

ARMAGEDDON, JUDGEMENT OF THE NATIONS, CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN AND THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

Armageddon is the name of the place that will be the scene of the final battle, predestined by God, between good and evil in the earth at Christ's second coming. It will be the greatest battle ever fought in the history of the world. On the one side will be Christ, and on the other Antichrist aided by the devil – Satan, the false prophet, and all the armies of the confederation of nations that will align themselves with Antichrist at Armageddon (CP Rev 16:13-16). The dragon is the devil, who has been cast down to earth from Heaven (CP Rev 12:7-9). Together with Antichrist and the false prophet the devil will make war on Israel in the second three and a half years of the tribulation (CP Rev 12:1-5, 10-13, 17). The woman in Rev 12 symbolises Israel (it is not material to this study as to who the man child is). *The third part of the stars in Heaven* in V 4 refers to the number of angels also cast out of Heaven down to earth with the devil (CP V 9).

The beast in Rev 16:13-16 is Antichrist (CP Rev 13:1-8 with Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 2Th 2:7-9; Rev 6:4). The *sea* out of which Antichrist rises in Rev 13 symbolises people, nations, multitudes and tongues – inhabitants of the earth (CP Rev 17:1, 15). Antichrist is a human being who rises up to power from among other human beings. He is not a supernatural being as so many believe, but is empowered to do signs and wonders and work miracles by both Satan (CP 2Th 1:9), and the false prophet (CP Rev 13:12-15), which God permits. Many inhabitants of the earth at that time will think that Antichrist died of his head wound in Rev 13:3, and that God brought him back to life, thus duplicating Christ's death and resurrection, and attesting to Antichrist's deity. But the healing will be effected by Satan and the false prophet to dupe people into worshipping Antichrist's image, believing him to be God (CP Dan 8:23-24; Rev 13:11-15). Scriptures do not teach who Antichrist is, only that he comes from Syria – he is referred to many times as "the Assyrian" (CP Isa 10:20-27; 14:24-27; 30:27-31; 31:4-9; Dan 11:36-12:13; Mic 5:3-15). Those scriptures all refer to Antichrist as the Assyrian, including Dan 11:36-12:13. *The North* in Dan 11:36-45 refers to Syria.

The false prophet in Rev 16:13-16 is himself, although, as we saw in Rev 13:11-15, he is also symbolised by a beast in scripture (CP Rev 13:11-18). *Earth* in V 11, like *sea* in V 1, is used symbolically of peoples. It is also the same Greek word as *world*, symbolising the inhabitants of the earth, in V 3 (CP V 3 with Gen 9:19; 11:1; 19:31; Rev 6:8; 11:6; 19:2). The false prophet is also a human being like Antichrist, yet he too is supposed by many to be a supernatural being. John refers to him simply as "the false prophet". He is empowered to work miracles and deceive people into believing that Antichrist is God. He will enable the image of Antichrist, which will be set up in the temple – *the abomination of desolation* – to talk as God. He will cause people to worship the image and behead those who refuse (CP Rev 13:12-15 with Mt 24:15; 2Th 2:3-4 and Rev 20:4). The false prophet will also cause people to receive the mark, or the name, or the number, of Antichrist in their right hand or their foreheads, in order to buy and sell. It will be better to die though

than to receive any of those marks, or worship Antichrist, for all who do so will be cast into the lake of fire (CP Rev 13:16-17 with 14:9-11). It is useless speculating what the mark is – scriptures do not say.

The three demon spirits like frogs that came out of the mouths of the devil, Antichrist, and the false prophet in Rev 16:13-16, will go throughout all the kingdoms of the world working miracles to induce their kings to side with Antichrist at Armageddon with their armies, to fight Christ (CP Rev 16:13-14 with Psa 2:1-3; Joel 3:1-2; Zeph 3:8; Zech 14:1-3; Rev 19:19). The battle of Armageddon will take place immediately after the tribulation (CP Mt 24:29-31). Jerusalem will be surrounded by the armies of Antichrist, the women ravished, and half the city taken captive (CP Zech 14:1-3; Lu 21:20-28). God's purpose for the battle of Armageddon is to deliver Israel from total destruction by Antichrist and his armies (CP Isa 10:20-27; 13:6-16; 14:4-6, 9-11, 16-20, 24-27; 30:30-33 (*Tophet* (KJV) means a great funeral pyre); 34:1-17; 63:1-6; Jer 30:1-11; Eze 38:1-39:29; Joel 3:1-21; Mic 5:1-15; Zech 14:1-7, 12-15). The clear teaching in all these scriptures is that all that will take place at Armageddon in the future, has been ordained by God in the past. God will even make it easy for the armies of Antichrist to be deployed at Armageddon – He will dry up the River Euphrates so they can cross over on dry land (CP Rev 16:12). In the context of the prophecy in Eze 38 and 39, *Gog* represents Antichrist, and *Magog*, Assyria – the nation he rules. Antichrist is also referred to as the king of Babylon, and the king of the North, as we saw in earlier scriptures. Syria is north of Jerusalem (CP Eze 38:15). That part of Old Testament Syria where Babylon was located, is now modern day Iraq.

The battle of Armageddon is variously referred to in scripture as *the day of the Lord* (CP Isa 13:6-9; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Zeph 1:7; Zech 14:1; 1Th 5:2). *The day of His fierce anger* (CP Isa 13:13). *The day of the Lord's vengeance* (CP Isa 34:8). *A day of darkness* (CP Joel 2:2). *The great day of the Lord* (CP Zeph 1:14). *A day of wrath* (CP Zeph 1:15). *The day of the Lord's wrath* (CP Zeph 1:18). *The day of His coming* (CP Mal 3:2). *That great day of God Almighty* (CP Rev 16:14).

On His way to the battle of Armageddon, Christ will return first to the Mount of Olives from which He ascended to Heaven after His resurrection (CP Lu 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-12). As Christ stands on the Mount of Olives, it will split in two and create a great valley into which the Israelites who survive the tribulation will flee for safety from Antichrist's armies, and the outpouring of God's wrath at Armageddon (Zech 14:1-7). Two thirds of the nation of Israel will die in the tribulation – only one third will survive and make up the nation that will go into the eternal Kingdom with Christ (CP Zech 13:8-9). Although all the redeemed in Heaven and the angels of God – *the armies of Heaven* – accompany Jesus to the battle of Armageddon, they do not fight the battle with Him. He single-handedly defeats Antichrist and his armies together with Satan and the false prophet (CP Joel 2:1-11; Mt 24:27-31; 2Th 1:7-8; Jude 14-15; Rev 19:11-

Armageddon, Judgement of the Nations, Christ's Millennial Reign and the Eternal Kingdom

16, 19-21 with Isa 59:16-21; 63:1-6).

The battle of Armageddon will last only one day (CP Isa 30:26; Zech 14:6-8, 13). Christ will spare only one sixth of Antichrist's armies who will then become a part of Christ's millennial Kingdom (CP Eze 39:1-2 with Zech 14:16-19). The blood that will be shed by the armies of Antichrist who Christ will destroy at Armageddon will flow for a distance of two hundred miles – approximately three hundred and twenty kilometres – at a depth of approximately 1.2m ... *unto the horses' bridles* (CP Rev 14:19-20 with Isa 34:1-8; 63:1-3; Jer 25:30-33; 46:9-10; Joel 3:13). Armageddon is the *great winepress of the wrath of God* in Rev 14:19. It will take seven years to burn the weapons of war used by Antichrist's armies as firewood (CP Eze 39:8-10). It will take all of Israel seven months to bury the bodies of those killed in the battle, notwithstanding that the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field will also eat the dead bodies (CP Eze 39:4, 11-20 with Rev 19:17-18 and Mt 24:27-28; Lu 17:34-37).

Antichrist's forces will not only die by Christ's hand though. They will also die from a plague sent by God that will eat away their flesh, and they will slay each other as well (CP Zech 14:12-13 with Eze 38:21). God will also smite the horses of Antichrist's armies with terror and panic (KJV *astonishment*), and their riders with madness (CP Zech 12:1-4, 8-9). Some of the better known nations named in scripture that will be mobilised against Christ at Armageddon are Syria, which Antichrist rules, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and Persia – present day Iran. Lesser known are Lydia, Chub, Roth, Tubal, Meshech, Gomer, Togarmah and Edom. Opinions are divided among bible scholars as to precise present day counterparts of these nations, so it is best to see them simply as nations that will exist at the time of Armageddon, who will oppose Christ (CP Isa 19:16-17; Eze 30:1-9; 38:1-23; Dan 11:40-43; Joel 3:18-19). In light of those scriptures it seems a reasonable observation to make here that the confederation of nations that will oppose Christ at Armageddon will mainly be Middle Eastern and African Islamic nations which hate Israel.

Much of Palestine will be destroyed, as too will much of the world in the battle of Armageddon and the events preceding it, immediately prior to Christ's second coming (CP Isa 13:5-13 with Rev 16:17-20). This earthquake will be the most powerful and devastating earthquake in the history of the world. It will split Jerusalem into three parts, bring cities around the world crashing down, completely and utterly destroy the city of Babylon, and radically alter the earth's topography: every mountain and island will be moved from their position – the mountains will literally disappear. This will happen contemporaneous with Antichrist's armies invading Israel immediately prior to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon (CP Eze 38:18-23). Although the city of Babylon does not presently exist as such, it will be rebuilt for its destiny to be fulfilled to accord with scripture (CP Zech 5:5-11). Here Zechariah prophesies the future rebuilding of Babylon – *wickedness will be built a home in Shinar*. *Wickedness* refers to Babylon, *Shinar* is the land in which it is situated (CP Gen 10:10). *Babel* is

Babylon. *The wind in the woman's wings, and having wings like the wings of a stork* in Zech 5:9-11, symbolises the speed with which Babylon will be rebuilt and restored to its former glory at the appointed time. It has been partly rebuilt where it was previously situated in the land once part of Syria, which is now modern Iraq. Babylon will be Antichrist's seat of government prior to the battle of Armageddon (CP Isa 14:3-6 with Rev 17:1, 3-6, 18; 18:1-24).

As was earlier noted in this study, the battle of Armageddon and all the events preceding it are predestined by God. Antichrist and his cohorts have no say in the matter. God will be magnified and sanctified by Christ's supernatural destruction of Antichrist and his mighty armies, which will be the fulfilment of the many prophecies in scripture that have already been noted in this study (CP Eze 38:14-23). Three results of Christ's victory at Armageddon will be that God will make His Holy name known in the midst of His people, Israel; He will not allow them to pollute His Holy name any more, and the heathen will know He is the Lord, the Holy One in Israel (CP Eze 39:7). After Christ defeats Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon, Antichrist and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire (CP Rev 19:20). Satan is chained and cast into the bottomless pit – a prison of demon spirits – for a thousand years during the millennial reign of Christ (CP Rev 20:1-3). We will see what happens next with Satan a little later in our study on the millennial reign of Christ.

After the battle of Armageddon at the commencement of His millennial reign, Christ will judge the nations (CP Mt 25:31-46). This is called the Judgement of the Nations, although in fact it will be individual people who will be judged, because Jesus separates them from each other, into *sheep* and *goats* (CP Mt 25:32-33). The sheep represents those individuals who will go into the eternal Kingdom (CP Joel 3:2, 12; Zech 14:16). The goats represent those who will be cast down to Hell (CP Mt 25:46). *All nations* who will be gathered before Jesus in Mt 25:32 are Gentiles who survive the tribulation. *Nations* in Greek also means Gentiles. Their judgement takes place prior to Christ setting up His millennial Kingdom on earth, to determine who of them will go into the Kingdom. The basis of the Gentiles' judgement will be their failure to extend mercy to the Jewish believers during the tribulation (CP Mt 25:34-40 with 41-46). This can never be construed as teaching salvation by works; that these Gentiles were saved because of their kindness to the Jews. That would contradict the testimony of scripture (CP Eph 2:8-9). It simply means that those Gentiles' kindness to the Jews during the tribulation, reflected their love for Christ. That is what saved them. And, although the application of this teaching is toward the Gentiles who survive the tribulation, the teaching is relevant to Christians in all ages. Believers today must also extend mercy to the least of God's children, whether they be Jews or Gentiles (CP Mt 5:7).

The millennial reign of Christ, also referred to as "the Millennium" by Christians, only applies to the first thousand years of God's earthly kingdom. It is an everlasting kingdom, and after the thousand years

Armageddon, Judgement of the Nations, Christ's Millennial Reign and the Eternal Kingdom

Christ and God together will reign over it for all eternity (CP Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 23-27; Zech 14:1-9). The express purpose of the first thousand years is to rid the earth of all enemies of God and rebellion against Him. This will be accomplished when the last great rebellion is put down at the end of the thousand years. After Satan is loosed from the pit for a short time he will deceive nations hostile to God into joining him in besieging Jerusalem and attacking Christ's faithful ones. God will send fire down from Heaven and destroy them. Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever together with Antichrist and the false prophet. The wicked dead will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgement and also cast into the lake of fire. Christ will then hand the eternal Kingdom over to God (CP Rev 20:7-15 with 1Cor 15:24-28). All the saints of God, Old Testament and New Testament alike, from Abel until the very last soul saved in the tribulation will rule and reign with Christ for the thousand years (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:20-23, 51-58; 1Th 4:13-18; 2Ti 2:11-12; Rev 5:8-10; 20:4-6).

Some in the professing church do not believe that Christ will reign over a literal earthly Kingdom during the thousand years. They believe that the earth will be desolate in that period, and that the earth itself is the bottomless pit where Satan will be bound for the thousand years. This of course is incorrect and contradicts the clear teaching of scripture. The earth will not be desolate, for the millennial reign of Christ will be *the times of restitution of all things* spoken of by Peter in Ac 3 (CP Ac 3:19-21). The *restitution of all things* means that in the thousand years reign of Christ all things will be completely restored to what God intended them to be before Adam's fall. The earth will be delivered from the curse under which it now exists because of Adam's sin (CP Gen 3:17-18 with Ro 8:19-21 and Rev 21:1-5; 22:3). In Ro 8:19-21 Paul teaches that the whole creation – all nature – comprising both the animate and inanimate world, is awaiting the glorification of the saints of God, so it too may be delivered from the curse. The saints will be glorified when they go to Heaven with Jesus in the first resurrection (CP Ro 8:28-30; 1Cor 15:42-44; Col 3:4; Rev 20:6). The earth will be restored to normal fertility and productivity; there will be no more famines – fruitful seasons will be without interruptions; waste places will be restored to usefulness; deserts will blossom again (CP Isa 4:1-2; 30:23-25; 32:15; 35:1-2, 7; 41:17-19; 43:19-20; 49:8-11; 51:3; 55:12-13; 61:4-5; Eze 34:23-31; 36:8-12, 29-30, 33-38; 47:1-12; Joel 2:18-19, 21-27; 3:18; Amos 9:11-15; Zech 8:12; 14:8; Rev 7:16-17).

There will be no more sin and sickness in the earth (CP Isa 33:20, 24; 35:3-6; 53:5; 1Pe 2:24). World wide peace will prevail in the earth (CP Isa 2:1-4 (Mic 4:1-3); 9:6-7; 11:10; 19:23; 26:12; 32:18; 54:14; 57:19; 60:18; 66:12; Zech 14:9-11). There will be no more poverty; material blessings will fill the earth; prosperity will be for all (CP Isa 60:5-17; 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10). Formerly wild animals will be tame; children will play with once highly venomous snakes (CP Isa 11:6-9; Eze 34:25, 28). There will be no more sorrow or mourning; no more weeping and crying; pain will no longer exist (CP Isa 35:10; 53:4; 60:20; 65:18-19; Rev 7:17; 21:4).

Death will continue during the millennium but only for those who commit sins worthy of death; infant mortality and premature death will no longer exist; a hundred year old man will still be considered a child, and only sinners will die that young (CP Isa 65:20-22). The righteous will no longer die (CP Isa 25:8; 1Cor 15:52-57; Rev 21:4). The lifespan of natural man will be extended throughout the millennium, and if they do not rebel with Satan at the end of the thousand years, they will continue to live eternally in the new earth (CP Mt 25:46; 1Cor 15:23-28; Eph 1:10; 2:7; Rev 20:7-15; Rev 21:4). Animals will no longer attack and kill human beings, nor each other (CP Isa 65:25).

The thousand years reign of Christ is also referred to in scripture as *the regeneration* (CP Mt 19:28); *the Kingdom of God* (CP Mk 14:25; Lu 19:11; 22:18). We learn in Mk 14:25 and Lu 22:18 here that communion, or the Lord's Supper, will be observed by Christ and all Christians in the Kingdom of God throughout eternity (CP also Mt 26:29); *the dispensation of the fullness of time* (CP Eph 1:10). There will be no national governments governing the people in the eternal Kingdom. They will all be governed by Christ, assisted by Christians (CP Isa 2:2-4; 9:6-7; Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 27; Mic 5:2; Zech 14:8-9; Lu 1:31-33; Rev 11:15; 20:6). The Apostles will each rule over one of the twelve tribes of Israel (CP Mt 19:28; Lu 22:28-30). King David will govern all Israel, under Christ (CP Jer 30:4-9; Eze 34:23-24; 37:21-28; Hos 3:4-5). The eternal Kingdom will be worldwide (CP Rev 11:15 with Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 27; Zech 14:9). Everyone left of the nations mobilised against Jerusalem by Antichrist – the one sixth part not killed by Jesus at Armageddon, which were let go into the eternal Kingdom – will have to go to Jerusalem every year to worship Christ and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, which commemorated the Israelites' period of wandering in the wilderness (CP Lev 23:33-34; De 16:13 with Isa 2:1-4; Zech 14:16-21). The term *Canaanite* in Zech 14:21 is synonymous with the immoral, wicked, ungodly. It means that there will be no sinners in the eternal Kingdom.

Israel will be given all the original promised land (CP Gen 12:1-5, 7 with He 11:8-10; Gen 15:1-7, 18; 17:1-8; Isa 60:61; Eze 47:13-48:35). *Canaan*, the land God promised to the descendants of Abraham as their possession for ever – often called by Christians "the promised land" – is present day Palestine. It belongs to the Jews as Abraham's descendants, and they will possess it in its entirety when Christ sets up the eternal Kingdom. At the same time Israel will also be restored as a nation. Because it rejected Christ, Israel as a nation was cut off by God from salvation – not Jews individually, for many have accepted Christ – but it will be raised up again as a nation when Christ sets up the eternal Kingdom (CP Psa 94:14-15; Isa 10:20-22; 27:12-13; 41:8-10; Hos 3:1-5; Mic 2:12-13; Zech 8:6-13; Ro 11:1-10). Many Bible scholars do not believe that Ro 11 deals with the restoration of Israel as a nation. They believe that it only deals with a remnant being incorporated into the New Testament church. But that is not correct. While individual Jews have been incorporated into the New Testament church, God will still restore Israel as a nation, no longer in unbelief, but as a Christian believing nation,

Armageddon, Judgement of the Nations, Christ's Millennial Reign and the Eternal Kingdom

which Ro 11 teaches in conformity with many other scriptures (CP Psa 14:7; Isa 11:10-13; 49:22-26; 59:20-21; 66:7-14; Jer 23:3-6; 31:31-34; Eze 37:11-14; Joel 2:32; Mic 4:6-8; 5:7-8; Zech 12:8-13; Mt 24:30-31 with Ro 11:12, 23, 26-29). *All Israel* in Ro 11:26 does not mean that every Jew who ever lived will be saved, but that each member of the nation living at the time of Christ's second coming, who have accepted Him as Saviour, will be saved. Ro 11:29 teaches that God has never regretted His calling the nation of Israel to be a part of His eternal Kingdom. He has merely set it aside temporarily and will restore it at Christ's second coming.

As noted earlier in this section of the study, Christ's thousand years reign in the eternal Kingdom will end in Satan being cast into the lake of fire and the wicked dead being judged at the Great White Throne Judgement. Christ will then hand the Kingdom over to God. It should also be noted that contemporaneous with the Great White Throne Judgement a new Heaven and a new earth will be created (CP 2Pe 3:7, 10-12 with Rev 20:11). In the context of 2Pe 3:7, 10-12 *dissolved* means that Heaven and earth will be loosed from their present corrupt state into a new state. They will be purified by fire and made new as to character (CP Isa 65:17; 66:22; He 1:12; 12:26-27; 2Pe 3:13 with Rev 21:1). Then, the Holy City, New Jerusalem, will come down to earth from God out of Heaven (CP Rev 21:2). New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ (CP Rev 19:7-8; 21:9-10). For a more detailed teaching on this subject see author's study *The Bride of Christ* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**. New Jerusalem will be among men forever as the capital of God in the earth (CP Rev 21:3, 24:27). God will live visibly among men in New Jerusalem (CP Lev 26:11-12; Psa 68:15-18; Isa 33:17; Zech 2:10-11; 8:3; Mt 5:8; Rev 7:15; 22:3-5). Previously, no one could look upon God and live (CP Ex 33:20-23; Jn 1:18; 1Ti 6:16). The Tabernacle of God that is with men in Rev 21:3 is God's temple in New Jerusalem, which Jesus will build (CP Zech 6:12-13). This temple will be the Throne of God and Christ, forever (CP Isa 2:2-3; Eze

37:26-28; 43:1-7; Joel 3:17; Hag 2:6-9 with Rev 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 15:5-8; 16:1, 17).

There will be a river of water of life proceeding from the Throne of God and of Christ in New Jerusalem, with the tree of life growing on either side of the river (CP Rev 22:1-2). It is not called the river of water of life because it will be the medium of life, but because it will bring life to everything along its course (CP Eze 47:1-12; Zech 14:8). The river will flow into both the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas – the *former sea* and the *hinder sea* in Zech 14:8. It will give life to the Dead Sea, which presently cannot sustain any organic life, but at that time it will be teeming with fish (CP Eze 47:9-10). The river of water of life is a literal river, as scriptures clearly prove. It is not symbolic of the blessings of God, or the continual flow of eternal life from God's Throne, as some teach (CP Psa 46:4). The tree of life is also literal. It will bear twelve kinds of fruit – a different fruit for each month of the year. It will be such a prolific bearer, the fruit will never be all used up (CP Eze 47:7, 12; Rev 22:2). The fruit will be for both the redeemed of God who will live in New Jerusalem and the natural people who will live in the new earth (CP Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14). The leaves of the tree will be for the preservation of life of the natural people.

The new earth will be inhabited throughout eternity by natural people and their future generations who lived on earth after the battle of Armageddon through the millennial reign of Christ, and did not rebel with Satan at the end of the thousand years (CP Psa 37:9-11, 22, 29, 34; 69:35-36; Isa 2:1-3; 65:18-25; 66:22-23; Dan 7:13-14, 27; Mic 4:1-5; Zech 14:16; Mt 25:31-46; Rev 11:15). The generations of natural people in the new earth will marry and have children, build houses, plant crops, go to work and live normal, everyday lives. And most important, they will all worship God (CP Zech 14:16 with Rev 21:24-27; 22:14). There will be normal increase in population of natural people in the eternal Kingdom (CP Gen 9:12; Isa 9:6-7; 65:20-23; Jer 30:19; 33:22; Hos 1:10-11). The human race will continue for ever.