

## Cities of the Bible – Megiddo

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Megiddo is a city found in northern Israel that overlooks the Jezreel Valley, otherwise known as the Plain of Esdraelon or the *Valley of Megiddo* from its southern side.
  - A. Excavations have shown it to likely have been built in the early 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.
  - B. It was a city of importance far beyond its size because of its strategic location at the crossing of two important military and trade routes, resulting in it changing hand nationally many times.
2. As far as its Biblical significance is concerned:
  - A. The name of the city is mentioned 12 times in the O.T., many of which have historical significance for Israel.
  - B. Yet, its name is more widely known, or possibly the area around it, because it is referenced **once** in the book of Revelation as **Armageddon**, or **Har-Magedon**.
    - i. This reference gets many religious people both excited and involved in much speculation concerning its significance today.
    - ii. It is likely one of the most popular topics of the N.T. In fact, I Googled “Battle of Armageddon” and in less than a second returned 27.5 million hits.
3. But to better understand that reference it helps to have knowledge of this significant place of Bible history which requires that we look at what the Bible has to say about Megiddo.

### BODY:

#### **I. Old Testament History and Megiddo:**

##### A. Megiddo and the conquest of Canaan:

1. We first learn of Megiddo because Joshua defeated its king when entering the land (Josh. 12:7-8, 21 – “And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir (and Joshua gave their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, <sup>8</sup> in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the **Hittites**, the **Amorites**, the **Canaanites**, the **Perizzites**, the **Hivites**, and the **Jebusites**):... <sup>21</sup> the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one”).
2. This city was given to the Manasseh (Josh. 17:11 – “Also in Issachar and in Asher Manasseh had Beth-shean and its villages, and Ibleam and its villages, and the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of En-dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of Taanach and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages;...”).
3. Manasseh, like much of the rest of Israel, did not drive its inhabitants out as God commanded, showing a lack of faith in God.
  - a. Did not drive people out (Judges 1:27-28 – “Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. <sup>28</sup> When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not drive them out completely.”).
  - b. Lack of faith (Ex. 23:22, 27-28, 33 – “But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries... <sup>27</sup> I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. <sup>28</sup> And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the **Hivites**, the **Canaanites**, and the **Hittites** from before you... <sup>33</sup> They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”).
  - c. They did become a snare spiritually and physically.

##### B. Megiddo: A place of military victory

1. Barak and Deborah totally defeated Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin king of Canaan, in the **Jezreel Valley near Megiddo**.

- a. The song of Deborah and Barak speaks of this (Jdg. 5:19 – “The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan, at Taanach, **by the waters of Megiddo**; they got no spoils of silver.”).
  - b. This battle was no small matter, seeing God had allowed Jabin to **oppress sinful Israel for 20 years**.
    - i. God gave penitent Israel a complete victory (Jud. 4:16 – “And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; **not a man was left.**”).
    - ii. It was a most decisive victory, beginning an era of peace (Jud. 5:31 – “...And the land had rest for forty years.”).
  2. It was here that Gideon took 300 men and defeated the Midianites (Judges 7:1ff.).
  3. During Solomon’s reign Megiddo was subdued and occupied.
    - a. It was one of the cities designated by Solomon to provide food for his house (1 King 4:7, 12).
    - b. It was a city which Solomon built up by forced labor as a military center along with the Temple and his palace (1 Kings 9:15 – “And this is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon drafted to build the house of the Lord and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and **Megiddo** and Gezer”).
      - i. I bring this up because building up Megiddo was important, again, due to its strategic military and trade value.
- C. Megiddo was a place of **military defeat**
1. Josiah, king of Judah, died there by the hand of Pharaoh Neco.
    - a. Josiah was the greatest king of Judah (2 Kings 23:25 – “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.”).
      - i. Under his rule the Temple was repaired, the O.T. Law was found in the temple, he had it read aloud to the people, and made a covenant to obey the Lord with all his heart and soul in which the people joined him.
      - ii. He removed all the idolatrous items from the temple and burned them, defiled and broke down Judah’s high places, stopped the sacrificing of Judah’s children to Molech, destroyed the other places of idolatry with their altars, etc., that had been erected by the kings before him, put away the mediums, and restored the Passover.
      - iii. Josiah was a great spiritual deliverer and king.
    - b. Despite his dedication to the Lord and the great things he did, he died foolishly in the valley of Megiddo.
      - i. This happened when Pharaoh Neco of Egypt came to fight Assyria (2 Chron. 35:20-21 – “After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. <sup>21</sup> But he sent envoys to him, saying, “What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And **God** has commanded me to hurry. **Cease opposing God**, who is with me, lest he destroy you.”).
      - ii. Despite the warning **from God** given by Neco, Josiah did not listen and was killed (35:22-24 – “Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. **He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God**, but came to fight in the **plain of Megiddo**. <sup>23</sup> And the archers shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am badly wounded.” <sup>24</sup> So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he **died** and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. **All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.**”).
      - iii. **Lesson:** Though we might be seeking to do as God says and have, or believe we have, a good relationship with God, we cannot ignore God’s word without consequences.

2. It became a place of death for...
  - a. Saul and Jonathan, who fought their last battle with the Philistines and died on the eastern side of the plains of Megiddo (1 Samuel 31:1-6).
  - b. Ahaziah, king of Judah, who died as a result of Jehu's coup (2 Kings 9:27-28).
3. The **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** says that the Valley of Jezreel, or the valley of Megiddo, may have witnessed more bloody encounters than any area like it in the world.

## II. Old Testament prophecy and Megiddo

- A. The prophecy (Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1 – “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will **look on Me whom they have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an **only son**, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping **over a firstborn**.<sup>11</sup> In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the **mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo**...<sup>13:1</sup> “In that day a **fountain will be opened** for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **for sin and for impurity**.”).
- B. Israel would **look upon** and **mourn** God **whom they had pierced** (12:10-11).
  1. This change of heart would come about because God was still willing to pour out His grace upon Israel despite their stubbornness and rebellion. What an amazing God!
    - a. The people would look upon **Me whom they had pieced** and mourn as though weeping over an **only son, a firstborn**.
    - b. This, of course, had its ultimate fulfillment in **Jesus**, God's **only Son**, whom the Jews crucified (Jn. 19:36-37).
  2. Their mourning would be great, like that **done at Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo**.
    - a. Tradition says Hadadrimmon was a city near Megiddo, though its exact location is unknown.
    - b. Their **mourning** would be like that of Judah on the plain of Megiddo...when **king Josiah died**.
    - c. This connection is significant because Josiah's **greatness** was because he completely turned his heart to God and His Law for the purpose of **ridding the land of sin**, which we know to be the life and mission of **Jesus the Christ** as well.
- C. By God's **grace** in Israel piercing **Him**, the Son, a **fountain of forgiveness** was opened (13:1).
  1. We are recipients of that grace.
  2. But, we must be like those of Israel and mourn for our sin and it cost leading to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).

## III. Armageddon, or Har-Magedon (Rev. 16:16)

- A. The context involves the forces of Satan, which are the kings of the whole world, gathering to fight against God at Har-Magedon, or at the **Mountain of Megiddo** (Rev. 16:13-14, 16 – “And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.<sup>14</sup> For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to **the kings of the whole world**, to **assemble them for battle** on the great day of God the Almighty...<sup>16</sup> And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called **Armageddon**.”).
  1. This, again, is the source of much sensationalized speculation by modern day writers concerning a literal end-time battle of the world against Christ—the **battle of Armageddon!**
  2. It is believed that in this valley there will be a war where Christ and His people will **literally kill** their enemy with **physical weaponry** and afterwards a 1000-year earthly reign of Christ will follow with Christ sitting on His throne **in Jerusalem**.
- B. This theory is fraught with biblical problems and contradictions, but we cannot address them all.
  1. It contradicts the words of Jesus concerning His **kingdom** (John 18:36 – “Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”).

- a. Did Jesus not know that His true kingdom, according to this theory, is of this realm?
  - b. Did Jesus not know that His disciple would actually fight with earthly weapons to establish His kingdom?
2. It contradicts the Spirit-revealed knowledge of Christ's apostles (2 Cor. 10:3-5 – "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ").
- C. **Yet, from what we have seen, we can surely see that a reference to Megiddo is significant.**
1. This was **the** place of battle, the place of great victory and defeat, the place of great joy and sorrow.
  2. Those standing against God, whether it be the forces of Rome, the world, or the Jewish nation, or anyone else today who refuses to submit to the King of kings, **find themselves on the plains of Megiddo fighting a battle they cannot win.**
  3. On the other hand, those who will **mourn** for their **sin** and the **death of God's Son** as did the Jews for **Josiah on the plain of Megiddo**, there is a **fountain of forgiveness and life open** and flowing for them.

CONCLUSION:

1. The plain of Megiddo is a reality you must face—the spiritual battle for your soul.
2. The result of that battle will either be...
  - A. Eternal life and joy for your faithful service **in Christ**
  - B. Death and eternal sorrow for those who either by procrastination, negligence, or refusal **do not enter Christ.**
3. So, I encourage you to choose life, to face your plain of Megiddo, if you will, with Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and drink of the **fountain of grace and forgiveness**, and win eternal life!
4. Will you come to Christ in F-R-C-Bp? Of, if you have strayed from the Lord, will you return to Him in repentance, confession of your sin, and in prayerful seeking of God's grace to forgive you and restore you to Him?