had all three of these qualities. It was one of the most important cities of its day because commerce passed by Megiddo going east/west and north/south. It also had an elevation advantage of around 700 feet above the surrounding area, and its own water source.

Another important advantage is that Megiddo overlooked what was the breadbasket of Israel in those days and continues to be today. The Valley below Megiddo has three names: (1) The Jezreel Valley, (2) The Valley of Esdraelon, and (3) The Valley of Armageddon.

You may wonder, is this where “**The Battle of Armageddon**” is going to be fought? There is no Battle of Armageddon though many battles have been fought in that Valley. *“Through the Valley of Jezreel, many armies have marched and fought, from the days of Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III to Napoleon and, in this century, General Edmund H.H. Allenby. Allenby’s decisive victory at Megiddo in 1918 forced the Turks to relinquish control of Palestine to the British. After that he was often referred to as Allenby of Armageddon.”*¹



Figure 4 - Rick Yohn at Megiddo - Photo by Linda Yohn

In the Revelation passage, armies will gather at Armageddon, or the Valley of Jezreel, and then march southward to the City of Jerusalem. That is where the battle will be fought just before the return of our Lord to earth. *“This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign Lord. In my zeal and fiery wrath, I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel . . . I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and his troops and the many nations with him”* (Ezekiel 39:18,19,22).

Down through the centuries Israel has held the title of **"most hated nation in the world."** In Biblical days, they were hated by their neighbors nearby and nations far away. Egypt enslaved them, Assyria deported them, and Babylon destroyed both their Temple and City of Jerusalem. A little over 500 years after the Babylonian destruction, the 10th Roman Legion destroyed Jerusalem on the anniversary of the Babylonian catastrophe. The Jews have been kicked out of countries, refused entrance into other countries, and we all know what Nazi Germany did during World War II.

¹ UCG.org / Good News / Famous Battles at Megiddo

Furthermore, in my generation, no sooner had the U.N. voted for Israel's right to have land and become a nation-state when Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq attacked them within 24 hours. Israel had to defend itself during the War for Independence in 1948, the Six-Day War in 1967, the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Lebanon War in 1982, and 2006, and the Gaza War in 2008. On top of these wars, we can include the 1st Intifada – Palestinian uprising (1987-93), and the 2nd Intifada (2000-2005). Israel lives in the "Center of the Nations," but those nations are hostile to Israel. Though the news media may have you think that Israel is this giant nation grabbing land from its loving neighbors, take a look at this map.

We can trace much of this antagonism to the Book of Genesis. Abraham and Sarah attempted to help God fulfill a promise for children. When Sarah did not become pregnant, she told Abraham to go to her handmaiden, Hagar, and have a child by her. Abraham did just that, and the result was a son named Ishmael. Thirteen years later, Sarah gave birth to a son they named Isaac. He was the son whom God promised to Abraham. From that day on, Ishmael and Isaac have been feuding over territory. According to the Muslim worldview, once you have gained land, it is yours forever.



Figure 5 - Israel's Neighbors - [notasheepmaybea goat.blogspot.com.2012/09/end-unjust-jewish-occupation-of-arab.html](http://notasheepmaybea.goat.blogspot.com.2012/09/end-unjust-jewish-occupation-of-arab.html)



Figure 6 - Map of Turkey - John Ankerberg Show, Feb. 19, 2016

Based on God's prophetic timetable, a number of these nations will rise and attempt to put an end to Israel. The Prophet Ezekiel names them as Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, and Beth-Togarmah. These are the Biblical names of the countries in Ezekiel's day, so now let's look at them today. Magog is in Russia. Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah are areas in Turkey. Persia is present-day Iran. Cush is Ethiopia and Put is Libya. So we see Turkey, Russia, Iran, Libya, and Ethiopia playing a significant role in God's Prophetic Program

culminating in the invasion of Israel in the last days before Jesus returns to earth.

In summary, Armageddon is where the nations will gather for the battle in Jerusalem, and the Apocalypse is the revelation of that truth, unveiled in the Book of Revelation, as well as many other prophetic passages throughout Scripture.