



## **Are We Approaching Armageddon?** by Dr. Sellers S Crain, Jr

*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

Whenever there is a conflict of some kind in Israel or the Muslim nation around it, would be prophets come forward with the idea that we are approaching Armageddon. Several years ago, the religious editor of a Nashville newspaper suggesting that because mainline churches are not teaching about Armageddon, he wrote,

“The churches’ strange silence on this subject leaves people watching the news and the skies with nerve-twisting dread. The sky ought to inspire awe, not disillusionment.”

If people really understood this subject, neither of these things would be happening. There is perhaps no subject more misunderstood or abused than this one. The real problem is that so many modern-day Chicken Littles keep running around saying, “The sky is falling!” When that doesn’t happen, people will begin to doubt the Bible instead of realizing that those who teach the premillennial doctrine of the end time (end of the world) are false teaches.

*The Battle of Armageddon is part of a fanciful Eschatology concerning the end of the world that also includes the Rapture of the church before a theorized period of seven years of persecution, and a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. **What does the Bible say about these things?***

Numerous times I have heard preachers on TV and radio say that a “Rapture of the church” is predicted in **Revelation** and is soon coming to pass. A church sign I saw a few years ago read, “The Rapture is coming soon.” So far it hasn’t happened. It is hard to swim against the tide of popular opinion, but as popular as this doctrine is, **there is no Biblical support for it**. It is pure fantasy created in the minds of people with overactive imaginations who do not understand the Bible, and it is being perpetuated by those who read their own writings instead of studying the Bible.

**What does the Bible say about the Rapture of the church? Nothing!** It is taken from the phrase “caught up” in Paul’s encouragement to the Christians in Thessalonica (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**). Paul was endeavoring the being some comfort to Christians whose loved ones had died and were buried. They did not understand that the souls of those people were not trapped inside of their bodies, and they wondered what would happen to those loved ones when Jesus returned (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**). If their bodies would decay, what about their souls? Paul reassured them that when Christ returned in the clouds of heaven, the souls of the righteous dead would return with Him, and their bodies, regardless of their present condition would be raised first to rejoin their soul in a glorified body (**I Corinthians 15:50-58**; **Philippians 3:21**). There will be only one resurrection at which time the good and the bad will both be raised at the same time, with the righteous dead being raised first. (**John 5:28-29**)

Paul did not mention the unrighteous dead being raised because he was writing to console these, Christians.

**What does the Bible say about the reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years? Absolutely nothing!** This false idea comes from a misinterpretation and misunderstanding of **Revelation 20:1-6**. Notice some of the things taught by Premillennialist that are not mentioned in this text. It does not mention Christ reigning on earth, the throne of David, Jerusalem, or when His reign begins or ends. Look at the text. It is describing the reign of the martyrs who died under the Roman persecutions. (**v. 4b**) “[The martyrs] lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (**v. 4c**) Where did this reign take place? In heaven. (**20:1**) How long Christ individual reign lasted is never mentioned. It is referring to how long the reign of the martyrs with Him lasted, Jesus could not reign on earth from Jerusalem since He was a descendant of Coniah (Jehoiachin). (**Jeremiah 22:28-30**) According to Peter’s sermon on Pentecost Christ is reigning now from heaven over the kingdom of God (the church) from heaven. (**Acts 2:22-36**)

The following quotations from some who believe in The Battle of Armageddon will help us to understand what they teach on this subject.

“The Battle of Armageddon is the final war between human governments and God. ... After the tribulation, Jesus will return to earth as a mighty king with the armies of heaven to destroy all of those who have rejected Him as Savior. ... Jesus Christ will lead a heavenly army to victory over those who oppose God and those who treat God with contempt.” (referencing **Revelation 19:11-16, 19-21**)

And I saw the best and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against Him who was sitting on the horse and against His army. (**Revelation 19:19**)

While some of those who believe in the Battle of Armageddon say this battle will take place in the literal battlefield of Esdraleon, another who believes in the battle disagrees as to the location. I am quoting this writer because I do agree with him that the battle the premillennialist describe *could not* take place in this valley. He wrote,

“Armageddon cannot refer to the literal area near ancient Megiddo. There is no large mountain there, and even the entire adjoining Low Plain of Jezreel could not contain all of those who will fight against God.”

**What does the Bible say about the great physical battle of Armageddon that will come and the end of the world? The answer is NOTHING! The Bible, though not using the term the Battle of Armageddon, does mention the gathering together of the forces of evil** under the direction of the dragon (Satan) “to the place called Armageddon.” (**Revelation 16:14-16**) The word is actually Har-Mageddon, which means “Mountain of Megiddo.” The fact is there is no Mount Megiddo, unless we are to believe the seventy feet high hill upon which the ancient fortress of Megiddo sits is a mountain. The Hebrew word “har” could be used for “hill” or “hill country.”

The plain beneath the ancient city of Megiddo runs northwest to southwest along the foot of Mount Carmel. It is known as The Plain of Jezreel or the Plain of Esdraelon. Its valley is called the Valley of Megiddo because it sits beneath that city. The first recorded battle in history took place on this plain, J. I. Hurlburt states in his Bible

Atlas that more battles have taken place here than any other place in the history of the world. It was the place where Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites (**Judges 4:13-15**), and the scene of Gideon's army of three hundred's victory over the combined forces of the Midianites and Amalekites (**Judges 7:1-25**). It is also the place where young King Josiah was wounded in battle with the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho and later died in Jerusalem (**2 Kings 23:29-30**). It is also the general location where King Saul and his sons lost their lives in a battle with the Philistines. (**1 Samuel 31:1-6**) Therefore this ancient battle field became a symbol for any decisive struggle and it became a type and not a location.

When attempting to interpret **Revelation** you must keep in mind that this book is highly figurative and is full of signs and symbols. There is no way the scene described in **Revelation**, if a literal physical battle, could actually take place in the Valley of Megiddo. (**Revelation 14:20**) It is only fourteen by twenty miles and no armies cited could take place in that valley. Do these would-be prophets actually believe that in these days of modern warfare that horses and foot soldiers will take the place of supersonic jets, tanks, attack helicopters, smart bombs and guided missiles?

Even in **Revelation 19** there is no real battle. The forces of evil are helpless against the Lord and His angels. He destroyed them with sword that went forth out of His mouth. (**19:15**; see also **Ephesians 6:17**; **Hebrews 4:12**) **Armageddon is not a physical battle, but it is a spiritual battle between God and Satan.** While I believe the original meaning had to do with the overthrow of ancient Rome and not some war in the future, **it is going on now.** Rather than seeing this as one great battle at the end of the world, it is better to understand it as **the ultimate overthrow of the forces of evil and the forces of God in any age.**

**Revelation assures us God always wins.**

—-- Dr. Sellers S. Crain, Jr.