

Is Jesus Coming Soon?

Dub McClish

For many years, every time a major political crisis between nations has arisen, especially if it involved the Biblical area of Palestine (now largely belonging to Israel), the cry has arisen that these events signal the return of Jesus. This was true of the outbreak of World Wars I and II, of the Korean War, of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, and of the Viet Nam conflict. A movie about Viet Nam was named, "Armageddon." The upheavals involving seriously strained relations between Iran and the United States and Soviet Russia's military occupation of Afghanistan provoked a new wave of sensational speculations. In many cases, well-meaning, but mistaken people have set a certain year, some, even a certain day, for the coming of Christ.

But what does war or threat of war have to do with the coming of Christ? All of those who like to speculate about when Christ will come again (and certainly, the Bible teaches that He will), belong to a theological school of thought called "Premillennialism." This may be loosely defined as the doctrine that when Christ returns, He will personally establish a literal kingdom in Jerusalem, reigning there for 1,000 years. According to most proponents of this doctrine, a great battle, involving all the nations, will take place (Armageddon) and while it is raging, Christ will come to establish His millennial (1,000 year) reign. Thus, we can see why the threat of war triggers such cries as "Armageddon is imminent," and "Christ is coming soon." What shall one believe about such things?

Armageddon (actually, "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 near the area of Mt. Carmel in northern present-day Israel. For centuries it was fortified and served as a fortress (there are numerous references to it or the plain and valley below it in the Old Testament). Its occupants held a commanding view and almost unchallengeable control of the storied valley below. The Plain of Megiddo is the most ancient and most often used of all the earth's battlefields. The "Battle of Armageddon" that the speculators like to discuss so freely is envisioned as a literal war, involving all nations (200 million Orientals alone, according to Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 151) that will take place on this battlefield. Such speculators like to make a literal application of Rev. 14:20 to the "Battle of Armageddon," declaring that the

blood will run horse-bridle deep for 200 miles both north and south of Jerusalem from this war.

The whole scheme that produces such absurd predictions results from two major flaws: 1) Grievous misapplication of prophecies; 2) Forcing literal interpretations upon symbolic or figurative statements. The “signs of the times” that the time-guessers so often refer to (including “wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes,” and the like) do not refer to the coming of Christ, but to the destruction of Jerusalem (Mat. 24:6-7). Those things were fulfilled in the events leading up to that calamity that was visited upon the Jews in A.D. 70, and they involved the contemporaries of Jesus (Mat. 24:34). In the very same chapter, Jesus said that He Himself did not know when He would return, that none of the angels then knew and that certainly no man could know (vv. 36, 52, 44). The fact of the matter is that the Bible gives no “signs of the times” for Christ’s coming. It tells us that He is coming, that we must ever be ready for His coming, and even some of the things that will occur **after** He comes. But there are no indicators to tell us when He will come.

What about the “Battle of Armageddon”? In the book of Revelation, John often uses a geographical location to symbolize a concept. *Zion* and *Jerusalem* are symbols of the church (Rev. 14:1; 21:2). *Babylon* is symbolic of apostasy and rebellion against God (Rev. 14:8). *Egypt* and *Sodom* are symbols of wickedness and oppression (Rev. 11:8). So, the old battleground of Armageddon is used as a symbol of the final overthrow of all forces of evil at the time of Christ’s coming in Judgment. The “Battle of Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16) is no more literal than the dragon, beast, or frogs of the three previous verses. I have twice stood on the Hill of Megiddo and surveyed the plain below. It measures only about 14 by 20 miles, hardly large enough for hundreds of millions of soldiers to even stand, much less, to wage war. Those who are wise will be more concerned about the plain teaching of the Bible which tells us how to get ready and stay ready for Christ’s second coming, than with sensational speculations about when He is coming. Do not be disturbed by the time-guessers. Remember: by Jesus’ teachings, they are all false prophets.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the February 22, 1980, edition of *Light of Life*, of which I was editor. This monthly paper was published and mailed to every address county-wide by Granbury Church of Christ, Granbury, TX.]

Attribution: From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner and administrator.