The Middle East In Prophecy
Wednesday December 17, 2014
Part Four

Armageddon

Daniel 11:40-45 NLT

"Then at the time of the end, the king of the south will attack him, and the king of
the north will storm out against him with chariots, cavalry, and a vast navy. He will
invade various lands and sweep through them like a flood. [41] He will enter the
glorious land of Israel, and many nations will fall, but Moab, Edom, and the best
part of Ammon will escape. [42] He will conquer many countries, and Egypt will not
escape. [43] He will gain control over the gold, silver, and treasures of Egypt, and
the Libyans and Ethiopians will be his servants.

[44] "But then news from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set
out in great anger to destroy many as he goes. [45] He will halt between the glorious
holy mountain and the sea and will pitch his royal tents there, but while he is there,
his time will suddenly run out, and there will be no one to help him."

WARNING! You do not want to be on this earth when Antichrist makes his entrance!
We believe that coming is the first seal judgment of Rev. 6:1-2. As I watched, the
Lamb (Jesus Christ) broke the first of the seven seals on the scroll. Then one of the
four living beings (one of the four massive angel seraphim over God’s throne) called out
with a voice that sounded like thunder, "Come!" [2] I looked up and saw a white
horse. Its rider (Antichrist) carried a bow, and a crown was placed on his head. He
rode out to win many battles and gain the victory. This takes place following the
Rapture of the church (Remember that in Revelation 4 and 5, the 24 elders - representing
the redeemed of God) are already rejoicing and worshiping around God’s throne.

Antichrist will come on an alleged “peace platform” but he will institute a seven-year
reign of terror called the Tribulation that will make the French Revolution seem like a
company picnic. As one writer observed, “Armageddon is an unprecedented holocaust
that shall break upon the world to give this earth the greatest blood bath it has ever
known!”

Many of us can remember the famed “Battle of the Bulge,” the last-gasp effort of Hitler’s
Wehrmacht forces to cut the allied army in two in Belgium in December of 1944. He
failed, due to the heroics of our armed forces. In much the same way, ARMAGEDDON
will be Satan’s last-gasp effort to end Christ’s claims on this planet. Oh, my friend - you
do not want to be here when it happens, unless you are one of the resurrected and glorified
saints of God who come back to earth with Christ: Rev. 19:11-21 [The Message]:
A portion of the famed Jezreel Valley also known as the Valley of Armageddion. In the distance, Mount Tabor. Behind it, the Sea of Galilee. To the left, Nazareth.

Then I saw Heaven open wide—and oh! a white horse and its Rider. The Rider, named Faithful and True, judges and makes war in pure righteousness. [12] His eyes are a blaze of fire, on his head many crowns. He has a Name inscribed that's known only to himself. [13] He is dressed in a robe soaked with blood, and he is addressed as "Word of God." [14] The armies of Heaven, mounted on white horses and dressed in dazzling white linen, follow him. (This is us, who have been redeemed, and have just come from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, to see our blessed Lord conquer and institute His 1,000 year reign on earth.) [15] A sharp sword comes out of his mouth so he can subdue the nations, then rule them with a rod of iron. He treads the winepress of the raging wrath of God, the Sovereign-Strong. [16] On his robe and thigh is written, King of kings, Lord of lords.

[17] I saw an Angel standing in the sun, shouting to all flying birds in Middle-Heaven, "Come to the Great Supper of God! [18] Feast on the flesh of kings and captains and champions, horses and their riders. Eat your fill of them all—free
and slave, small and great!"

[19] I saw the Beast and, assembled with him, earth's kings and their armies, ready
to make war against the One on the horse and his army. [20] The Beast was taken,
and with him, his puppet, the False Prophet, who used signs to dazzle and deceive
those who had taken the mark of the Beast and worshiped his image. They were
thrown alive, those two, into Lake Fire and Brimstone. [21] The rest were killed by
the sword of the One on the horse, the sword that comes from his mouth. All the
birds held a feast on their flesh.

The Valley of Armageddon is only the epicenter of this quick and massive rout of the
forces of Satan and Antichrist. The battle will be a global one in which our Lord wins
with a mere Word from His mouth!

THE PLACE - THE VALLEY ITSELF

Prior to the last century, northern Israel (including the Galilee) had been denuded of trees
by the Turks. Those subjugated people were required to pay exorbitant taxes to the
Ottoman Empire - including taxes on trees. So - they cut them down. This made the
Galilee and the Jezreel Valley (Armageddon) a virtual swamp. When some Jews were
able to purchase the land, they worked diligently to drain the swamp, cutting canals and
planting Eucalyptus trees. Thus the area became some of the most fertile farmland in the
whole world. Today, Israel has so much food it exports much of it to other nations.

The Jezreel Valley got its name from the biblical city of Yizre’el that served as winter
home for such Jewish monarchs and Jezebel. The first Jewish settlements in our era
came about in the early 1800's. One of the very first kibbutzim, (communal farms),
Kibbutz Ein Harod was established there in the 1920's, right at the spring where Gideon
was required by God to cut his army from 32,000 to a mere 300 (Joshua 7). Today you
will find large cities and towns in the valley such as Afula and Beit Shean (where the
Philistines fastened King Saul’s headless body to the wall - I Samuel 31).

You will find well-known Old Testament stories that took place in this valley such as the
incident involving the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite (I Kings 21). The foundation of
Jezebel’s fatal tower is still to be found there.

This valley was vital in ancient times as it presented a viable route from the Mediterranean
Sea to the Jordan Valley and even south to Egypt. It was along this route mentioned in
Isaiah 9:1 as “the Way to the Sea,” or VIA MARIS that who ever controlled it controlled
traffic from Africa to Europe and Asia Minor (Turkey).
THE TIME

The Battle of Armageddon will be the final battle to take place among Gentile nations. It should be noted however that there will be a brief skirmish following the Millennium when God unleashes Satan from hell one final time: Rev. 20:7-10 
When the thousand years are up, Satan will be let loose from his cell, [8] and will launch again his old work of deceiving the nations, searching out victims in every nook and cranny of earth, even Gog and Magog! He'll talk them into going to war and will gather a huge army, millions strong. [9] They'll stream across the earth, surround and lay siege to the camp of God's holy people, the Beloved City (Jerusalem). They'll no sooner get there than fire will pour out of Heaven and burn them up. [10] The Devil who deceived them will be hurled into Lake Fire and Brimstone, joining the Beast and False Prophet, the three in torment around the clock for ages without end.

The Battle of Armageddon will take place immediately upon the second coming of Christ to earth. Do not mistake the second coming with the rapture; they are at least seven years apart, the rapture taking place first. Following the rapture, Antichrist will institute his one-world global empire; however, there are certain places and nations that will not concede his authority. The western nations will be led by a trinity from hell:
- Satan, the father
- Antichrist, the son
- The False Prophet, the unholy ghost

During time of one-world government from the western nations, there will be the establishment of a false world religious system. It is my opinion that this is the harlot church of Babylon - Islam. Radical Islam means to destroy not only Israel, but America as well. Read the Koran and you will be immediately aware that our former presidents have been wrong: Islam is NOT a religion of peace. If you are not aware of that, you have your head in the sand.

Don’t overlook the rising tide of rabid Buddhism. Our foreign missions department in Springfield, Mo., warn of the rising ferocity in Sri Lanka of Buddhists opposing followers of Christ with many now being murdered for simply doing what you are doing here tonight. Our missions executive director, Greg Mundis, warns that 100,000 believers in Jesus will be martyred next year - just as they were this year.

I also call to your attention a rising animosity concerning Jesus in the free world, including the United States. The warning of the Apostle John comes to mind: 1 John 4:1-4 [The Message]

My dear friends, don’t believe everything you hear. Carefully weigh and examine
what people tell you. Not everyone who talks about God comes from God. There are a lot of lying preachers loose in the world.

[2] Here's how you test for the genuine Spirit of God. Everyone who confesses openly his faith in Jesus Christ—the Son of God, who came as an actual flesh-and-blood person—comes from God and belongs to God. [3] And everyone who refuses to confess faith in Jesus has nothing in common with God. This is the spirit of antichrist that you heard was coming. Well, here it is, sooner than we thought!

[4] My dear children, you come from God and belong to God. You have already won a big victory over those false teachers, for the Spirit in you is far stronger than anything in the world.

THE ENEMY - ANTICHRIST

Rev. 13:1-10 [The Message]

And the Dragon stood on the shore of the sea.

I saw a Beast rising from the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads—on each horn a crown, and each head inscribed with a blasphemous name. [2] The Beast I saw looked like a leopard with bear paws and a lion's mouth. The Dragon turned over its power to it, its throne and great authority.

[3] One of the Beast's heads looked as if it had been struck a deathblow, and then healed. The whole earth was agog, gaping at the Beast. [4] They worshiped the Dragon who gave the Beast authority, and they worshiped the Beast, exclaiming, "There's never been anything like the Beast! No one would dare go to war with the Beast!"

[5] The Beast had a loud mouth, boastful and blasphemous. It could do anything it wanted for forty-two months. [6] It yelled blasphemies against God, blasphemed his Name, blasphemed his Church, especially those already dwelling with God in Heaven. [7] It was permitted to make war on God's holy people and conquer them. It held absolute sway over all tribes and peoples, tongues and races. [8] Everyone on earth whose name was not written from the world's foundation in the slaughtered Lamb's Book of Life will worship the Beast.

[9] Are you listening to this? [10] They've made their bed; now they must lie in it. Anyone marked for prison goes straight to prison; anyone pulling a sword goes down by the sword. Meanwhile, God's holy people passionately and faithfully stand their ground.

There is a double reference here in verses 1 and 2. The beast not only represents the one-world government, but also its leader, Antichrist. The sea represents the turbulence in the world. Antichrist is referred to as a "beast." Well-defined. He is as cruel as a vicious beast. "Anti" means "against." Everything Jesus represents, Antichrist defiles.
Verse 3 remarks that Antichrist has suffered a fatal wound, but he is brought back to power again (at least it looks that way) for Satan does not have life-giving power, only death-dealing ability. Verse 7 teaches that Antichrist will make war against the tribulation saints. He will also make vicious war against the Jews.

Being an ardent supporter of the Jews, the land of Israel, and being a Zionist, I would like to declare that it’s going to get better and better for them all; however, that would be only wishful thinking. During the Tribulation period of the seven years following the Rapture, Satan and his cohorts, Antichrist and the False Prophet, will unleash a time of unprecedented persecution against Israel and the Jews. It has always been Satan’s desire to exterminate the entire Jewish race, which would make your Bible of non-effect, would erase all credibility with God, and be a devastating “slap in the face” to the memory of Abraham and the covenant he had with the Creator. “...the plan of Satan is to exterminate every Jew. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming to reign on this earth over the seed of Abraham and the seed of Davidd. If Jesus Christ reigns, it is evident that Satan is no longer a world ruler. Satan’s purpose is to wipe out every Jew so there will be no kingdom people over whom Jesus Christ can reign. And if Christ has no Jewish nation over which He can reign, Satan could continue as the world ruler. To accomplish this, Satan will move nations against Israel and will bring organized military powers against the people of Israel to exterminate them through invasion. Through the Beast and the False Prophet, a summons goes forth to the kings of the earth to gather them to battle. Rev. 16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Prophecy For Today / D. D. Pentecost / Zondervan / p. 116)

Here is how bad it’s going to be for Israel: Rev. 12:13-17 [The Message] When the Dragon (Satan) saw he’d been thrown to earth (following his aborted effort to revolt against God), he went after the Woman (Israel) who had given birth to the Man-Child (Jesus). [14] The Woman was given wings of a great eagle to fly to a place in the desert (perhaps neighboring Jordan - Seir - Petra) to be kept in safety and comfort for a time and times and half a time (3 ½ years), safe and sound from the Serpent. [15] The Serpent vomited a river of water to swamp and drown her (supernatural oppression), [16] but earth came to her help, swallowing the water the Dragon spewed from its mouth. [17] Helpless with rage, the Dragon raged at the Woman, then went off to make war with the rest of her children (tribulation saints), the children who keep God’s commands and hold firm to the witness of Jesus.

THE EXTENT OF THE BATTLEFIELD

Rev. 14:15-20 [The Message]
Another Angel came out of the Temple, shouting to the Cloud-Enthroned, "Swing your sickle and reap. It's harvest time. Earth's harvest is ripe for reaping." [16] The Cloud-Enthroned gave a mighty sweep of his sickle, began harvesting earth in a stroke.

[17] Then another Angel came out of the Temple in Heaven. He also had a sharp sickle. [18] Yet another Angel, the one in charge of tending the fire, came from the Altar. He thundered to the Angel who held the sharp sickle, "Swing your sharp sickle. Harvest earth's vineyard. The grapes are bursting with ripeness."

[19] The Angel swung his sickle, harvested earth's vintage, and heaved it into the winepress, the giant winepress of [God's wrath]. [20] The winepress was outside the City. As the vintage was trodden, blood poured from the winepress as high as a horse's bridle, a river of blood for two hundred miles. (200 miles is about the length of present-day Israel.)

Note carefully the boxed words in verse 19: “God’s wrath.” There is little question that there is vicious persecution of followers of Christ today. I have heard such figures as “100,000 persons martyred for Jesus just last year.” But that is MAN’S WRATH. God’s fury will be something else entirely. The first four “seal judgments” of Revelation 6 kill hundreds of millions of people left behind following the Rapture.

THE FORCES COMING AGAINST ISRAEL AT ARMAGEDDON

Following the Rapture, there will be an even sharper delineation of nations hostile to each other:

1. The West – which would include Europe and the United States - led by Antichrist himself.
2. The Forces of the North, which we are seeing once again are led by Russia. I believe the Arab states will link arms with the Russian bear. Egypt could remain a force unto itself, as recent events there are suggesting.
3. The East - those several billion people in Japan, China, India, Pakistan, etc.

Let’s begin with the actions of Antichrist: Daniel 11:36-37 (New Living Bible)

"The king (Antichrist) will do as he pleases, exalting himself and claiming to be greater than every god there is, even blasphemy the God of gods. He will succeed—until the time of wrath (the tribulation) is completed. For what has been determined will surely take place. [37] He will have no regard for the gods of his ancestors, or for the god beloved of women, or for any other god, for he will boast that he is greater than them all.”
Sadly, even Israel will have succumbed to the wiles of Antichrist. We learn in Revelation 6 (first seal) that he rises to power in the west by his “peace platform.” He has promised to protect the Jews and their rights to “the land” of Israel. Israel’s response to such an overture is easy to understand when one considers the incredible cost the Jews there shoulder of maintaining security and peace. Antichrist will double-cross Israel midway through the Tribulation and rather than being the friend of the Jews, he will be revealed as their worst nightmare.

Daniel 11:36-39

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For several years, Antichrist does pretty much what he chooses, and then his troubles begin: Daniel 11:40  "Then at the time of the end, the king of the south (Egypt) will attack him (Antichrist), and the king of the north (Russia) will storm out against him with chariots, cavalry, and a vast navy. He will invade various lands and sweep through them like a flood."

Egypt is a puzzle to many of us who study the Middle East. Under their President Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated by militants in 1981 for his peace overtures to Israel, even daring to visit Jerusalem when Golda Meir was Prime Minister there, Egypt forged a peace with Israel, that though tentative, remains in effect even now. But sometime late in the Tribulation period, Egypt will flex its muscles and spark the event that will bring Armageddon into existence. So already we have three major powers at each others throats:

- Antichrist (with Europe and Israel, and probably the United States)
- The King of the South - Egypt
- Russia and its cohorts

As we have seen in Daniel’s writings, the campaign of Armageddon will be initiated when the king of the South, Egypt, pushes against Jerusalem (headed by Antichrist and joined to the western Europe nations). This is why we read earlier that Jews will evacuate the Holy
Land and flee into the desert places. This will be a devastation in Israel, including Jerusalem. Antichrist will overcome the King of the South and feel that all is now well within his satanic empire. But then: Daniel 11:44 "But then news from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in great anger to destroy many as he goes." What is the "bad news?" Rev. 9:14-16 (New Living) And the voice spoke to the sixth angel who held the trumpet: "Release the four angels who are bound at the great Euphrates River." [15] And the four angels who had been prepared for this hour and day and month and year were turned loose to kill one-third of all the people on earth. [16] They led an army of 200 million mounted troops—I heard an announcement of how many there were. Can you even imagine it? 200 million strong - the greatest military force the world has ever known - are headed for the Middle East, Israel, and Antichrist’s forces. Here is how Zechariah foresaw the event: Zech. 12:2-3 I will make Jerusalem and Judah like an intoxicating drink to all the nearby nations that send their armies to besiege Jerusalem. [3] On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone, a burden for the world. None of the nations who try to lift it will escape unscathed. And Zech. 14:1-3 Watch, for the day of the Lord is coming when your possessions will be plundered right in front of you! [2] On that day I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses plundered, and the women raped. Half the population will be taken away into captivity, and half will be left among the ruins of the city. [3] Then the Lord will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past.

YET ANOTHER INVASION AT ARMAGEDDON!

This invasion, if you will, is from outer space! Jesus returns - this is the glorious second coming! Down below are the forces of Antichrist and the eastern nations - hundreds of millions strong, fighting to the finish for world supremacy. They are not aware of this new force coming down from above. Rev. 19:11-21

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. [12] 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. [13] And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. [15] 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. [16] And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

[17] 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; [18] 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.
[19] 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. [20]
And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles
before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast,
and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire
burning with brimstone. [21] And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that
sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were
filled with their flesh.

The redeemed of God, earlier raptured, checked for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ
(I Cor 3) and guests at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, now return in our glorified
bodies with our Lord. With a spoken word, Jesus defeats the amalgamated forces below.
King David, who gave us some powerful prophecies, issued this one: Psalm 2:1-12
Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? [2] The kings of the
earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and
against his anointed, saying, [3] Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away
their cords from us. [4] He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have
them in derision. [5] Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his
sore displeasure. [6] Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. [7] I will
declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I
begotten thee. [8] Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. [9] Thou shalt break them
with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. [10] Be wise
now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. [11] Serve the Lord
with fear, and rejoice with trembling. [12] Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye
perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that
put their trust in him.

And with that - so quickly accomplished - Jesus begins His 1,000 year reign on this earth,
the time we call THE MILLENNIUM.

The Millennium will be the subject when next we meet, Wednesday, January 7, 2015.
Next week: Christmas Eve services at 4 and 6 p.m. In two weeks, the New Year’s
Eve service at 7 and watchnight service at 11:30.