

ARMAGEDDON AHEAD

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."
Revelation 16:16.

Few people seem to realize that the difficulties and distress of nations since 1914 including wars, revolutions, famines, pestilences, the rise and fall of nations and the return of the Jews to Palestine attended by the opposition of the Arabs and others are described in the Word of God as signs of the approaching return of Christ to establish a new order. Many world leaders believe that a reign of peace and a warless world can be realized by the adoption of their plans which leave God out and repudiate the return of Christ, but according to God's infallible prophetic word their plans and efforts will fail miserably.

The interest of many has recently been shifting in the direction of Palestine. At one time Hitler let it be known that he was preparing for an invasion of the Near East. He and his counsellors decided to postpone such an invasion and make an attack on Russia. The German forces invaded Russia, for the time was not ripe for the prophecy in Ezekiel 38 and 39 to be fulfilled, nor were the nations mentioned as the great prophet foresaw in the battle which he predicted.

Russia wants Palestine badly. Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula make a land bridge from Europe to Asia to Africa. Any nation which controls that area would have a tremendous and powerful advantage. Many greatly coveted possessions lie within this region, among them being the Mosul oil fields, the Suez Canal and the Dead Sea with its vast wealth of minerals. As I stood on the shore of the Dead Sea I thought, here is a body of water into which for centuries God has been pouring the waters of the Jordan River. The chemical wealth of the Dead Sea is conservatively estimated at 1500 billion dollars. Such wealth, when available for the development of the country, will cause any desert to "blossom as the rose." The ease with which these salts can be extracted from the Dead Sea is one of the remarkable features of this phenomenon. The sun, which is ninety-three million miles distant, does the work. It evaporates the water, after it has been drained from the sea, and leaves the chemicals. God looked ahead to this day and said in Isaiah 60:5, "Then shalt thou see and be radiant, and thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged: BECAUSE THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SEA SHALL BE TURNED UNTO THEE."

"My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, He has riches untold."

Some people have the idea that the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is a description of Armageddon. This is not true, as we shall see. The former will be fulfilled before the rise of the Antichrist and before the Great Tribulation.

The latter will be at the end of the Great Tribulation. In Ezekiel 38, we have two alliances of nations facing each other in battle, while at the battle of Armageddon the Antichrist will bring all nations against Jerusalem. In the former we have an alliance of nations which is usually referred to as the great northern confederacy.

To understand Ezekiel's prophecy we must identify the persons and places named. Gog is the prince or ruler. Magog is the land. The chief prince comes from a one-syllable Hebrew word, Ros or Rosh, which is the name of modern Russia. Meshech is Moscow, and Tubal is Tobolsk. Moscow and Tobolsk are the European and Asiatic, or western and eastern, capitals of Russia. Gomer is Germany. Togarmah is Turkey. Persia is now called Iran. Then he mentions three countries in Africa—Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya. In the ancient world, Ethiopia usually meant the whole continent of Africa. So you can easily see how that continent will be involved in the federation.

The plan of Russia expansion and dominion which was devised by Peter the Great over two

hundred years ago is being carried out very effectively today. No other nation so completely fits into the divine portraiture of an anti-God nation as does modern Russia. In Ezekiel 38:3, God plainly says, "I am against thee, O Gog!" Terrible will be His fury when God's day of vengeance arrives.

Russia now looks with longing eyes on Iran, a country about twice the size of Texas, which has the finest and richest oil fields in the world. She is also interested in the Suez Canal, which is the very life-line between the various parts of the British Colonial Empire, and in the Dead Sea with its vast resources or wealth of minerals. Sometime, and nobody knows when, a great northern confederacy, headed up by Russia, and along with her will be parts of Germany, the Balkan States, Persia, Ethiopia and Libya at least, with the largest army ever assembled will attack Palestine. The final battle in that terrible slaughter will be fought on the mountains of Israel when Russia and her allies move to take all the Near East.

How soon that march will take place we do not know, but it is certain that the effort will be a failure. Palestine will be to Russia what Waterloo was to Napoleon and Stalingrad was to Hitler. Success for this northern army cannot be attained since God has already spoken and decreed Russia's doom. Russia is the one nation in the world that God says He is against. "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" (Ezekiel 39:1). Five-sixths of the northern hordes will never live to escape. Ezekiel 39:2. Russia will not fail because she does not have the men and the equipment but on account of God's direct judgment. Communists, all of whom are avowed atheists, hate God and have set themselves to the task of destroying the very remembrance of God. The communist salute is the clinched fist raised in defiance of God. However, we must remember that the destruction of Russia will not be the end of earth's troubles. Europe will fall into the trap of the Antichrist by forming the United States of Europe.

I. Where Will Armageddon Be Fought?

This word "Armageddon" occurs but once in the Bible. It means the hill or mount of Megiddo and the great plain of the Esdraelon valley, which has been the scene of many memorable battles. Branching out from Mount Carmel, upon which Elijah confronted and defeated the false prophets of Baal, in either direction like the two prongs of the letter "Y" and extending to the sea on either side is a mountain range. In this V shaped valley between the two prongs great battles have been fought down through the centuries. In fact, it has been the cockpit of war throughout human history. Here the Canaanites and Philistines, Jews and Egyptians, Chaldeans and Persians, Greeks and Romans, Moslems and Christians have met in conflict on this field of carnage. Here, midway between ancient Egypt on the south and ancient Assyria on the north, marching and contending armies met and fought over their issues. The kings of Egypt and the kings of Babylon met there and vanquished each other. The very mention of that battleground suggests to students of history the names of various world conquerors.

Fifteen hundred years before Christ, Thotmes III landed from the beach, defeated his opposition in the valley, marched into Palestine, captured nineteen of the principal cities and subjugated the land. Thirteen hundred and fifty years before Christ, Rameses II landed at the same place, vanquished his enemies and conquered the Hittites who were then in the land. It was in the same plains that good King Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt. In 722 B. C. Sargon defeated and destroyed Samaria on this battlefield. Then came the Assyrians and sweeping down from the north in 586 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Israelites in this valley, captured and destroyed Jerusalem and took the choicest of the Jews to Babylon in captivity, where they remained for seventy years. Among them was Daniel the prophet, the three Hebrew children and many others. In 197 B. C. Ptolemy of Egypt fought a decisive battle here and captured the land. One of the most despicable characters of all history was Antiochus Epiphanes, and in 168 B. C. he fought and won a decisive battle in this same place. In 63 B. C. Pompey the Great fought and won a decisive battle and brought Palestine under Roman rule.

Rebellion among the Jews against the rule of the Romans brought marching armies into the land many times. Soon after the crucifixion of Christ and true to His prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D. the Romans under Titus marched through that land, then captured and destroyed Jerusalem. Then came the Turks! In 614 A. D. the Persian king Khosru captured that land. In 637 A. D. the greatest of all the Moslem conquerors, Omar, captured Palestine. To commemorate his victory he built what is now known as the Mosque of Omar, on the site of the ancient Temple of Solomon. This building stands to this day on the spot of ground that is sacred to three great groups-- Jews, Christians and Mohammedans.

The Crusades were organized for the purpose of wresting Jerusalem and Palestine out of the hands of the unbelieving Turks and restoring it to Christendom. In 1099 A. D. the Crusaders, led by Saint Louis of France, won a decisive battle and temporarily established the reign of France over the land, thus replacing the Crescent with the Cross. In 1187 it was lost again to the Moslems, when Saladin the Terrible defeated Richard the Lion Hearted. Again in 1516 the Ottoman Turks overran the land and held it in subjection until December, 1917, when under General Allenby, Jerusalem was captured and the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack were unfurled at the Joffa Gate.

I have mentioned these incidents to give you a bird's eye view of some of the historic and conflicting armies of Europe, Asia and Africa which have settled their issues in this area. This great valley has been proclaimed by military experts to be the most ideal battlefield in all the world. It has seen more bloody battles during its past history than any other equal spot of ground in the world.

II. When Will Armageddon Be Fought?

We do not know the date, for God has not specified it. It is a sad fact that there are many cranks who set dates for things of this nature. Consequently, instead of inquiring what the Bible has to say on this subject, they just back off from it. There has nothing that has brought the prophetic message of the Scriptures into disrepute more than irresponsible men who have set dates for certain things to take place. Anybody who sets a date for a certain event in the prophetic schedule of God cannot be trusted as a safe interpreter of the Word of God. The other extreme with respect to the prophetic message is not only as dangerous but even more prevalent than date setting. It is the extreme of discounting the prophetic Word altogether and maintaining that we cannot know anything concerning the last days and the return of our Lord.

As to time, the Battle of Armageddon will be fought in relation to the coming of Christ to this earth. Revelation 16:15-16 gives us the relative time. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armagedden." The fact that Armageddon will be fought when Christ returns in His glory, accompanied by all of His saints and by the angels of heaven is further set forth in Revelation 19.

III. What Is The Cause Of The Battle?

Though he is not responsible for it, the Jew will be the occasion of it. Out of World War I came one clear-cut result, namely, Palestine was restored to its rightful owners, and for the first time in almost three thousand years the world witnessed a Jewish ruler reigning over it. In World War II the Jew was a vital factor. Hitler hated the Jews and hounded them all over Europe. Many others participated in the satanically inspired Anti-Semitism. Why do people hate the Jews as they do? Because they envy them on account of their success. Jealous of them, they want what the Jews have. No Christian should have any part in hating the Jews, for God's promise to Abraham still holds. "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:

and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Don't lay your hand upon the Jew! When God wants him chastised He will do it Himself without any assistance from you or me.

IV. Who Will Lead The Contending Forces?

One of them is a man, a great military leader, and the other is the Son of God. As to the character of the one who shall lead the armies of the world Daniel says: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things" (Daniel 11:36-38). Coming out of the sea of troubled humanity, being beastly in his destructive power, the greatest military ruler of all times, the arch deceiver, he will make war against the saints. He will lead the martial hosts of earth against Jerusalem. Representatives of the military forces of all the principal nations of the earth will be involved in this terrible conflict. When our Lord returns in His glory, He will slaughter the assailing armies as they march against Jerusalem.

V. What Will The Outcome Be?

Armageddon will be the final act in this world drama, the principals of which will be God on the one side and Satan and his followers on the other. Armageddon is on the program of God. It is the ultimate gathering center for the nations. It is the appointed place where the returning King of kings will grind the nations to powder, after which He will build up His kingdom.

You may be inclined to laugh and scoff at my message of warning. They laughed and scoffed at Noah the day before the flood began, but when the flood waters began to rise, they realized too late that Noah was right. The Bible has never been wrong. Through the centuries millions have trusted its promises, and not one of them has ever testified that it has failed them. Pharaoh laughed at Moses and when he finally grew angry he said, "See my face again no more." Moses was the messenger of God, and he replied as he spoke for God, "I will see thy face again no more forever." Those words were ringing in Pharaoh's ears as he went beneath the surface of the Red Sea. When Sennacherib came up against the children of Israel, he had the most perfectly equipped and well trained army in all the world. What could this little handful of Israelites do? He was a tyrant of such power and dominion that he could stamp his foot and the earth would almost tremble. Interested friends tried to warn him that no emperor had ever been able to interfere with God's people and escape. He would not hear. He laughed and scoffed and said, "Tomorrow we shall see." But that night the death angel from heaven passed over his army and with one flap of his mighty wing slew 185,000 men. The next morning when he arose that number of corpses covered the ground.

As a servant and messenger of God I stand in the midst of a world, which is planning its own way, waging its own wars and declaring what it intends to do tomorrow and in the generations to come, to warn you on the authority of God's Word that all civilizations are heading up for the final battle at Armageddon. Divine intervention will come from the skies and Christ shall come and take vengeance on all who know not God.

Christ has paid the penalty for you. When He died on the cross, He suffered the pangs of death for every person listening to me. He tasted death for every man. God collected the debt of perfect obedience to Him in the death of His only begotten Son. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Right now in your heart you can trust Christ, you can receive Him as your Saviour and your Lord. He alone can save

you and meet your every need. His precious blood can cleanse the vilest sinner and make him a new creature. His present intercession can give victory over the powers of evil. His coming again provides thrills as we anticipate heaven and home.