

## The Kingdom of God - What will it be Like? - 17

At his second coming Jesus, setting up his power in Jerusalem, and manifesting his astonishing power, will be seen by the nations to fulfil their expectations of a latter day Antichrist. They will be unaware that they have been misled by the actual Antichrist into accepting that “strong delusion, that they should believe the lie” - 2 Thessalonians 2:11, and so lastly, “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them...” - Revelation 17:14.

The first invasion which will have been already overcome by Jesus was predicted in Zechariah 14:2 “I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity...” This will have been followed by the second, more massive invasion, which will be destroyed while still en route - “You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you...5 you shall fall on the open field” - Ezekiel 39:4.

But the final and greatest invasion against Christ’s kingdom is described in Revelation 16:14 where the influences which are there spoken of “go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”

After the destruction of the Jewish state by the Romans in AD 70, there was no territory where Hebrew was the language of the people. But in the last century Hebrew was resurrected into the official language of the re-established State of Israel. So a “place called in Hebrew” refers to a location in the Holy Land. Like the term “Nicolaitan”, Armageddon is a divinely compounded word made up of the Hebrew words arema = a heap of sheaves, gai = valley, and dan = judgement - all together the name means “a heap of sheaves in a valley of judgement”.

An Old Testament prophecy of this same final battle is in Joel 3:9 “Proclaim this among the nations: ‘Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. 10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’ 11 Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. 12 Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.”

The exact geophysical location required for an event of this magnitude is of minor importance in the face of its name, the Valley of Jehoshaphat = judgement. In v.14 it is called “the valley of decision...” when 15 “The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness” - figures for the fall of civil and religious governments. At Armageddon, Christ’s brethren have already passed through their judgement day, “and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” - 1 Peter 4:17.

Joel includes more figurative language, “Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow -- for their wickedness is great” - v.13. This very imagery is picked up and expanded upon in Revelation 14. Here, the harvest of the earth is the first of two separate events, followed by the vintage of the earth. After the harvest, “So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again” - Joel 3:17.