

fields today appeal to our minds, like Waterloo, or Gettysburg, but for the first century mindset, it was Armageddon where God always wins the battle.

The scene of Revelation 16 begins with the pouring out, one by one, the seven bowls of God's wrath. In the context of Revelation, this is God's wrath being executed against the Jewish people of the first century, for their hardened hearts in rejecting their Messiah. The bowls of wrath are to be understood symbolically (because God signified this book), and the Bible reader will immediately notice the parallel between this text and the plagues poured out on Egypt in the book of Exodus. Here we see boils on the skin, all water sources becoming blood, all sea creature dying, men being scorched by fire, and darkness over the land. The great difference here is that these plagues were added one on top of the other, while the plagues of Egypt were separated. After this, the sixth bowl caused the Euphrates river to dry up. In Israel's history, the Euphrates was the route used by invading armies. The river serves as the final barrier that must be breached before invading Jerusalem. The idea that God had dried the river up (16:12), symbolized the final hurdle being crossed before Jerusalem's destruction.

So now, the final bowl of wrath is ready to be poured out, and when it happens, the Lord says from His throne: *"It is done!"* Here is the finale, it's all over after this. We see in the text how the whole earth is shaken

up by the judgment of God against the Jewish commonwealth, which had infiltrated every nation under heaven. And in the end of this flood of plagues, the Lord gives the "great city" Jerusalem (which will be well described in chapter 17 as that old unfaithful woman who played the harlot against the Lord) "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." This is her end. The next two chapters in revelation will give the details of her destruction (which took place only a few years after the letter of Revelation). However, for our study, I hope we can all see how Armageddon fits into this situation. A symbol of God's battlefield. All those who will come up against the Lord will fall. The use of the word Armageddon in Revelation is specifically symbolic of the Jewish people being set against the Lord and against His Anointed One in the first century, even plotting and putting to death the Lord of Glory and following that by further persecution of those who obeyed the gospel (see the book of Acts). This is the idea of the Battle of Armageddon in the book of Revelation. In no way can it be used to fuel a doctrine of a carnal battle still in our future when it is kept with honor in its original context.

Friend, I thought you'd benefit from this. Contact me if you have any questions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Battle of Armageddon

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What is this Great Battle?  
&  
Will it ever take Place?

Does the Bible speak of a great carnal conflict of the future called the battle of Armageddon? Many today believe this, but again, what does the Bible say? The “end times” theorists believe in an enormous battle that will take place within the “seven-year tribulation” (see our tract on the seven-year tribulation). They believe it to be a final battle between all the nations of the earth against Christ. Now that we have an idea of what is taught today, let’s turn to the scriptures to see if this is consistent with the word of God.

On a single occasion we find the word “Armageddon” in the Bible. It is in Revelation 16:16, *“they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”* The more literal Hebrew is *Har-Megiddon*, and the word refers to the region of the city of Megiddo. Why would God use this word, this place, to speak of a gathering of people for battle? Because when the book of Revelation was written, the plain of Megiddo was the most famous and historical battlefield on earth. It is the site of not just one great battle (such as how most battlefields gain their fame), but of many huge and decisive battles. A number of critical battles were finished on this plain that are contained within the Biblical record, and a number of other battles were decided there that are not of mentioned in the Bible. Much later in history, even Napoleon was impressed by this great plain of blood, saying

“All the armies of the world could make battle here.”

The area is a triangular-shaped plain that is 36 miles long, by 15 miles wide. Its points of extension are from Mount Carmel, to Mount Gilboa, to Mount Tabor. This battlefield was where the tribe of Manasseh fought to obtain the area for their promised portion (Joshua 12:21). This was by the will of the Lord in fulfilling His land promise to Abraham.

It was also where Barak came with 10,000 men to defeat the Canaanites. This was accomplished by the command of the Lord (Judges 4:6).

It was where King Saul and his three sons reached the end of their lives amidst the conflict between Israel and the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:8). This was no accident, it was the will of God which the spirit of Samuel had prophesied to Saul: *“Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines”* -1 Samuel 28:19.

It was where King Josiah fell by the hand of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23:29). Although Josiah was one of the few godly kings of Judah, he made a very foolish mistake which cost him his life. It was by the will and command of God for Necho to be

victorious over Carchemish, but Josiah went out against Necho. Necho told him to not meddle in this business for it is by God’s word that this must happen. Josiah refused to listen, and instead he ran out to battle wearing a disguise. He was shot by the archers and soon died. The Bible certainly testifies that God had given Necho the command to go against Carchemish (2 Chronicles 35:22); Josiah made a fatal mistake.

What do all the events at Megiddo have in common? God will be the victor! His purpose will always be accomplished. Megiddo is the perfect scene to use for Revelation 16. Before we consider the content of Revelation 16, let’s refresh our memory on the language and purpose of the book. The book was not intended for us, nor our future. It was written to show Christ’s servants in the first century *“things which must shortly take place”* (1:1). The events contained within the book, although tempting to create fantasies about, were events which God promised would occur within the next few years from the date of the letter. The book is also written in symbolic language, for reasons which God does not provide. It is not symbolic because I said it was, this is not up for debate, it is a symbolic book because God said it: *“He sent and signified it”* (1:1). Signified means to communicate through signs. Armageddon, for example, is a symbolic scene that has historically stood for the victory of God, and that is what we can expect to see in the book. Other battle-