

To begin, let me by way of review present a general overview of the premillennialists' doctrine states that the Antichrist is a political figure of power that will emerge during the final 3 ½ years of the tribulation to battle against the righteous. During the second 3-½ years, war over Israel erupts and is climaxed in the battle of Armageddon where 200 million soldiers fight over Israel. Jesus now returns, defeats evil thus ending the battle of Armageddon, and establishes his earthly kingdom and begins to reign on his Jerusalem throne for a thousand years. During this reign, peace on earth will prevail.

Today we will go to the book of Revelation as we wind down series with Armageddon. Understand that in Revelation much of the geography and terminology used is of the Middle East and is used in a symbolic sense. Frequently today, people take much of the Middle East geography and terminology and apply them literally. For instance, when the book talks about a 144k of all the tribes of Israel, they accept that as a literal 144K; Mt. Zion is applied to the literal mountain where Jerusalem sits today; Jerusalem is applied to the literal city in Israel; and the temple refers to a literal rebuilt temple on the temple mount. When the Bible talks about Babylon, it refers to the literal ancient city of Babylon in the region of Iraq that was being rebuilt by Sadame Hussein. When the river Euphrates is referenced and the people from the east are coming, many equate this to people from China coming across a dry river bed to battle against Israel in the valley of Megiddo just north of Jerusalem.

Did God intend us to make literal application to these Middle East places? (*Rev 1:1 KJV*) *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:* First note that this book is a message from Jesus Christ. (*Rev 2:20 KJV*) *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* Jesus says to the church of Thyatira that they allowed that woman Jezebel ... to seduce my servants. Jezebel was a wicked woman found in the OT. Jesus uses that wicked woman of the past to make a point to the church at Thyatira. I think we all will agree that the literal Jezebel didn't returned from the dead to seduce the servants of Christ. Jezebel was used as a symbol to those teaching wicked and false doctrine inside the Lord's church. This verse is using symbolism.

(*Rev 11:8 KJV*) *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.* Now Jerusalem was the name of the city where Jesus was crucified yet this passage

speaks of the ancient city of past, Sodom and Egypt. In context, the passage is speaking of a spiritual Sodom where the wicked dead lie in the streets and spiritual Egypt which refers to the city where Jesus was crucified, i.e. Jerusalem.

Chapters 15-16 discusses the seven bowls of wrath. Verses 12-16 notices the sixth such bowl. The 6<sup>th</sup> angel poured out its vial of wrath on the Euphrates River, dried it up and open the door to kings of the east. Today religionists are applying this verse to the literal Euphrates River that flows through modern Iraq. Irvin Baxter Jr. in the End Time magazine wrote, *“In Rev 16:12 the Bible predicts that the River Euphrates will be dried up to prepare the way for the kings of the east to invade Israel. This drying up of the river will happen at the time of the battle Armageddon. On Jan 13, 1990 the Indianapolis Star carried the headlines, ‘Turkey will cut off flow of the Euphrates for one month. A huge reservoir has been built by Turkey and will filling up the reservoir, the flow of the Euphrates will be stopped for one month and a concrete plug for diversion built.’ These things have now been done and with this newly built dam; Turkey has the ability to stop the Euphrates River at will. The conditions for fulfilling this 1900 year old prophecy are now in place.”*

Many take Rev 16:12 literally and think that the river will dry and the Chinese from the east will invade. This passage is a link to vs {16} ***And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*** So we have V12 drying up of the river, kings coming from the east and vs 16 the battle of Armageddon. Hal Lindsey in Planet Earth 2000 A. D. Calls chapter 12 the Asia’s March to Armageddon where he wrote, *“The book of Revelation predicts that the kings of the east will move across the Euphrates River, the ancient boundary between the middle east and the orient, and travel southwest into the war that will rage around Israel.”* (page 213) He goes on to make reference to an invasion of China. These two examples are to show that religious leaders believe Rev. 16 to be literal.

***(12) And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*** The **sixth angel** pours his bowl on the Euphrates River to dry it up so the kings from the east, with their armies, can come across. The Euphrates was Rome's eastern boundary and to dry that up was symbolic of saying all of Rome's borders will be vulnerable to outside attacks. And it was, indeed, the attacks of the Huns, Goths,

Visigoths and Vandals, coming from beyond Rome's borders, which proved to be the major factor in Rome's fall.

So God has now said He will bring down the persecutor, which is Satan, Roman Empire and the Roman cult and that He will do it by a combination of (1) natural disasters, (2) the consequences of its own corruption, and (3) attacks from beyond its borders. As these powers are unleashed and begin to work their destructive power, we see a **new development** in the story (16:13-16). The dragon (Satan), the first beast (Roman Empire), and false prophet (second beast who is the Cult of Emperor Worship) notice that God has set in motion the forces that can bring the Empire to defeat. They determine not to sit idly by and let this happen. They develop, therefore, a plan to rally those who are their allies, the nations that make up the Empire. The dragon and two beasts, therefore, send frogs out of their mouths to gather these kings to do battle at Armageddon. *(13) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

*(14) For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (15) Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (16) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*

### **THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

First of all we must recognize that this is a passage filled with highly symbolic images. A dragon who is not really a dragon, meets with two beasts that are not really beasts, and they send frogs that are not really frogs out of their mouths which are not really mouths. The message the frogs carry to the subordinates is to gather at Armageddon. In the midst of all this symbolism is Armageddon literal or figurative? Surely it is likely that the term Armageddon is not intended to mean warfare at an actual place.

The term "Armageddon" would translate literally into Mount of Megiddo. If this "battle" is to be a literal conflict (as many expect today), are we to really believe three frogs will lead Satan's forces against God? Is this really talking about some nuclear warfare in the yet future.

Megiddo is a famous site in northern Israel which was the location of a fortress to protect the Israelites from invading armies. It is referenced 11 places in the KJV OT.

King Solomon had a large outpost there as did King Ahab. The valley beside this hill, the Valley of Jezreel was the site of many famous battles. It was here that Deborah and her forces defeated Sisera (Judges 4 - river of Kishon), that Gideon, with his three hundred, defeated the Midianites (Judges 7), that Saul and Jonathan were slain following their fight against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31), etc. Mount Megiddo and the valley beside it, then, were famous as a great battleground. So famous, in fact, that the place can be used as a figure of speech for making a final stand.

We all know how famous battlegrounds can be used figuratively. If we say, for example, that someone "met his Waterloo," we do not think he has gone to Belgium to the actual battlefield where Napoleon was defeated. One can meet his Waterloo and never leave home. As Satan and his forces see their powerful empire beginning to fall into defeat, they determine not to let God win without a struggle. So, they say, let's make a final stand like so many have done before. Let's have a battle of Megiddo, or Armageddon.

Remember that at this point in Revelation the topic is not the end of the world. The topic is to comfort those early Christians that they will be victorious. We are at a point in the story where the Roman Empire is being destroyed. This is how early Christians would have understood the story. **POINT TO NOTICE.** There is no description here of a battle ever taking place. The meaning simply is that, as Satan and his two allies see their plan failing and the Empire being defeated by the power God has brought against it, they refuse to go down easily. They still want to fight and this is expressed by their desire to "gather their forces" for a final effort as so many did in the valley near Megiddo. But before they could gather, the seventh angel poured out it's vile and "*it was over.*" Historically the Roman Empire lost it worldwide power in beginning in 476 A.D.

***Rev 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.***

(emp) The seventh angel pours out his bowl into the air and from the temple of God in heaven comes a loud voice shouting, "*It is done.*" When God chooses to bring the matter to an end, it is over and none of the "Armageddon" efforts of Satan and his allies can stop it. ***(18) And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. (19) And the great city was divided into three parts, and***

***the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.***

Notice the verb tense in verses 18-19 – past tense. Lightning, thunder, and a great earthquake stroke the great city and it splits into three parts and the cities of the nations collapse. V21 tells us that huge hailstones also fell and the enemies of God cursed Him. Again, this is not the end of time because no one will curse God then. It is at the height of Armageddon when all seems lost for God's saints that the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air. The loud voice from the temple was God announcing “*It is done!*”

***Revelation 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*** In that setting the Lord answered, a little bit longer . ***Revelation 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*** This question was answered in chapter 16.

Invitation