

The Battle of Armageddon

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“The current build-up of Russian ships in the Mediterranean serves as another significant sign of the possible nearness of Armageddon.” So wrote Hal Lindsey in 1970. Obviously, this was no sign at all. However, Lindsey’s error in prophetic discernment has not stopped others from falling into the same doomsday-heralding trap. Overly eager “experts” have repeatedly sounded the Armageddon alarm.

With the current volatile situation in the Middle-East (the rise of Isis, a nuclear Iran, and U.S. and Russian involvement in Syria), and tensions with North Korea, we can be assured that a number of contemporary prophecy writers will again be informing their readers, “Armageddon is Near!”

Through the years, Armageddon has received great attention from prophecy writers, preachers, doomsday cults, politicians, and even Hollywood producers—few have not heard of it.

The thought of a violent and climatic end-time battle is not limited to just Bible students. Many have labored over such an idea, wondering how and when such a deadly conflict would take place. Believers and unbelievers want to know: Is the world headed on a collision course toward Armageddon? Will current troubles in the Middle East lead us to the world’s final battle? What role will the United States play? What about Israel? Will anyone survive?

There are many who believe Armageddon will result in Earth’s cataclysmic end. As John Hagee put it, “...God tells us when, how, and where the world as we know it will end: Armageddon.” Unfortunately for Hagee and the many other prophecy writers who hold similar views, the Bible tells us no such thing! This is only their *interpretation*. Sadly, this is the view of Armageddon that many have been *sold*. With violently graphic detail, sensationalistic authors sell warning after warning about Armageddon’s deadly and destructive outcome.

We would do well to understand that end-time authors *must* insist that Armageddon is near. This keeps fearful interest among potential book buyers high, creating a strong market for greater book sales. If Armageddon were described as an event in the far and distant future, or worse yet for prophecy writers, only a fictional battle, interest and book sales would undoubtedly, greatly decline.

As a result of all the Armageddon talk and speculation, it ranks at the top of most everybody’s list in terms of fear and terror about the end-times. The very word “Armageddon” conjures up all kinds of images of death, destruction, bloodshed, millions of soldiers, and nuclear war. But are these images accurate? Will there really be a world-ending “battle of Armageddon”?

Here are the verses from which the so-called battle of Armageddon is taken. Look carefully and see if you can find the “battle of Armageddon.”

And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.") And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon (Revelation 16:13-16).

This is the only place in the entire Bible where Armageddon, or as it appears here, *Har-Magedon* is mentioned. The way some of the popular Bible teachers talk and write of Armageddon, one would think it is found throughout the Bible. In properly understanding what is being described in these verses, we first need to understand that Armageddon, or as it is more accurately rendered here in the NASB, *Har-Magedon*, is a place. *Har* (Mountain) *Magedon* (Megiddo); that is: The mountain of Megiddo.

There were battles fought at this place. It was at Megiddo that Debra and Barak went to battle against Sisera the commander of Jabin's army, overthrowing their Midianite enemies (Judges 5:19). In another battle, King Josiah of Judah was killed by Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt (2 Kings 23:29).

The question relevant to this writing is which battle is going to take at Megiddo in Revelation? And the answer is easy: None! That's right, none. There is no battle at Armageddon described in Revelation! Don't believe me? Look at the text again. All that is said to take place at Megiddo is a gathering of armies for "the war of the great day of God." Nothing is said about a battle being fought at Megiddo, only a gathering of armies. In his outstanding commentary on the book of Revelation, Arthur Ogden notes:

Josephus tells us that when Titus left Egypt with orders from his father to subdue the Jews that he returned "to Caesarea, having taken a resolution to gather all his other forces together at that place." Bear in mind that Caesarea was within sight of Mt. Carmel, the mountain of Megiddo, and that those armed forces coming from the northern regions must pass through Megiddo before reaching the appointed place of gathering.

Megiddo was only a staging ground for the Roman armies. It was from Caesarea, the area of Megiddo, that Titus and his armies moved toward Jerusalem for (as Revelation describes it) "the war of the great day of God" (Rev. 16:14). This was a first century battle that involved the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem.

Despite the sensationalistic claims of today's popular prophecy writers, there is no future "battle of Armageddon" described in the Bible. The battle of Armageddon depicted in their many books is the fictional product of misinterpretation and imagination.