

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Megiddo

(Jerry Fite)

In the Plain of Esdraelon, between Mount Carmel and Mount Gilboa, lies Megiddo. It strategically connects the southwest with the northeast as a prominent trade route, and has witnessed many important battles of war in history.

Pharaoh Thutmose III led Egypt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to victory over a coalition of Canaanites at Megiddo. At the close of World War I (1918), General Edmund Allenby successfully led British forces against the armies of the Ottoman Empire in Megiddo's valley. Josiah lost his life at Megiddo at the hands of Pharaoh Necho after the King of Judah refused the Egyptian army passageway to Carchemish (2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35:22). In the day of the Judges, Deborah sang a song of victory for her people over Jabin's Canaanite army at the waters of Megiddo (nearby Kishon River) (Judges 5:19).

Twelve times in the Old Testament “Megiddo” occurs in the King James Version. Megiddo's walls were built in the days of Solomon to be a protective garrison in the strategic valley (1 Kings 9:15). Megiddo had its

“towns”, “waters” and “valley” (Joshua 1:27, Judges 5:19, Zech. 12:11). But, we never read of “mount” Megiddo in the Old Testament.

Not until we come to the New Testament do we read of “Mount Megiddo”: “*And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Mageddon*” (Revelation 16:16). Drop the “h”, which is included to accommodate the hard breathing mark over the “a”, you then are left with “Armageddon” – the mountain of Megiddo.

Premillennialists view Armageddon as either a series of battles throughout the region, or a single battle ushering the return of Jesus Christ to earth as He wins a decisive victory over the kings of the earth at Megiddo. You would think the battle of Armageddon, because of its importance in the theory of premillennialism, might be prophesied about in the Old Testament, but you will never read “the battle of Armageddon” from the pen of God's prophets. Neither do we read of a literal “mountain of Megiddo” in Old Testament scripture. There is a “tel” or hill proving a long history of inhabitants in ancient Megiddo,

but no mountain of Megiddo exists on earth.

If we are to consider literal Megiddo for this decisive battle, should we not also believe the great Euphrates River will literally dry up to provide access for the blaspheming kings (Revelation 16:12)? Instead, we should remember that John sees a dramatic vision. Not only a dried up Euphrates becomes a land bridge, but evil spirits appear as three frogs enticing the kings to assemble for war (Revelation 16:14). It is not literally “mount Megiddo” for such a mount has never existed in history, but a vision of Megiddo, which was understood as the place of many important battles, and therefore a victorious stronghold.

It is assumed that the battle of Armageddon is the decisive battle of history, ending all things. But the Bible refers to another war that follows “Armageddon” where again God defeats the enemy, symbolic Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:7-10). John sees the current persecuting world empire Rome being defeated, but understanding God's people will undergo future devouring threats and deliverance before God closes man's history on earth.