

Preparation for the End Time Babylon and Armageddon

Lesson #12 for June 23, 2018

Scriptures: Revelation 14:8; 16:12-16,19; 17:5; 18:1-10; Isaiah 52:9; 1 Kings 18:1-40; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2.

1. It should not be a surprise to anyone who has spent significant time reading and studying the book of Revelation that it is full of images and terms taken directly from the Old Testament. That made it very difficult for any Roman soldier to understand what John was talking about. However, for those who were oriented to the Hebrew Scriptures, it was very meaningful.
2. The name *Babylon* appears six times in Revelation. There is good evidence that it is not talking about the ancient kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar nor that of his ancestors. John was using it as a code word for Rome. *Babylon* represented a powerful religious and political entity seeking to crush Judaism and their religion.
3. Read Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21. These are the six passages in the book of Revelation referring to Babylon. What do they mean? It is clear that John was warning God's people to get out of Babylon because Babylon is corrupt and will soon fall.
4. While Jerusalem had proven to be a rebellious city, it was always God's intention that Jerusalem be His capital for His chosen people. (Psalm 102:21; Isaiah 52:9; **65:19**; and Revelation 3:12) By contrast, Babylon has always stood for oppression, violence, and every kind of rebellion against God through deceit and false religion. So, where is Babylon now?
5. Read Genesis 11:9. The Hebrew word for *Babel* is the word translated in Greek as *Babylon*. Read **1 Peter 5:13**. What church was Peter talking about? It cannot refer to ancient Babylon because as God predicted to the prophet Isaiah:
6. **Isaiah 13:19-22:** ¹⁹ [The LORD said:] "Babylonia is the most beautiful kingdom of all; it is the pride of its people. But I, the LORD, will overthrow Babylon as I did Sodom and Gomorrah! ²⁰**No one will ever live there again.** No wandering Arab will ever pitch his tent there, and no shepherd will ever pasture his flock there. ²¹It will be a place where desert animals live and where owls build their nests. Ostriches will live there, and wild goats will prance through the ruins. ²²The towers and palaces will echo with the cries of hyenas and jackals. Babylon's time has come! Her days are almost over."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Isaiah 13:19-22). New York: American Bible Society. [Content in brackets and bold type are added.]
7. Read Revelation 14:8 and 18:3. What are some of the reasons why God has told His people to get out of Babylon? It is very clear that God describes Babylon as a sexually immoral entity full of unrestrained lust and riches. It is described as a religio-political compact between an apostate church and the nations of earth. (Revelation 17:5; Isaiah 23:15-17) So, what is this "wine of the wrath of her fornication"? (Revelation 14:8) Clearly, that must be a reference to the corrupt practices, false teachings, and false doctrines of an apostate church. And those false teachings, practices, and doctrines will apparently spread all over the world. Do we see any hint of that today?
8. Read Revelation 18:1-10. This is a very clear and very strong message to anyone who is reading and listening; the message is not to take part in Babylon's sins but to get out.

9. Clearly, Revelation 18 is a re-expression and an expansion of Revelation 14:8, the call to get out of Babylon. Have we gotten out of Babylon?

The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that "Babylon is fallen,... because she made *all nations* drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination.

The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work "with *all* power and signs and lying wonders, [390] and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" and they that "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to receive "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 389.2-390.0.

10. Will there be any way to know when these predictions about Babylon have been fulfilled? (John 13:19) And what does it mean by the phrase *get out of Babylon*? Are we sure that our understanding of God and the Scriptures is pure and true and not in any way corrupted by the false doctrines and false teachings spreading all over the world? Is that Babylon?
11. What form will God's punishment take at the end? What do we need to know about Armageddon? What does the word *Armageddon* mean? What is Revelation telling us about that final battle? Those who are aware of modern culture know that *Armageddon* has come to be a code word for the devastation, even destruction, of our earth.
12. *Armageddon* was not originally a Greek word; it is a Hebrew word talking about a certain mountain. In light of what we know about the great controversy from the Old Testament, this is a very important mountain and a very important conflict.
13. Many Christians feel that it is going to be some kind of powerful, enormous battle taking place somewhere near the ancient city of Megiddo in a valley in northern Israel. However, the biblical picture is very different. It is talking about a spiritual battle, the final battle between the forces loyal to God and those loyal to Satan. Satan will gather together every possible force he can enlist to support his side to make his claims that he is the ruler of this world.
14. Read Revelation 16:12-16; compare Isaiah 14:13-15 in different translations.

Revelation 16:12-16: ¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The river dried up, to provide a way for the kings who come from the east. ¹³ Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs. They were coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are the spirits of demons that perform miracles. These three spirits go out to all the kings of the world, to bring them together for the battle on the great Day of Almighty God.

¹⁵ “Listen! I am coming like a thief! Happy is he who stays awake and guards his clothes, so that he will not walk around naked and be ashamed in public!”

¹⁶ Then the spirits brought the kings together in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.—*Good News Bible** (Revelation 16:12-16).

Isaiah 14:13: “But you [Satan] said in your heart,

‘I will ascend to heaven;

I will raise my throne above the stars of God,

And I will sit on the **mount of assembly** [*har mō’ād*]

In the recesses of the north.’”—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*.* (1995). (Isaiah 14:13). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Isaiah 14:13-15: You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on that **mountain in the north where the gods assemble**. You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty. But instead, you have been brought down to the deepest part of the world of the dead.—*Good News Bible** (Isaiah 14:13-15). [Content in brackets and bold type are added.]

15. It is quite clear that the transliteration, *Armageddon*, comes from the Hebrew word *har*-meaning mountain and *-mageddown* or *-mageddow* which could have at least two different meanings.

Mâgiddown, Mâgiddow [*meg·id·done/*] n pr loc. From 1413; GK 4459 and 4461; 12 occurrences; AV translates as “Megiddo” 11 times, and “Megiddon” once. 1 ancient city of Canaan assigned to Manasseh and located on the southern rim of the plain of Esdraelon 6 miles (10 km) from Mount Carmel and 11 miles (18 km) from Nazareth. **Additional Information: Megiddo or Megiddon = “place of crowds”**.—Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*.* Woodside Bible Fellowship.

For the second part of the name, *-mageddon*, two different derivations have been suggested: (1) That *-mageddon* is from the Heb. *megiddo* or *megiddon* (1 Kings 9:15; Zech. 12:11), the ancient city of Megiddo, which gave its name to the important pass through the mountains to the southwest, to the valley of Jezreel to the north and northeast (2 Chron. 35:22), and to the Kishon (Judges 4:7, 13; 5:19, 21), which flows through the valley. (2) That *-mageddon* is from *mo’ed*, the Hebrew word commonly used throughout the OT for “congregation” (Ex. 27:21; 28:43; 29:4, 10, 11, 30, 32; etc.), for an appointed “feast” (see on Lev. 23:2), and for an “assembly” and the “places of the assembly” (Lam. 1:15; 2:6). The first derivation links the composite name **Armageddon** with the geographical and historical

environment of ancient Megiddo, while the second suggests a possible connection with the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

In Isa. 14:13, where *har-mo'ed* is translated “mount of the congregation,” or “mount of assembly,” and designates the mountain on which Solomon’s Temple stood, to the north of ancient Jerusalem, Lucifer is represented as aspiring to replace God as Israel’s sovereign ruler (see comment there). Compare “Tabernacle of the congregation” (Ex. 33:7; etc.).

Proponents of the first view of Armageddon consider the derivation to be from the Heb. *har-megiddo*, “mountain of Megiddo,” and interpret the name as it is used in Rev. 16:16 in terms of the geographical environment and historical associations of the ancient city of Megiddo. **Proponents of the second view understand the first derivation figuratively, that is, in terms of the historical events of OT history associated with the vicinity of ancient Megiddo (see Judges 4:4 to 5:31, especially ch. 5:31; chs. 6:33 to 7:25; 1 Kings 18:36-40; Ps. 83; cf. 2 Chron. 35:20-24), but without attributing geographical significance to the term Armageddon in Rev. 16:16 (see on v. 12). They understand the second derivation, *har-mo'ed*, figuratively also, on the basis of its use in Isa. 14:13, in terms of the great contest between Christ and Satan (see Rev. 12:7-9, 17; 17:14; 19:11-21).**—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,* vol. 7, 846. Review and Herald Publishing Association. [Bold type is added.]

16. Should we take these verses very literally? And geographically? It is important to notice that there are three frogs coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. Those must be references to the three powers mentioned in Revelation 12 and especially Revelation 13. Why would the land beast be called a “false prophet”?
17. The word *Armageddon* almost certainly refers to an expression found in Isaiah 14:13 where it is sometimes translated “mount of assembly.” However, clearly, that *mount of assembly* in Isaiah 14 refers to the place in the far north where they believed the gods assemble! Who was it that always has wanted to be a “God”? And what is he willing to do to try to achieve that? Read Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Clearly, these passages are in reference to Satan’s attempts to rise to equality with God. In light of what we know about the great controversy, the word *Armageddon* could be translated “mount of assembly” which in ancient Hebrew thinking meant “the place where God lives.”
18. It is important to note that there is no Mount Megiddo. Some have suggested that Mount Carmel which is not far away from the ancient city of Megiddo might be the location being referred to. Read the story of Elijah versus the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth as recorded in 1 Kings 18:1-40.
19. This is probably the most stark and blunt story in all of Scripture where the true God faced off against falsehood. Eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth did everything they could to get their sacrifice to burn; but, they failed. I am sure there were multiple attempts to sneak fire into the assembly; but, they failed. If they had managed to succeed in getting their sacrifice to burn, no doubt, Elijah would have been cut in pieces almost instantly.
20. What happened after Elijah poured water on the sacrifice he was offering and the God of

heaven lit the fire and burned up not only the sacrifice and the wood but also the stones and the water and left a black hole in the ground? Was there any question left in the mind of any of those watching about who the real God was? Won't that be the conclusion at the end of the battle of Armageddon at the end of this world's history? (See Philippians 2:10-11.)

21. As we have noted in Revelation 13&14, both sides in this battle are demanding that people worship their side or be faced with death. (Revelation 13:15-17; 14:9-11) Why would God demand that? Will it be a final, desperate warning by God?
22. Notice that as soon as Elijah's sacrifice was consumed, he told the people to take hold of those false prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, and he, with their assistance, killed all 850 of them! Those prophets were trying to "evangelize" Israel for their god, Baal. And so, what will be the parallel just before the second coming? Read Revelation 19:20-21. God's enemies will be thrown into the lake of fire. It is Satan's image or message that dies! Those who have not faithfully studied Scripture and determined to follow it at all costs will ultimately perish.
23. We know that, ultimately, the Lord of lords and King of kings will triumph. In fact, He has already won the great controversy by dying!
24. God cannot take to heaven those who are not fully convinced that His ways are right. He cannot allow the great controversy to start all over again and corrupt heaven. So, the battle of Armageddon will, ultimately, be a battle for the "minds" and "hearts" of the inhabitants of this world. Which side will you choose?
25. Is it clear in your mind why this is a spiritual battle that will take place worldwide and not just a local battle in northern Israel? Why does Revelation talk about frogs coming out of mouths?
26. We know that there is no other way to be saved except through Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12) All false -isms or religions in one way or another downplay the role of Christ or try to eliminate Him completely from their thinking.
27. So, what do we see happening in the minds and hearts of men in our world today? Are Christianity and Christ taking a major place in humanity's thinking?
28. Do we see the beginnings of collusion between major religious powers and political entities? How will that work out over time? Remember that beasts in the Bible generally mean religious-political combinations that seek to exert power over others, forcing them to worship that power or that system.
29. So, what have we learned about Armageddon? The Hebrew word means "mount of assembly." It will involve individuals all over the world, and it will be the final battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. Even though we are primarily talking about an event that happens just before the second coming of Christ, that same conflict will be replayed at the end of the millennium with Satan making his last-ditch attempt to attack and conquer the city of God which will have come down from God out of heaven.
30. So, what kinds of weapons will be used in that final battle before the second coming? We do not know. (See Ephesians 6:10-16.) How can we prepare ourselves? In this lesson, we have suggested that the battle of Armageddon between Babylon together with its cohorts versus the forces of God will be the final battle in the great controversy. Do the Scriptures really support the idea of a great controversy? See the handout, "The Great Controversy Described in Scripture," found on our website at www.Theox.org. See:

https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Great_Controversy_Described_in_Scripture_16.pdf

31. Have you had an opportunity to consider the interpretations about Armageddon proposed by others in our world? Do any of them seem plausible? Or, do they all just seem crazy?
32. How do you think Satan feels when he reviews this material in the book of Revelation? Is he still so self-deluded that he thinks he could somehow conquer God? His forces have been trying to directly fight against God since the days of Cain and Abel, the tower of Babel, and the wickedness before the flood.
33. When Revelation describes the forces gathering together, (Revelation 16:16) do you think that will be geographically correct? Will people really come together in a certain place for some kind of major battle? How will Satan and his evil sea beast and land beast manage to entice and deceive so many in our world?
34. Read Daniel 2:43-44 and Revelation 16:16-21. If you have a chance, read Revelation 17, and compare what that says with what we have learned in this lesson.
35. Do you see our world becoming more interrelated? Or, more isolated? Will organizations like the United Nations and the European Union and various economic organizations manage to pull us together to become a “global village”? We are certainly more interdependent.
36. How can we be certain that we are on God’s side and ready to stand up even to offer our lives for Him instead of being deceived by the Devil?
37. It is very interesting to note that God spoke of Cyrus the victor in the battle between Media-Persia and Babylon as His chosen person to accomplish a great work. (Isaiah 44:27-28 and Jeremiah 50:38) So, what did Cyrus accomplish?

“[Cyrus] posted his army at the place where the river enters the city, and another part of it where the stream issues from the city, and bade his men enter the city by the channel of the Euphrates when they should see it to be fordable. . . . When this happened, the Persians who were posted with this intent made their way into Babylon by the channel of the Euphrates, which had now sunk about to the height of the middle of a man’s thigh.”—*Herodotus I, Books I and II*, translated by A. D. Godley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 239.—[as quoted in *The Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161-162 including content in brackets].

38. What parallels can you think of between the conquest of ancient Babylon in the days of Belshazzar and the final conquest of this earth by God in the battle of Armageddon?
39. One factor that may cause some confusion in interpreting all of these visions of the prophets is the fact that they often spoke of events as occurring in the past in contrast to when we determine what they were speaking about, they are actually events still in the future. Why is that? The prophet himself was thinking back to his vision which happened in the past; but, in fact, it was a vision of future events.
40. We do not have the choice of avoiding getting involved in the battle of Armageddon. We will either fall with Babylon; or, we will stand straight and tall on the side of God. Which side will we be on?

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