

ARMAGEDDON

The battle of Armageddon refers to the final war between human governments and God. These governments and their supporters oppose God even now by refusing to submit to his rulership. (Psalm 2:2) The battle of Armageddon will bring human rulership to an end. (Daniel 2:44).

The word “Armageddon” occurs only once in the Bible, at Revelation 16:16. Prophetically, Revelation shows that at “the place that is called in Hebrew Armageddon,” “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” will be gathered “together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty.” (Revelation 16:14).

Who will fight at Armageddon? Jesus Christ will lead a heavenly army to victory over God’s enemies. (Revelation 19:11-16, 19-21) These enemies include those who oppose God’s authority and who treat God with contempt. (Ezekiel 39:7).

Will Armageddon literally be fought in the Middle East? No. Rather than being restricted to one area, the battle of Armageddon will encompass the whole earth. (Jeremiah 25:32-34; Ezekiel 39:17-20).

Armageddon, sometimes rendered “Har–Magedon” (Hebrew *Har Meghiddohn*), means “Mountain of Megiddo.” Megiddo was once a city in the territory of ancient Israel. History tells of decisive battles that were fought in its vicinity, including some that are recorded in the Bible. (Judges 5:19, 20; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29) However, 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 those who will fight against God. Instead, Armageddon is the worldwide situation in which the nations assemble in their last stand against rule by God.

What will conditions be like during the battle of Armageddon? While we do not know how God will use his power, he will have at his disposal weapons such as those he has used in the past—hail, earthquake, flooding downpour, fire and sulfur, lightning, and disease. (Job 38:22, 23; Ezekiel 38:19, 22; Habakkuk 3:10, 11; Zechariah 14:12) In confusion, at least some of God’s enemies will kill each other, yet they will ultimately realize that it is God who is fighting against them. (Ezekiel 38:21, 23; Zechariah 14:13).

Will Armageddon be the end of the world? It will not be the end of our planet, since the earth is mankind’s eternal home. (Psalm 37:29; 96:10; Ecclesiastes 1:4) Rather than destroying humanity, Armageddon actually saves it, because “a great crowd” of God’s servants will survive. (Revelation 7:9, 14; Psalm 37:34).

Besides referring to the earth, though, the word “world” in the Bible sometimes refers to wicked human society opposed to God. (1 John 2:15-17) In this sense, Armageddon will bring “the end of the world.” (Matthew 24:3).

When will Armageddon take place? When discussing the “great tribulation” that culminates in the battle of Armageddon, Jesus said: “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matthew 24:21-39).