

WHAT ABOUT ARMAGEDDON?

The principal publication of the Jehovah's Witness cult is *Awake*. In 1968 it boldly set a new date for the "Battle of Armageddon," which allegedly will both bring an end to the world and signal their warped version of the return of the Lord. It said, "Today we have the evidence required, all of it. And it is overwhelming! All the many, many parts of the great sign of the 'last days' are here, together with verifying Bible chronology." The piece further explained that it was **certain** that Armageddon would come in late 1975. News reports say that this miserable failure has cost them tens of thousands of members, as it should have. To be fair, they are not by themselves in such wild speculations.

For many years, every time an international political crisis has arisen (especially if it involves the modern nation of Israel), the cry has gone up, "Armageddon is imminent!" "The end of the world is near!" "Christ is about to come"! The Persian Gulf War of 1991 stirred a volley of such claims. The beginning of the War in Iraq provoked a new round of them. What shall we say?

Armageddon (literally, "Har-Magedon") appears only once in the Bible (Rev. 16:16). It means "mountain or hill of Megiddo" and refers to a man-made hill in central Palestine. For centuries it was fortified and served as a fortress, giving its occupants a commanding view and control of the Valley of Jezreel. This valley is the most ancient and frequently-used of all battlefields. The "Battle of Armageddon" that the speculators so much dote on will supposedly involve the military forces of all nations (200 million Orientals alone, according to Hal Lindsey, author of *The Late, Great Planet, Earth*). Lindsey and others, on the basis of their misinterpretation of Revelation 14:20, declare that the blood from this war will be horse-bridle deep (cir. 4 ft.) for two hundred miles

north and south of Jerusalem. These pitiful prognosticators also mistake Jesus' warnings about "wars and rumors of wars" and like statements (Mat. 24:6–7) as "signs of the times" for the Lord's coming. (Actually, they apply **only** to the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem.) Jesus said **in the same chapter** that neither He nor the angels and **no mortal** knew when He would return (vv. 36, 42, 44).

I have stood on the mound of Megiddo on two separate occasions and surveyed its ancient battlefield-plain below. It measures about fourteen by twenty miles, hardly enough area for a world war or an all-nation conflict. *Armageddon* is a symbolic term referring to the coming of Christ in final Judgment. It does not refer to literal warfare or physical armies. Do not be disturbed by the time-guessers They know no more about when Christ will come than does our dog, "Trixie." They may all be sincere, but they are all false prophets.

—Dub McClish

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