

Glad Tidings

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

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Armageddon

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When you hear the word, “Armageddon,” what comes to mind? Do you think of a “place?” Do you imagine a “battle?” Does the word bring fear to your heart, or do you embrace the term with hopeful anticipation? This brief examination of Armageddon from the perspective of the Bible should help our understanding, establishing our hearts in the truth.

“Armageddon” is found only once in the Bible. This may surprise some because one would think the term occurs many times in Scripture, considering how often the term comes up in religious discussion. John writes, “*And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon*” (Revelation 16:16). John informs us that “Armageddon” is a place. Since in the Hebrew it is a combination of “Har”- mountain and “Magedon,” scholars believe John is referring to “Megiddo,” which in history has been a strategic stronghold in Israel.

“Armageddon” is a place for gathering for war. John writes the kings of the whole world are gathered here “*unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty*” (Revelation 16:14). Megiddo, because of its strategic position on a pass through and overlooking the Jezreel Valley, was a location where

important battles were fought. In 1478 B.C., the Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III fought a Canaanite coalition at this stronghold. Israel’s judges, Deborah and Gideon won important battles at Megiddo (Judges 4-5, 6:33). In 609 B.C., Josiah lost his life in a battle at Megiddo against Egyptian Pharaoh-necho (2 Kings 23:29-30). In more recent times, British forces clashed in an important WWI battle at Megiddo which in more modern history was still a strategic and important place for war. So, it is not surprising to read that “Armageddon,” is mentioned as a gathering place for another important war in the Book of Revelation.

“Armageddon” is not something for the Christian to fear. The Book of Revelation was written to encourage the faithful Christian. Encouragement, not fear, should enter the faithful Christian’s heart when he or she reads the word, “Armageddon.” Evil spirits drive the enemies of God to Armageddon where they will be defeated in war. While gathering for war in Revelation 16, the war is not fought until Revelation 19. Even here we read of only the results of the conflict. We see why it is described as a war manifesting “*the great day of God*” (Revelation 16:14). The persecuting force (the beast), and the voice for false religion (the false prophet) were cast into the lake of fire and

brimstone while those worshippers of the beast and supporting kings were killed with the sword, filling all the birds with their flesh (Revelation 19:19-20). Therefore, the Christian, especially the persecuted Christian in John’s day, should react with confident hope, not in shrinking fear when they heard then, and we hear today, the word “Armageddon.”

“Armageddon” is not the final battle. This may surprise you because in dictionaries, “Armageddon” is defined as: (*in the New Testament*) *the last battle between good and evil before the Day of Judgment.* (Oxford Dictionary). But in Revelation, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations one last time through Gog and Magog to fight against God’s people. The encompassing forces against God’s people will be devoured by God in fire (Revelation 20:7-10). This follows the “Armageddon” battle in Revelation 19. Satan, the deceiver of the world, was not cast into his final destination of Hell’s lake of fire along with the beast and false prophet at Armageddon. He was allowed to deceive one more time, issuing into the final battle of Gog and Magog against God’s people. So, “Armageddon” is not the final battle as defined by many. It is also truly encouraging to know that God’s people will never be defeated by Satan, regardless of the battle he creates against God’s people.