

# Armageddon

## *The Battle of God*

Elder Alexander de Neufville Snyman

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**R**evelation 16:16: “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” we have had many sermons on this. If you had heard me preach this sermon 50 years ago, which is when I got started preaching, and hear me preach this today, you’d wonder what has happened to me in the meantime. It would be totally different, because our understanding has grown, generally. Seventh-day Adventists have bogged down in their understanding of this subject with no excuse. We have had the wonder gift of the SOP giving us guidance, telling us more than a hundred years ago the truth about some of these things. So, we’ll see what we can find about this very important subject.

Let us read the entire story of the sixth plague in Revelation 16. Beginning with verse 12:

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

That great day of God Almighty. It’s mentioned many times in Scripture. We need to look at a few texts just to get a background for this. There are too many for me to read them all, but, following the principle of the “law of first mention,” we read about this in Isaiah 2:12:

“For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:”

But it goes on in Isaiah 13, verse 6, we will find:

“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.”

and in verse 9:

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.”

Further to this, we need to look to some texts in, for instance, Joel. That’s where you find much about the Day of the Lord. Here, for example, in Joel the first chapter, verses 14 and 15:

“Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD, alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.”

We go to Joel chapter 3 and read there verses 9-11:

“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.”

That is not a contradiction of Isaiah the second chapter. Let's look back there, Isaiah 2:4:

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.”

That is exactly the opposite. The difference is that in chapter two of Isaiah and verse three we read:

“Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . .” and etcetera.

Those are clearly the words of the people, “the people shall go and say,” but in Joel the third chapter and verse nine, it is the Lord who speaks. Where He says, “beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears,” that is the Lord telling us exactly what is going to happen, speaking the truth on these things.

There are other texts, we can look perhaps at one more. Zephaniah 1:7:

“Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand.”

Also, in Zechariah 14, verse 1, there is another such use:

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.”

All these focus on the coming great day of the Lord, and in Revelation 16, there is a description of the battle, the great day of God Almighty. There is nothing said there about a confrontation between nations. It's God's battle, it's God's war, it's the climax of the war of the ages. This is what Armageddon is all about. Armageddon has been on the minds of many for a long time.

Not long after World War II, General Douglas MacArthur said something like this:

“A new era is upon us. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door.”

Then there was Nikita Krushchev, premier of Russia. He talked about the fact that in this century, we had seen two tremendous wars. He said:

“Now that we have learned to control the atom, we have developed a system of warfare unlike anything ever known before. All of the weaponry of tanks and warships of World War II are like toys compared with the tremendousness of the weapons that can be turned loose upon the earth today.” He said, “Any entrance into war by the nations of earth would be sheer madness.”

Eisenhower? He went even further, if possible. He said: “War is now utterly preposterous.” He went on to say that, “In the past the fields of conflict have been stained with blood, but now, war will not produce blood, only a great emptiness.”

There is a recognition among the people of earth, its leaders, and the nations of this world that the sword of Damocles is hanging over their heads. There is a feeling of endtimeness (if you'll forgive me for inventing a new word), but it's there in the thinking of untold multitudes.

My friends, we need to understand something about the great day of the Lord and what is involved here. We will be looking at texts from Scripture. I would suggest, if you have your Bibles handy and can flip readily from text to text that you do so. It will fix it in your memory even that much better.

Let's turn again to Revelation 16:12, "the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates."

A little further along there we read about this Armageddon thing, and people have wondered about that. We read the text in Revelation 16:16, where we found that it is the place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. Now, we would expect, "That's easy, let's flip over to the Old Testament, we'll find out all about Armageddon now." But, we go there and what do we find? We find zilch, we find zero, we find nothing, and so we're a little puzzled. However, there is this—the word in the Greek here in Revelation 16:16, is actually two words; the words har and megiddo. Those are Hebrew words meaning "mountain" and "Megiddo."

Megiddo we know about. It's an interesting place. It's out there—it's not a plain. One of our South African officers, an uncle of Audrey's and he was a physician in the South African army, held the rank of major, he was up there. When he was telling us about it he said, "For the modern army of today you will not find room on the plain of Megiddo." He said, "there just isn't room enough to duck." As he told us more about it, I began to get the idea that we are not dealing with a plain so much as a mountain.

That particular area is interesting, for many conflicts in the past took place there. Do you know that it was right there that there has been confrontations with armies and leaders for a long, long time. It was in 1482 BC, as a matter of fact, that Thutmos III of Egypt conquered that city. That was right there in the early time of the Exodus.

As archeologists have excavated around Megiddo, they have found twenty levels. The archeologists have a way of doing that. They will carve a channel right down so you can see the levels right there. They go down twenty levels until they find bedrock.

Back in about the fourth or fifth level, you will find the early Israelite occupation. It goes on to level nine. You go on a little higher and you come to the time of Solomon. Further, you come to other levels that have been built as the city has been rebuilt since that time. When you come to about 450-350 BC, you don't find any further levels—nothing to add to the twenty that they have found there. The city seems to have been abandoned at about that time.

We learn about Solomon there. Solomon was known a lot more for his horses than for his wives. According to 1 Kings 11:3, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. You might be tempted to say, "Well, what on earth?" Yes, that's a good question, but I'm sure he never saw the great majority of them. They were added as he made treaties with kings and other leaders and so on. Every time he signed a treaty, he was expected to take all their daughters into his harem. In many cases, the king was only too glad to see the last of his family there because, many times, they had become something of a burden to be landed with so many daughters and no husbands. So, there it was, 700 wives and 300 concubines. I have studied for a long time to try to learn the difference between a wife and a concubine, but it has never been altogether clear to me, though it seems a wife has a higher status than a concubine. Whatever that may be, I think you know more about that than I do.

But then we find, in a place like 1 Kings 4:26, for instance, that Solomon had something like forty thousand stalls for his horses. He had twelve thousand horsemen. In this Megiddo city there, they found on about the

eighth level—somewhere around there, eighth or ninth, how that Solomon (if that was his particular place in these levels) had had room for four hundred and fifty thoroughbreds. That of course was only a small portion of his entire collection of horses. All of that comes out in excavation around Megiddo.

There were conflicts that took place there. An Israelite army came down from the north and confronted the Canaanites who were encamped in that city. They had nine hundred chariots of iron. You read about that in Judges 5:19-21. You'll find there that it tells us about that conflict. The Lord gave the children of Israel a signal victory. There were not too many of them and they were poorly armed, but apparently, if you read carefully, especially the revised versions, you will find that apparently there were rain storms there that caused all kinds of flash floods. These chariots of iron, nine hundred of them, bogged down in the mud. And so, the children of Israel went in there and carved them to ribbons. That's how things happened.

It was a place of conflict through the past. Maybe that's the reason for talking about the battle of Armageddon as the final confrontation of the day of God. As a matter of fact, Solomon himself was involved there in the conquest of that city.

Not too long after the time of Solomon, we read about Gideon. That was where he collected his famous army of 300 finally, after he had sent most of them home, and won his signal victory over the Midianites, and sent them back to where they had come from. So, you can begin to see the background of *har megiddo*.

As far as the actual Hebrew is concerned, look for a moment at Isaiah 14:13. In there is this fascinating text—it's about Satan. Lucifer, when he wanted to be the light of the morning, he wanted to be like the Most High. Now then, verse 13:

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.”

What has fascinated Hebrew scholars is that that term “Megiddo”—*har megiddo*, actually is the same as this “mount of the congregation,” except for one letter, and that has created a problem. That means that linguistically we have not been able to attach too much importance to this. There are some who feel that these words are the same. The thing is that right in the middle, in place of ‘G’ (the *gimel* in Hebrew), you know, *aleph, beth, gimel, daleth, he, vau, zain, cheth, teth, jod*, and all the rest of it. *Ain, pe, tzaddi, koph*—*ain*, the letter *ain* if you want to find it, is in your Bible in Psalm 119. That's the Hebrew alphabet. The third letter is *gimel*. That one is the one that appears in Megiddo, but the *ain* is the one that is used here. It is an interesting guttural.

I remember when I was first studying Hebrew at Walla Walla College, I had as my instructor Dr. Linzau. He was telling us at that time when we asked him “exactly how do you pronounce this?” He said “I don't know,” but he said, “it is a deep down guttural that you have to pronounce deep down in your throat by clicking your tonsils.” He said, “the Arabs are able to do this because they have been doing it from the time that they were so high, but we don't know.” He then went on to say, “When an Arab sings, the olive trees move in rhythm.” I don't know if it has anything to do with the mount of the congregation, but that's as close as we can come in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

Let's take a look at the sixth plague and see what we have there. We read earlier that “the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”

You know, about the time that I came to Walla Walla College from South Africa, I had crossed the Atlantic ocean in one of Henry Kaiser's little ships. We had been spending most of our time with our fingers crossed and sometimes in prayer because U-boats were still active in the Atlantic. If they had sent a torpedo after us, that

ship in which I was, would have gone straight to the bottom in a matter of seconds because it was loaded with copper which had been picked up in Mombasa before they had picked me up at Capetown. That weight of copper made it sit so low in the sea that we felt we were a submarine ourselves.

When we crossed the equator around those warm waters, the flying fish used to come out. Some of them used to come right over the ship. There was one that landed right on those hot decks. You know, so help me, by the time we got to that fish it was roasted and ready to be eaten because those decks were so hot under the equatorial sun. That interesting little liberty ship was a place where I met some friends. One was a Roman Catholic priest; a man who was a bush Baptist (that meant he had no religion). He had been practicing dentistry in South Africa for a long time, but he was an American coming home. When we got to New York, we were in the middle of a war. I tell you, the FBI looked me over with a fine-toothed comb from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. I had my violin with me, and the customs man there said, "We don't have to worry about a violin." The FBI man said, "Open it up, I've seen machine guns in cases like that." You see, he'd been dealing with men like Al Capone and his gang over in Chicago, so I just smiled while he took it apart. Then they became interested in my violin. They wanted to know where it was made and so on, and so I had to explain about Nicola, a Frenchman who made violins.

The war was on everybody's mind, everyone was under a tension. I was well aware of this, and when I went to Walla Walla College, I found that the preaching of Armageddon was centered around the current events of that time. When it talks about the way of the kings of the east, the Seventh-day Adventist evangelists (and I tell you, they were going everywhere at the time) were telling us, "This is Armageddon, the way of the kings of the East." They had pictures of the Japanese flag, the Rising Sun. They used the translations that said, "the kings of the rising sun". They thought that had to be Japan gathering the people of the East for the final confrontation with the forces of the West at the plain of Megiddo.

Oh, how they used to preach that. So, a couple of years later, when I graduated, when they turned me loose on an unsuspecting public, I'll tell you, I had all these slides. There was the man with whom I worked, Elder Roper; there was my best friend and best man at my wedding, Elder Dolman (he had quite a collection of slides that he inherited from somewhere. I remember my wife working hard to make some extra money. We got an extra \$300 to buy a Leica camera, and with this I began to copy slides right and left. I copied everything Elder Roper had, I went down to where Don Dolman was and copied all of his. I still have slides that I made at that time that show the Near East. Maybe I'll dig up some of those sometime and show you just what kind of preaching we did back then.

There was a naval officer who stands with his hand on that map. I always used to point out to the audiences, "The tip of that finger rests right on the plain of Megiddo." Significant? No, didn't mean a thing. But, there was that thinking back then, you see.

Now, of course, evangelists either go around with red faces from those eras, a long time ago, fifty years back, or, they have just conveniently forgotten about the whole thing. This has made others a bit more careful about what they say about the unfolding of prophecy. Prophecy in the Bible was not given to make prophets out of us. Prophecy is given to enable us to learn and to see the milestones as we come to them. "I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29; 13:19).

This East/West conflict, and I'm not going to introduce very much from the Spirit of Prophecy today, but I want to point out that Ellen G. White knows nothing of an East/West conflict—nothing at all—all we have here is what the Lord says, "To gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Now, this matter of the sixth angel pouring out his vial "upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

The Euphrates River is significant in the history of Babylon. That was the river that ran through the city of Babylon originally, corner to corner. The city of Babylon fell when Cyrus the Persian was able to divide or deflect the waters of the river Euphrates into an unused lake nearby, and the waters ran dry under the city. One third of Cyrus' army was working there to build up a wall so that the waters could go another direction into that unused lake. Then, the waters under the city ran dry. The other two thirds (one third on one side and the remaining third on the other side of the city) came in under the walls. They walked upon the dry bed of the river. That's how Babylon was conquered, the drying up of the river Euphrates. Babylon is very much a part of the whole picture.

But there is more to it than that. As far as we are concerned today, we are dealing with something that sets the stage for the confrontation of God and the nations of earth. We need to understand this. When the water there-of was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared, we need to look at some things here.

First of all, in Revelation 17:15 we read: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Waters represent peoples, vast numbers of peoples, nations upon nations and tongues, etcetera. These are going to be dried up. Whom do they support? Originally, the symbolism was Babylon. The original river Euphrates was the support for Babylon. I imagine it supplied pretty much all the water for that city, the city of Babylon. But now we come to something else. Modern Babylon clearly is papal Rome. This has been recognized by others besides Seventh-day Adventists. A book that was written by a man named Alexander Hyslop, an English historian and theologian, wrote this book called *The Two Babylons*, in which he points out that the "two Babylons" are Babylon, originally, and papal Rome, the second Babylon.

This Rome is supported, tremendously supported by the nations of earth. The support of all of those nations, giving their support to Roman Catholicism (the mediaeval system of religion), they are going to withdraw that support at a very crucial time. When they realize how they have been deceived by this system. You can read about what happens to Babylon in Revelation 18 particularly, verse 19, and so on, and in there is the story of how Babylon is left a widow and she is reduced to burning, and so on.

This "drying up of the river Euphrates" is the drying up of the support of the peoples. One SDA interpreter said that you can't use it that way because there is no way that a river represents a nation. That is questionable because the river Euphrates was the support for original Babylon. What we are dealing with here is not so much the river, for it doesn't say that the river was dried up, but the waters will be dried up. Waters are said to be nations, and tongues and kings, "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

Who are the kings of the east? Japanese?—Chinese?—and all of those?

I want to introduce you to a few texts here, you probably know about them, most of you anyway— in Isaiah. First of all we'll look at the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, beginning with verse 27, "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:"

and verse 28, this is chapter 44 of Isaiah:

"That saith of Cyrus," this is an interesting prophecy. The Lord named the man who would be responsible for subduing Babylon. "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

Now, look at 45, verse one: "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,"—again, he mentions him by name, "whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."

That's interesting because when Babylon fell to Cyrus, the Medo-Persian armies that went in there on the dry bed of the river, could have walked in on the one side and right out the other side for all the good that it would have done them, had it not been for the fact that those tremendous brass gates that lined the river were wide open. It was a time of the festival of Bacchus. The Babylonians had given themselves over to a partying and debauchery the like of which we don't see very often today. They were drinking themselves into a stupor. The guards of the gates were not to be seen. The result was, the brass gates were left wide open, and as it says here, "to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."

The Medo-Persians were able to go in, finding the Babylonians easy meat. It was at that very moment, climbing the steps up the side from the two-leaved gates, that Belshazzar was leading out in a feast among all his nobles and the people of the palace when he saw this strange tracing upon the wall, "*mene, mene, tekel, peres.*" In the original it simply means, translated, "You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting."

There was the experience of the downfall of Babylon. Verse 2 says:

"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel."

He called Cyrus by his name, way ahead of time, about a hundred and fifty years ahead of time. These prophecies are mind boggling when you get to thinking about them, how the Lord has given them so accurately.

Talking about the treasures of Babylon—Babylon was spoiled over and over again after her original fall, but never were they able to exhaust the treasures of that place. Wouldn't you like to go to a place where it doesn't matter how much gold and precious stones you took from it, there was always something left for the next guy? This is what happened to Babylon. "All that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 50:10).

Turn back in Isaiah to chapter 41. Here is a significant verse, verses 1 and 2:

"Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow."

Those words are practically reproduced in Revelation chapter 19, verses 11-16:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Those are the words of Isaiah 41:2, "gave the nations before Him, and made Him rule over kings." He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords it says here. *There* are your kings of the east. *That* is the King of the east. He who comes *from the east*, leading the armies of heaven. Revelation 19 is a beautiful description of that.

If we read a little further: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (Revelation 16:13).

The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The dragon is Satan, we know that from Revelation 12. The beast, of course, is that great medieval system of religion which has virtually guided and influenced the thinking of the world. If you watch a television program of any kind today, no matter what it is, if there is any kind of religious emphasis to it, it’s always a man with a reversed collar who is doing the officiating.

I remember Elder H.M.S. Richards, the one who is recently deceased (he was a good friend of mine, I knew him for many years), telling a group of us a long time ago, “You know, it’s a man’s own business if he decides if he wants to walk into his collar or back into it.” He didn’t think it was very bad to wear collars that were reversed. That’s alright. But you will see them appearing in any important television emphasis. You look, and if it has religion of any kind the Roman priest is the man who is up front. Where do you ever see or hear of a Protestant minister or a Jewish rabbi?—oh sure, they come in sometimes, but when it comes to authority in religious matters, it’s always the Roman Catholic priest to whom they go. It’s this sort of thing that shapes the public’s thinking without them realizing it.

The dragon, the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. We say, “Well, that is apostate Protestantism”—that could well be. I have heard others suggest that the great false prophet of the ages is Mohammed. His influence in the religious world today you’ve got to see to believe. There are millions in the world today who are taking to the Moslem religion just like a duck takes to water. It’s something that you cannot avoid noticing, even in this country. You get more basketball stars, and other stars, and others, who are taking Arab-sounding names. Lou Alcindro became Kareem Abdul Jabbar. And of course Mohammed Ali,—what was his name?—Lucias Casius Clay. These are only a drop in the bucket compared with the numbers who are doing this. The Moslem religion is gathering a tremendous number of adherents today. That may be the false prophet, I don’t know. It may also be apostate Protestantism; we’ll have to wait and see.

But now, verse 14: “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

These miracle working demons; we read about them many times, in fact, if you turn back to Revelation 13, you will find in verse 14, “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.”

Today people look over and over again to miracles and think that God is directing the operation. Not so, necessarily. You will find that the emphasis on miracle working demons is mentioned over and over again in the Bible. In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself had occasion talk about the fact that there would be these miracles that would be wrought in the last days. Here in Matthew 24:5, for instance, “For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

And in verses 11 and 12:

“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

And a little further too, we are told about the miracles that are going to be wrought by those who are going to parade themselves as Christians. Verse 24 says:

“For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

It goes on and on dear friends. We have been warned that miracle working is going to be seen as a result of the work of Satan in these last days.

I had a man in Huntington Park, California, when I was holding a series there. I was talking about the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the antichrist. He was a young Mexican Roman Catholic who came to me and said, "You know, I'm going to ask the priest about this, I don't think it is right." I said, "I know what the priest will tell you, I know exactly what the priest will tell you." And he said, "What you said about Catholicism simply can't be true, look at all the miracles that the Catholic church has." The Bible warns us that the devil will use miracles to deceive people in the last days. It goes on, and on.

This war, this great confrontation—we read about it and we should look at a few texts. Look at Isaiah 24, for instance. Beginning with verse 1: "Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof."

And on the to verse 3:

"The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: For the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof."

Turn to Jeremiah 25:31, and again we read about warfare and all that is involved in it:

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth"

Whirlwinds are a symbol of war. All of these pictures are of a tremendous conflict. We have already read some from Joel, for instance, where the Lord says, "beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears." There is a confrontation coming.

Now, I want to take a look at something here. We need to understand this. First of all perhaps I should read a text from Job 38:11. Apparently the forces of darkness and wickedness are going to go on, and on, and on until finally God is going to call a halt and He will say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

The context of this verse in Job is in connection with the raging sea, but if we go along a little further, I want to read something else, verse 22:

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" A tremendous hail that God has planned for these last conflicts. Now, go back to Revelation 16 and notice here in verse 17: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air;" and there were voices and lightnings, and thunders and so on, and then in verse 21 under the seventh plague, "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent."

Well, as far as I can tell, probably the lightest weight that you can give to a talent is sixty-five pounds. We complain about golf ball size, or even tennis ball size hail. That's peanuts compared to what is going to happen when the great cities of the earth are ice-bombed. That's what is going to happen—tremendous hail. I don't want to be

under one of those stones when that happens. But now, go back to Job 38. Something here fascinates me. I'm always fascinated by numbers. Job 38:22: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail". Remember those numbers. Turn to Ezekiel 38:22 and see what we have there:

"And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone."

Did you get it? Interesting. Job 38:22; Ezekiel 38:22. A tremendous outpouring of hail at the very last. Job said it was reserved unto the day of battle and war. Here in Ezekiel, it's talking about the confrontation with Gog and Magog. Look at Ezekiel 38:1, "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him"

You know, I used to preach on Russia in Bible prophecy and used this text. In fact, to tell you the truth, the first sermon I ever heard as a ministerial intern after leaving Walla Walla College was in Tacoma, Washington. Elder Roper was conducting those meetings. He was the one from whom I got so many slides, was able to copy them. His first sermon was "Russia in Bible Prophecy" and he was using these particular symbolisms.

There is a translation, a more modern one, that says "Set thy face against Gog, the chief prince of Rush, Meshech, and Tubal," and people have said "that sounds like Russia, and Moscow, and Tubalsk." Well, I don't know. It may be that Russia has a part to play in all of this, the great power from the north; but maybe not, since Russia is no longer a contending force in world affairs. As we read here in verse 8:

"After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel . . . Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands"

A tremendous air force, you see. And, we are also told that he is going to come out of the North parts. You make of that what you can. You'll find, in chapter 39, that the story goes on. Gog, Magog, these are the hosts of the wicked against whom God has this controversy. We find the climax is a tremendous outpouring of hail.

Let's look some more at Revelation 16 where we are told that these nations which are being gathered to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

We want to find out how this really applies. We need to be able to find something on which we can be able to build a solid foundation. We are told that "he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Armageddon is used symbolically. I believe its tie-in with the city of Megiddo, the Mount of Megiddo, is because that place was the scene of conflict in ancient times over, and over again.

How does all this work? The drying up of the river Euphrates, the support of the peoples of earth for that system of religion which has deceived them, and led them to the place where they see the plagues coming. They see the calamities of the last days and end up blaming commandment-keepers, the Sabbath-keepers, for all of these things. Satan will see to that. But here, the support has finally been withdrawn. She is a widow, barren. Revelation 18 and 19 will tell you about that.

Of course there is this famous verse in Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." What a prophecy that is! I'll leave you to read that this afternoon to get a picture of the final downfall of Babylon.

There is something here that I need to emphasize very strongly. We're looking at Revelation 19 again. We've read those texts, but we need to look at them carefully. Here is the word of God, here is the One who leads the armies of heaven, here is the One out of whose mouth goes "a sharp sword that with it He should smite the nations: rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." This is the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The most important verse that I consider of that entire series on Armageddon is one that we haven't looked at yet. That is this fifteenth verse, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

I mentioned earlier that Ellen G. White knows nothing of an East/West conflict, but she has had something to say about Armageddon, and I want you to notice very, very carefully what she does say, and—what she doesn't say.

First of all, there is the statement on page 624 of *Great Controversy*. Right at the top of the page on the left hand side; it reads like this,

"Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception."

That's what it tells us in Revelation 16! It says that the unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, the false prophet—"they are the spirits of devils working miracles which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

I want you to notice this. Whenever the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen G. White, uses the exact words of Scripture in a statement, that is a commentary on that Bible text. When the words she uses are identical to the words of Scripture, she is commenting on that Scripture.

Now, what does she say? "The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception."

For what purpose? Well, we might say, "Isn't that where she says 'in order to gather the forces of the East for their final confrontation with the forces of the West on the plain of Megiddo?'" There, in that statement, would have been a glorious opportunity to say that, but that's not what she said. She said, "to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven."

It's a confrontation between God and the forces of heaven with the forces of earth down here. Remember that! It's crucial. Now, it's on page 406 of *Testimonies* vol. 6, where there is a simple statement there, "The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought."

Ellen White didn't make many statements like this, but she did here. "The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought." And then, what follows? "Soon the forces of the East, the Orient, will be marshaled to confront the forces of the West in the final battle on the plain of Megiddo"? Is that what she says? No. She says, "He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven."

She is commenting in the first instance from *Great Controversy* 624, on Revelation 16:14. In the second instance, she is commenting on Revelation 19:11-16. It's a commentary on that, and this, she says, is the battle

of Armageddon. The battle of Armageddon is going to be fought. What's it all about? "He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven." That's what happens in all of this.

Let me just tell you right now what this is all about. In the nineteenth verse of Revelation 19 (begin at verse 17, following what we learned earlier):

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army."

Did you get it? It's the forces, the armies of earth, ready to fight against the forces of heaven. Armageddon is nothing but an invasion from outer space. That is what's happening in all of this. Clear as it can possibly be. Spirit of Prophecy, Old Testament, New Testament, put it all together and the conclusion is positively inescapable.

It works something like this:—Satan has been battling for a long time to gather for himself a kingdom. He saw his opportunity, I suppose, with other worlds, but when he went to first created beings of the other worlds and tried to get them to listen to his sophistries, his deceptions, they told him to get lost. That's about what it amounted to. Finally he came to planet earth, and there he was able to tempt our first parents to sin. That's when he probably said to his angels, "At last, we've got a place, we've got a kingdom. This is mine." From the beginning he said that.

In Job, the very first chapter we are told that when the sons of God (that is, the first created beings from the different worlds) came to present themselves before God they said, "What are you doing here?" He said, "I'm from planet earth, it belongs to me." And God says, "Not as long as there is a man like Job down there."

Now, Satan finally says, "Now I've got this planet in my grasp. Millions of people, hundreds of millions have chosen me and they've rejected You. Get off my back. This is my kingdom."

God says, "You cannot call planet earth your kingdom as long as there is a commandment-keeping remnant down there."

Satan says, "Alright, we'll see about that." And so, he sets about with renewed energy to destroy the commandment-keeping remnant. If you want to know where the arena of the battle of Armageddon is, there it is—the commandment-keeping people of God. That's the arena. Satan on one side, God on the other.

When he sets himself with renewed vigor, and energy, and viciousness to destroy the people of God, that's where God steps in and we see the fulfillment of Job 38:11, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" That is when we see the armies of heaven ride horses with Him who is called King of kings and Lord of lords, leading those armies to confront Satan and his armies. That's what it says here. This is what it's all about, very simply. Revelation 16:16 announces the battle of Armageddon. Revelation 19:19 describes the battle of Armageddon.

I said, this most important text, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 16:15). That is the part that really concerns you and

me. God will take care of the armies of the wicked. Never fear about that. What is important is that we play the part that we have been given, to be sure that we are ready for that time, and to make sure that others, multitudes, are ready also because of the work that we have done in sharing the truth with them.

A couple of weeks ago when I was here, I remember reading to you a statement, it's the one that says, "As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures, to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness." (*Review and Herald*, 12/23/1890).

Memorize that. Memorize as much of that paragraph as you can. There is another one. It comes from the *Review and Herald*, November 24, 1904:

"Those who would not that He should reign over them will see Him surrounded by the army of the redeemed, each of whom bears the sign, "The Lord Our Righteousness." They will see the head once crowned with thorns crowned with a diadem of glory."

Do you see the constant emphasis on armies, armies, armies?

Armageddon? Yes friends, we're almost there.

One more thing. We talked about Gog and Magog over there in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Look now at Revelation 20:8:—"And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

The millennium, the thousand years, is an interruption of the battle of Armageddon. When Christ comes with the armies of heaven, the wicked are destroyed by the brightness of His coming and the righteous are taken up to heaven. But at that point the battle of Armageddon isn't finished; it's interrupted. A thousand years later it resumes because those who were slain at the beginning are now resurrected, and these hordes of the wicked, so numerous that they are like the sands of the sea, rise up in battle with Satan against the King of kings and Lord of lords. That is when a generated fire (and I'm not sure about this; the language is a little ticklish there), when God says "I will raise a fire from the midst of thee." Does the fire come out of the midst of the wicked? or out of the midst of God? or out of the midst of the earth? Maybe Satan and all the advanced technology of that time generates a nuclear reaction, a chain reaction that turns the world into a sun (see 2 Peter 3:10-13). I don't know; we'll have to wait and see.

Well, that's it. That's when Armageddon comes to an end and the world is reduced to a molten mass which God fashions into a new home, for you and me.