

REFUTING PM – PART 10 (THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON)

I. PM View:

- A. PM believe in a literal reign of Christ upon the earth during what they call The Millennium.
- B. PM are convinced that just before The Millennium occurs the world will be engulfed in a gigantic world war called The Battle of Armageddon (Hereafter BOA).
- C. Hal Lindsey, in his book The Late Great Planet Earth (pp. 151-168), describes the battle as follows:
 1. The Antichrist will become head of the revived Roman Empire which will grow out of the European Common Market.
 2. He will make a covenant with the Jews to guarantee their safety; this event will mark the beginning of the seven year countdown to the BOA.
 3. After 3½ years, the Antichrist will begin to persecute believers in Christ and will break his covenant with Israel.
 4. The Antichrist will then enthrone himself in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and demand to be worshiped as God.
 5. An Arab-African confederacy led by Egypt will invade Israel. They will not remain in power long.
 6. Russia and its allies will then invade and conquer the Middle East but will only be able to hold it for a short time.
 7. An Asian alliance of nations led by Communist China will field an army of two hundred million men and march toward Israel; supposedly they are going to support the Antichrist, but actually they will turn against him.
 8. Fire and brimstone will come upon Russia (probably nuclear warfare, says Lindsey) and annihilate them completely.
 9. With the Arab-African alliance having been defeated by Russia, and Russia having been eliminated by nuclear power, the Asian alliance remains to fight the Antichrist and his forces.
 10. These two massive armies will meet at a place called Armageddon where the final battle for control of the world will take place. *“So here it is – the last great conflict. After the Antichrist assembles the forces of the rest of the whole world together, they meet the onrushing charge of the kings of the East in a battle line which will extend throughout Israel with the vortex centered at the Valley of Megiddo.”*
 11. The world will be in chaos and concurrent fights will erupt throughout the world. Major cities such as London, Paris, Tokyo, and New York will be wiped off the map and entire islands in the ocean will be destroyed.
 12. Then, per Lindsey, *“As the battle of Armageddon reaches its awful climax and when it appears that all life will be destroyed on earth, Jesus Christ will return and save man from self-extinction.”*
 13. Thereafter the millennium begins.

II. The PM View Sure is Popular:

- A. Nearly every denominationalist I know of believes in The Battle of Armageddon in some form or another.
- B. Web page after web page.
- C. 1998 – Christopher Walker reported in The London Times that the biblical site of Armageddon was to be transformed for the millennium into an “intellectual theme park.” Walker stated that because of the theme park people would be able to experience, via multimedia, the final battle between good and evil that many believe will signal the end of the world.

III. Refutation:

- A. This PM idea is easy to refute if you keep the following things in mind.
 1. The PM system stands or falls together (e.g. defeat their “rapture” and...)
 2. The inspired commentary of Revelation.
 - (a) It is “apocalyptic writing.” This is known from **1:1 (#602 apokálupsis)**.
 - (i) This is writing filled with symbols.
 - (ii) One writer has noted, *“The message is usually expressed in vivid symbolism. It appears in difficult times and conveys to readers that the troubles in which they find themselves are not the last word.”*
 - (b) The book is time sensitive (the events would shortly come to pass and were at hand; cf. **1:1, 3**).
- B. Remembering these things automatically allows one to know what the BOA cannot be.

IV. Let's Consider the Context:

- A. The grand context in which the BOA is found.
 1. Saints in the 1st century were undergoing intense persecution (7:13-14).
 2. The persecution was horrific and widespread (7:9-14).
 3. The persecution came from Satan via an earthly kingdom (12-13).
 4. The earthly kingdom that acted so devilishly was Rome (17:1-6, 9, 18).
 5. Would there be any relief (6:9-10)?
 6. John (1:1) received word that God was in control, not Rome (thus the throne room scenes of chapters 4-5). The real throne is in heaven, not Rome.
 7. Rome would be defeated and that type of persecution stopped (17:14).
 8. The saints simply needed to buy into 14:12-13.
 9. This is the easiest way I have been able to understand Revelation:
 - (a) Beginning in chapter 6 the story of persecution, the consequences for evildoers and the ultimate victory of God's people is told in symbolic language (seals, trumpets, vials).
 - (b) It seems that in each account the reader gains a little more information than he previously had.
- B. The immediate context in which the BOA is found (Rev. 16):
 1. In the context of 7 vials.
 2. 7 vials (i.e. 7 messages filled with symbolism) are poured out (1-21).
 3. It's not our purpose here to dig into what each vial represents (we can do this later, or you can study it on your own), but know this:
 - (a) Saints have suffered (6).
 - (b) Consequences for the sins have been announced (2-5, 8-10).
 - (c) Rome and unfaithful Christians are unrepentant (9, 11, 21).
 - (d) God's people will be vindicated because the victory is the Lord's (17-19).
 4. Remembering that the book is apocalyptic writing, and understanding that the battle discussed is not literal, let's see if we can understand what the message of Armageddon (16) really is all about.

V. What Does the Word "Armageddon" Mean?

1. The word is derived from the Hebrew words: **Har** (2022) **M^agidow** (4023).
2. The words combine to form a reference to the mountainous environment the town of Megiddo was/is located in.
3. The town overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon which is connected to the Valley of Jezreel (**Baker's Bible Atlas 309**).
4. This is important & is the key to understanding the symbolism behind the BOA.

VI. What did Megiddo and the Surrounding Area Represent?

- A. I think we all understand that the names of people and places can become symbolic because of some historical event with which it is associated.
- B. For example, with regard to people, when someone says "*He is a Benedict Arnold*" what do you think of?
- C. How about with regard to places?
 1. I'm pretty sure most of us are familiar with the saying, "*He met his Waterloo.*"
 - (a) Waterloo was a small town in central Belgium where Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815.
 - (b) The expression has come to represent a disastrous defeat.
 2. How about "Remember the Alamo!" When that is uttered what comes to mind?
 - (a) In that battle, a small group of men stood against impossible odds.
 - (b) That small building in San Antonio represents the spirit of courage and sacrifice.

D. So it is with the town of Megiddo and the area around Megiddo.

1. To those in ancient times, this area represented a place where battles were waged and decisive victories were gained.
2. Examples:
 - (a) Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera and Jabin's army here (**Judges 4-5**).
 - (b) Here Gideon with 300 men defeated a vastly larger army of Midianites and Amalekites (**Judges 6-7**).
 - (c) Saul and Jonathan died in this area while fighting the Philistines (**1 Sam. 31**).
 - (d) King Ahaziah was killed in battle near Megiddo (**2 Kings 9**).
 - (e) King Josiah was slain here as he fought against the forces of Pharaoh Necho (**2 Kings 23**).
3. By bringing up Megiddo, the message, then, is akin to "*Your persecutors will meet their Waterloo!*"
4. That is to say, in **Revelation** "Armageddon" is symbolic language to convey the thought that good and evil were embroiled in intense conflict and that there would be a decisive victory.

VII. Putting it all Together:

- A. Revelation is apocalyptic writing – a book of symbols.
- B. The victory of the Lamb and of the saints is a recurring theme throughout the book.
- C. "Armageddon" (i.e. **Har M^agidow**; i.e. Megiddo and the surrounding area) is a phrase used to inform the careful reader in the first century that the battle being fought (Rome against Jesus) would have a decisive outcome.
 1. The Lamb and His followers would win (**17:14**).
 2. Rome would lose (**18:2**).
- D. There is no possible way one can stay true to proper rules of biblical interpretation and find anything remotely like the PM version of the BOA.
- E. Sadly, they are wrong.