

Glad Tidings

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

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Responding to Armageddon

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When you hear the word, “Armageddon,” what comes to your mind? Do you think of a “place,” or do you imagine a “battle”? Does the word cause you to shrink in fear, or do you embrace the term with victorious anticipation? This brief examination of the subject from the perspective of the Bible should create in our heart the appropriate response when we hear the term periodically used.

“Armageddon” is found only once in the Bible. This may surprise many for one would think the term occurs many times considering how much 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 “Megedon,” which indeed in history has been a strategic stronghold in Israel.

“Armageddon” is a place for gathering for war.” John writes that 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). Even in more modern times British forces clashed in an important WWI battle at Megiddo with the Ottoman Empire forces in 1918. Its geographic position has placed Megiddo in history as 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’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 the gathering for war is mentioned in Revelation 16, the war is not fought until Revelation 19. Even here we read only the results of the war. We see why it is described as a war manifesting *“the great day of God” (Revelation 16:14).* The persecuting force (beast), and the inspiration for false religion (false prophet) were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone while those worshippers of the beast and supporting kings are 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 shrinking fear when they heard then and hear today the word “Armageddon.”

“Armageddon” is not the final battle. Before the end of time, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations in 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 Armageddon. So, Armageddon is not the final battle, nor should it be doom and gloom in the Christian’s heart.