

# ARMAGEDDON

## A Place—AND an Event<sup>1</sup> by Charles E. Herzog

The Bible mentions the word *Armageddon* in only one verse: “*And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon*” ([Rev. 16:16](#)). Though the New Testament was written in Greek, this is not a Greek word. It comes from two Hebrew words—“*har*” and “*megiddo*.” The word “*har*” means a mountain or range of hills (sometimes used figuratively)—hill country.

*Megiddo*, or Megiddon, was one of the royal cities of the Canaanites until Joshua captured it. Afterwards, it was given to the Manassites. It is located on the southern edge of the great plain of Issachar (also known as the Plain of Esdraelon and Valley of Jezreel). It was a fortified city that guarded the strategic passes of the Mt. Carmel area.

The Bible says that Armageddon is a *place*, but we believe it is also an *event*<sup>1</sup>. It is not a battlefield, but a gathering place.

The site is within the borders of the modern state of Israel, about 55 to 60 miles north and east of Jerusalem and about 20 miles east of the port city of Haifa. Today, it is nothing more than a 13-acre pile of historic rubble. In ancient times, this area was part of a main highway between Africa and Asia. It provided a natural gathering place due to the flatness of the surrounding topography. Archaeology shows evidence of frequent, extremely heavy defense facilities there.

1. Point of disagreement: Modification added by Roy A. Cloudt to Charles E. Herzog’s text, which read “*NOT an event*”.

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### A Place—AND an Event<sup>1</sup> (Continued, Charles E. Herzog)

Megiddo is a famous setting for several great slaughters throughout history and is first mentioned as one of the Canaanite cities conquered by Joshua ([Josh. 12:21](#)) in the early 1400s B.C. When Deborah was judging Israel, she ordered Barak into battle against the Canaanites led by Sisera in this area ([Judges 4](#) and [5](#)). The entire army of Sisera was destroyed—every last soldier.

The famous story of Gideon and his defeat of the Midianites may also have taken place at Armageddon (See [Judges 6:33](#), where the valley of Jezreel is mentioned). Chapter 7 details how God reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300 and yet still defeated their enemy.

King Solomon turned the city into a fortified camp that housed several hundred horses for his fleet of chariots ([I Kings 9:15-19](#)). The remains of the foundation of Solomon's enormous stable are still visible today. When Jehu, king of Israel, wounded Judah's King Ahaziah in battle, Ahaziah fled to Megiddo, and died there ([II Kings 9:27](#)).

The Egyptian king, Pharaoh-nechoh, came to the aid of the Assyrians and defeated the Israelites led by Josiah ([II Kgs. 23:29-30; II Chron. 35:20-25](#)).

This valley has seen military battles in modern times, as well. On September 19, 1918, British General Allenby won a decisive battle there, defeating the Turks. Because Megiddo is identified as a place of decisive conflicts, and because more battles have been fought there than at any other place in the world, it has become emblematic of any decisive battlefield—as much as Waterloo, Gettysburg or Normandy.