

An easier understanding of prophecies about ...the Armageddon period

The original setting of the prophecy

When considering Armageddon times prophecy it is very important to bear in mind the original historic circumstances of the time any given prophecy was given. Contemporary events of the time had a big bearing on what the prophet emphasised. Many of the contemporary events of their times may be repeated in a similar manner in the Armageddon period. This means that prophets from different times in history can speak of the **same event** but **emphasise different perspectives**. Below are three ways in which contemporary history influenced end times prophecy.

● **The prophet's original target audience**

It is very important to note to whom a prophet was sent and how this influenced his Armageddon times visions. He may have been addressing the people of Jerusalem, Samaria or the entire nation. This difference of target audience meant that some prophets concentrated on **different aspects of the same future Armageddon period**. Failure to understand this very simple principle has led to countless theories about multiple and complicated end times battle scenarios ie claims that Ezekiel's vision is of a different time period to that of Zechariah's.

● **Why certain enemy nations are named**

If you read carefully, you will find that although these prophecies are about the Armageddon time period, the message only concentrates on the **nation or nations who were Israel's biggest threat at the time that particular prophecy was delivered**. This makes sense seeing that there may be many nations that did not exist in biblical times that may well be involved in this future conflict. During the time of Haggai and Zechariah's prophecies there is no mention of any particular enemy nation **by name** because at this time Israel were at peace with the Persian empire. So these later prophets use general phrases like, “**all nations**” (Zechariah), “**Gentile kingdoms**” (Haggai) or simply, “**the wicked**” (Malachi) when referring to Israel's enemies in Armageddon times.

● **The enemy nations future intentions**

● “**And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty...and they gathered them together to the place called in the Hebrew, Armageddon.**” Rev.16:13-16 NKJV

In the above verses from Revelation we are shown the importance of knowing **why** the nations will gather to Armageddon. This Scripture presents us with the “three unclean spirits” of the **dragon**, the **beast** and the **false prophet**. These three 'spirit' symbols represent three reasons why nations choose to attack Jerusalem.

- **The Dragon** represents the political and military 'rebellion' of certain nations. The dragon is used earlier in Revelation to represent Rome in the military sense (see Rev.ch12).
- **The Beast** represents the commercial greed and desires of certain nations. The beast is also used to represent the greed and enslavement of Rome (see Rev.13:17, ch18).
- **The False Prophet** represents the false religious fervor of some nations (See last topic on page three).

See handy chart on next page 

A handy chart

Comparing six 'last days' prophecies

The first section of this chart is designed to sum up page one ie historic settings of Armageddon times prophecies and show how their time slot in history has a bearing on what the prophet emphasises in his message.

The second section of the chart presents a simple order of events starting with the return of Israel to the land and ending with God's kingdom established. It's interesting to see at a glance what the prophets emphasised in their message. There are similarities we may not have noticed which are shared by Ezekiel, Zechariah and Micah. Blank spaces indicate the prophet's silence on that issue.

	Isaiah ch33	Ezekiel ch38-39	Zechariah ch12-ch14	Joel ch3	Obadiah v15-21	Micah ch4-5
The prophet's original target audience	Judah and Jerusalem Isa.1:1	Children and house of Israel Ezek.2:3 Ezek.39:25, 29	Governor and house of Judah Hag. 1:1, 14 Zech.10:3, 6	Elders of Judah and Jerusalem Joel 1:2 Joel 3:1, 6	Edom and the children of Judah v1, 12	Samaria and Jerusalem Mic.1:1
The enemy nations named	Assyria implied Lebanon and 'Bashan' which is southern Syria Isa.33:9, 18-19	Sythians, Persia Ethiopia, Libya and <u>many</u> nations Ezek.38:1-6	All nations No enemy nations named Zech.12:3, 14:2	Assyria implied 2:20 Phoenicians & Philistines 3:4	All nations v15 House of Esau v18	Many nations 4:11,13 Assyria 5:5
The main intentions of the enemy nations	World domination (political)	Greed for Jewish wealth (commercial)	Possess Jerusalem (religious)	Slavery and greed (commercial)	Destruction and greed (polit. & comm.)	World domination (political)

Israel regathered from dispersion		38:8, 12 39:27		3:1		
Jesus' Kingship	33:17, 22		14:16			5:4-5
Conspiracy against Israel		38:10-12				4:11
Enemy nations gathered		38:2-9				4:11
Nations gathered against Jerusalem			12:2-3 14:2	3:2,11		4:11
Israel suffers	33:9, 14	39:10, 26	13:8	3:2-3, 5-6	v10-14	5:10-14
Enemies fight each other		38:21	14:13			
Plague and pestilence		38:22	14:12, 15			
Earthquake		38:19-20	14:4-5	3:16		
Israel exalted over her enemies	33:23	39:21-22	12:6-9 14:14	3:16	v18-20	4:13 5:8-9
Israel recognises God and His Son	33:17, 22	39:22-29	12:10-14	3:17		5:4-5
Plunder taken from the nations	33:1,4, 23	39:10	14:14		v17	4:13
God's final victory and supremacy	33:10-13	38:22-23 39:21	12:9 14:9	3:17	v21	4:13 5:15
Israel restored	33:20-21	39:29 ch47-48	14:8-11, 16-21	3:18-20	v19-20	4:1-8 5:7-9

See extra notes on next page

Some extra notes

● What does 'Armageddon' mean?

"Armageddon" is the English form of the Hebrew word "har-mageddon" which is a combination of two words: "har" and "megiddow"

The Hebrew word "har" means, "a hill"

The Hebrew word "megiddow" means, "to gather"

So a literal dictionary meaning for the word Armageddon is, "the hill of Megiddow" or "the hill of gathering".

● The origin of the word 'Armageddon'

The ancient city fortress of Megiddo stood on a hill at the head of the valley of Jezreel (God will sow), and guarded a pass through the Carmel range. This ancient Canaanite city was conquered by Joshua (Josh.12:21) and later fortified by Solomon (1 Kings 9:15) because of its strategic position. The connection between the word Armageddon and this fortress and valley in the north of Israel is simply along **symbolic lines** which makes sense seeing we are reading a symbolic book ie Revelation. Although this future battle is fought against Israel, when we consider the number of troops and fire power involved it would be impossible to confine the gathered nations for this enormous battle to the Jezreel valley.

● Other 'gathering place' names

The prophet Joel calls the gathering place, "the valley of decision" and "the valley of Jehoshaphat", (Joel 3:13-14) which means, 'Yahweh judged'. God is using the words 'Armageddon', 'Jehoshaphat' and 'decision' as symbols of the importance and decisiveness of this last great battle which can be compared with the decisiveness of other great battles in Old Testament times.

The focus of attention with Armageddon is of course Israel and the city of Jerusalem and it will be from this city that God will go out in the **latter stages** of the battle and fight with those nations gathered against His city.

● Edom can be a symbol of all nations

We read the following words in a kingdom age restoration prophecy in Amos 9:12:

"That they may possess the remnant of EDOM, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name..." NKJV

When James quotes these words in Acts 15:7 he says:

"So that the rest of MANKIND may seek the LORD, even the Gentiles who are called by My name..." NKJV

'Edom' in Old Testament prophecies can be understood as a symbol for mankind or Gentiles in general. After AD70 the Edomites disappeared entirely from history. Herod the Great was one of the last of the Edomites.

● 'Suffering' and 'earthquake' in Ezekiel's prophecy

Some claim that there is no mention of Israel suffering in Ezekiel's prophecy but according to Ezek.39:10 Israel suffers from "**plunder**" and "**pillage**" at the hand of the invading forces. If we read Ezekiel and Zechariah carefully you will notice that both prophets speak of absolutely devastating earthquakes which effect Israel as well as the invading nations. To claim that Ezekiel's prophecy about the Gogian invasion is after Israel is 'rebuilt' under Christ would necessitate another destruction of Israel. Ezekiel's description of the earthquake is one of total destruction throughout the entire land of Israel and would have to occur before the establishment of the kingdom.

The "**pestilence and blood**" of Ezekiel's prophecy and Zechariah's **flesh-consuming plague** could well refer to an extremely virulent strain of a virus like 'ebola' where corruption sets in before death. Germ warfare could be the carrier here.

● The dragon, the beast and the false prophet

You will note when reading Revelation that both the 'beast' (commercial greed) and the 'false prophet' (false religion) are destroyed during the Armageddon period (Rev. 19:20), but the dragon (political ambition in this case), otherwise styled 'the devil' is only controlled (chained up, Rev.20:1-3) until his politically motivated* rebellion at the end of the kingdom age results in 'his' total destruction (see Rev.20:10).

*It could be that this final rebellion could be a call for the return of a 'people power' democracy which is completely opposed to God's ways ("it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps", Jer.10:23).