

# THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

The Battle of Armageddon refers to one of the major themes in God's plan of salvation for mankind. It entails the end of Satan's existence and thus of his rule over the earth. It will result in destruction to the willfully wicked ones and salvation to the people of God. It is thus the end of an epoch and the beginning of a new order of things on earth.

Unfortunately however, the Battle of Armageddon has been misunderstood and misapplied in several quarters. It has become the stuff of fantasies, the tool of doomsday-mongers and the resort of false prophets and politicians. But the Bible does not leave anyone in doubt as to its true meaning.

According to ecclesiastical scholars, Armageddon, recorded only in Revelation 16:16 and which means "the hill or mountain of Megiddo", is the fortress on the edge of the plain of Jezreel which guarded the pass through the Mount Carmel range. Because Megiddo occupied a very marked position on the southern edge of the plain, many of the famous battles of old Testament history were fought there. These include the battle in which Gideon and his little band alarmed and discomfited the Midianites, who destroyed one another in their flight (Judges 7:19-23); the war in which King Saul was defeated by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:1-6); the battle in which King Josiah was slain by Pharaoh – Necho in one of the most disastrous conflicts in the history of Israel (2 Chronicles 35:22-25). For being the scene of so many battles, Armageddon has over the years come to stand for battle itself.

In the Scriptures, Armageddon is used symbolically to depict the destruction which God will execute on the spiritual and physical realms of Satan's empire, a condition precedent to the realization of perfect peace and happiness on earth.

## False Predictions

There have been several false predictions about where and when the battle of Armageddon will take place. This is due to ignorance of the Scriptures and over zealousness. On October 22, 1844, one William Miller, a farmer led many of his 50,000 followers to the hilltops to await the appearance of Christ and an army of angels at which time he thought the world will end. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society predicted that the world would end in 1914. They further prophesied that 1925 would see the earthly resurrection of faithful men of old such as Abraham, David, Daniel among others. They also predicted the world's end at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. As a result, some traders here in Nigeria stopped going to the market; others stopped their children from going to school; while some sold their sewing machines and rubber plantations. Not done yet with such false predictions, the Watchtower Society started again in about 1966 to tell the world that Armageddon would come in 1975. It is noteworthy that both during the Second World War and in the late 1960s and early 1970s the GKS mounted extensive campaigns then to educate the world that the predictions were false. (For more details, please see *The Weekly Sermon, Volume 11 Number 51*, entitled "WILL THIS EVIL WORLD END IN 1975?" published first on December 6, 1970 and reprinted in booklet form in May 1974.) True to the warning given by the GKS, based on the Holy Bible, 1975 came and went and the world did not end. In the interest of the sheep of God who may have been misled, the GKS in 1976, mounted series of lectures in some towns in Nigeria with posters bearing such titles as "Is Armageddon postponed? If yes, who postponed it?" The campaign was to enlighten the public

about the fallacy of the Watchtower prophecy and to highlight the danger of following false prophets as stated in Deuteronomy 18:21-22. The Church enjoined those who suffered losses because they were misled to embrace the truth as preached by the GKS and to look to God always. It was not until 1995 that the Watchtower Society admitted that their views were based on mere “conjecture” and were therefore “erroneous”. – *Awake!* June 22, 1995, page 9. Even the federal government in the United States of America has had to take drastic action to keep the country stable due to predictions of those a commentator called “premature prophets of doom.” A report in the *Sunday Tribune* of 27th August 2000, page 16 stated that security agencies in the US were taking “drastic” measures which they believe “are absolutely necessary to maintain control over citizens who are sure to quit their jobs, abandon their families and run wild in the streets once they realize we are, in fact, living in the End Times”. The *Tribune* report quoted Dr. Robert Calke, author of the book *Paradise Waiting – What You Must Do to Live Forever*, as saying among other things that that “the Battle of Armageddon will start with China and Iraq attacking Israel on December 12, 2001. All-out nuclear war will follow, and all nations with military capability will be involved in the conflict. The 10-day battle will result in ‘the end of all things’ on December 22.” That apart, Evangelist Bill Graham was reported in the *Tribune* of Thursday August 3, 2000 as saying that Armageddon will embrace most of the nations of the world and that its focal point will be in the Middle East, at Armageddon – the Mount of Megiddo: Unclean spirits – demons – will go out into the world together the kings of earth to battle to battle.”

## Y2K

Fears that “the world may end as we know it” hit fever pitch as the world approached the end of 1999 in that many people associated the year 2000 with the second coming of Christ at which time they thought the world will end. Issues were compounded by the Y2K problem, fears that an alleged programming oversight that may make computers incapable of reading the date 2000 will lead to a range of malfunctions, such as erroneous early-warning reports, the accidental launch of nuclear missiles, plane crashes, breakdown of nuclear power plants, massive power blackouts, the failure of hospital, factory and fire equipment, the collapse of banking, food shortages, riots etc.

Because of fears of a global chaos or catastrophe, many people bought up to a year’s supply of food, water, and other essentials. They also bought gas-powered plants and candles. A few simply headed for the hills where they hoped to live out the impending calamity.

And yet others simply took off to Jerusalem or even to the site of Megiddo where they thought the battle will start. For instance, followers of a Colorado cult leader Monte Kim Miller travelled to Israel with 80 of his followers, believing that the city with the Mount of Olives, the Temple Mount, the site of Solomon’s Temple, was a possible “touchdown site for the Lord”. Miller claimed to be one of the prophets prefigured by the 11th chapter of Revelation, one who would be killed on the streets of Jerusalem and then, Christ-like, be raised from the dead three days later. Another group took up residence in monasteries in the mountains around Jerusalem, mostly in the West Bank. They even assigned to themselves portfolios which they hope to take up “in the world to come” One is in charge of justice, another is in charge of tranquility. See *Time* magazine of January 18, 1999, page 47. In the light of the raging global apprehension, the GKS, at the last and great day of the Feast of Tabernacles of 1999 released an address entitled: “The world and the new millennium in which she exhorted people not to be taken in by the bogus claims of false prophets as no one knew the exact time the world would end.

What a monumental disappointment it was for them as the year 2000 came and went and the world did not end.

## **Spiritual Battle**

The battle of Armageddon is not a conflict involving human beings. It will also not take place in Jerusalem nor indeed any single place on earth. It is a spiritual battle in which Jesus Christ and his angels will annihilate the Devil, his demons and all unrepentant wicked ones on earth. The destruction will be on a global scale and not be limited to any part of the earth. It is not a nuclear war nor is it a "global meltdown" due to any technological malfunction.

Armageddon is used simply in a figurative sense as it was the site of several battles and has become synonymous with war and destruction. Some of these battles saw the armies of the Lord vanquishing their enemies.

It is sheer foolishness for people to flee to the village of Megiddo in Palestine or even to Jerusalem believing that the destruction will start from there. Knowing the intensity of the horrors that will face mankind then, even the prophet Job prayed to be in the grave by then. (Job 14:13) God spoke through the prophet Amos to wit: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not

The text in Revelation 16:16 refers to the destruction which Jesus Christ will visit on Satan (known as the dragon in verse 13) his demons as well as the political, commercial and religious elements of Satan's empire, including all false prophets.

Satan the Devil had been given a suspended sentence right from the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15) This will be executed at the Battle of Armageddon, "when the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" will be killed. (Revelation 20:1-3) The destruction of the Devil and his organization, which St. Peter described as "the passing away of the heavens" will be total such that he will not be able to afflict the world anymore. -2 Peter 3:7,10; Nahum 1:9; Matthew 24:21; Isaiah 14:13-17.

The Lord will employ any means that He prefers to destroy the wicked ones on earth at the Battle of Armageddon. An indication to this effect is given in the book of Ezekiel where God spoke of using pestilence (dreadful diseases), sword, (weapon of destruction) famine (hunger) and noisome beasts (terrifying devourers) to destroy the wicked. -Ezekiel 14:12-21.

The calamities will reach all nations and so many people will be slain on that day that there will be no burial for them, as stated in the book of the prophet Jeremiah: "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." (Jeremiah 25:30,31) In the words of the prophet Zechariah, a greater number of those living on earth will be destroyed. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire (that is fiery trial), and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried..." - Zechariah 13:8,9

In addition, the prophet Zephaniah stated: "The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." – Zephaniah 1 :14-18; See also Isaiah 2:10-12; 13:6-11.

No one knows the time or hour when the battle will take place but the Bible shows it will be within these last days in which we are living. Jesus Christ said: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only." (Matthew 24:36) It is therefore highly presumptuous and deceitful for anyone to be making predictions about the date of Armageddon, a thing which Jesus Christ himself said only his Father knew!

After that battle none like it will happen again. Jesus Christ said: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." -Matthew 24:21; See also Nahum 1:9; Daniel 12:1.

Though few relative to those that would be destroyed, the number of Armageddon survivors will be such that no man can number them. Apostle John was privileged to see this in a vision in the Island of Patmos and he wrote: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." (Revelation 7:9,10,13-15 See also Daniel 12:1) That the saved ones stood before the throne of God does not mean that they were in heaven. All people on earth are before God. (Deuteronomy 29:10; Habakkuk 2:20; Acts 10:33; Psalm 100:3) The redeemed were on earth praising God for delivering them from death.

All persons who love to be saved should therefore flee Satan's stranglehold and place themselves under Jehovah's protection in His kingdom organizations now set up so as to be protected in "the day of the Lord's anger" as it is written: " Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger." – Zephaniah 2:1-3; Isaiah 26:20,21

The truth about the battle of Armageddon has been made clear in this sermon. Knowing that "of the day and hour knoweth no man" it is essential that we all strive to do works meet for salvation so as to be spared in "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" – Revelation 6:17; 16:14.