

Insight on the News

Threat of "Apocalypse"

According to the nuclear-winter theory, if bombs equivalent to 5,000 million tons of TNT were detonated in a nuclear war, the resulting smoke and soot—particularly from large cities—would plunge the northern hemisphere into months of darkness and freezing, life-threatening weather. "If the analysis is correct," states Nobel laureate Herbert A. Simon in the magazine *Science*, "then no nation can make a major nuclear attack even against an unarmed opponent without committing suicide."

Many experts feel that if this theory is verified, it will be a great incentive for nuclear disarmament. "Recognition of the nuclear-winter problem, awful as it is, seems a piece of immense good fortune at the eleventh hour," writes Thomas Powers in *The Atlantic*. But would this end the arms race? Hardly. Powers maintains that the superpowers would be compelled to construct "a whole new generation of weaponry" with "a much larger number of much smaller, extremely accurate weapons that would allow targets in cities to be destroyed without burning down the cities around them." He concludes that the nuclear-winter problem "does not end the possibility of a big war . . . , but it does push planners in a new direction, away from apocalypse."

Rather than offering hope, the threat of nuclear winter simply raises new fears. Would the superpowers not be *more* likely to deploy "suicide-proof" weapons to settle their confrontations? In

desperation, might not warring nations still use nuclear weapons at the risk of suicide to avoid defeat? The selfish military strategies that nations employ provide yet another reason for Almighty God to bring about *his* war of Har-Magedon. This he will do soon, and his Word assures us that "there is no king saved by the abundance of military forces." —Psalm 33:16; Revelation 16:14, 16.

Armageddon —What Is It?

In a televised debate, U.S. President Ronald Reagan said that no one knows whether Bible prophecies mean "that Armageddon is a thousand years away or day after tomorrow." But summing up some of Reagan's statements, Andrew Lang, research director of the Christic Institute, an ecumenical public-policy center, says: "What we have are a series of repetitions that Armageddon may happen in our generation, that Armageddon may happen in the Middle East and that Armageddon may involve Soviet forces."

The Bible indicates that "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" will be gathered to Armageddon for destruction, though a "great crowd" in God's favor will survive. (Revelation 7:14, 15; 16:14, 16; 19:19-21) Armageddon (Hebrew, "Har-Magedon," meaning, "Mountain of Megiddo") is not an actual site in the Middle East. Nor could the armies of the nations squeeze into the area surrounding Megiddo, an ancient Biblical city. Armageddon is, therefore, a situation, that is, the world's assembling or lining up in

opposition to Jehovah God. This situation will follow the "sign," which we are presently witnessing. *Armageddon will occur in our generation.*—Matthew 24:3-15, 21, 34.

Teenage Childbearing

"There is a strong tendency among those of us who are alarmed at the rise in pregnancy and child-bearing among black teen-agers to try to solve the problem by focusing on the pragmatic side of it," writes black columnist William Raspberry. What does he mean? Teenage girls are told not to have babies "because it interrupts their education, preempts their career prospects and damages their life chances. Their babies are likely to be of low birth weights and subject to learning disabilities." But, says Raspberry, "what fascinates and dismays me is how seldom the question of morality enters any of these discussions."

Indeed, teenagers need to be taught that promiscuity, which often results in pregnancy, violates the Bible's moral laws. (Galatians 5:19-23) They should also be taught principles in God's Word that deal with marriage and child rearing. The apostle Paul indicates that Christians should cultivate self-control and wait until they are "past the bloom of youth," when sexual desires first bloom, or become strong, before they get married. (1 Corinthians 7:8, 9, 36) Modern-day studies, which indicate that mature people make the best parents, confirm these moral laws and principles.

curring in some part of the world every day," notes one Bible commentary. How could this be when the Bible promises that Armageddon will bring swift doom for all evil nations and people? Christ, as God's anointed King at Armageddon, "will break them with an iron scepter, as though a potter's vessel [he] will dash them to pieces."—Psalm 2:9; see also Proverbs 2: 21, 22; Revelation 19:11-21.

Not a World Economic Collapse

The world's most powerful governments fear that a Third World default on debt would propel the global economic situation into what *Business Life* magazine calls an "Economic Armageddon." A collapse of the world's banking institutions would truly be tragic, but it would not be Armageddon. The Bible Armageddon is a worldwide situation involving war, not economics. The prophet Jeremiah describes it in these graphic terms: "There is a controversy that Jehovah has with the nations. He must personally put himself in judgment with all flesh. As regards the wicked

ones, he must give them to the sword." —Jeremiah 25:31.

Not a War in the Middle East

"Somewhere in time, the last conflagration will take place in the Middle East," preaches world-renowned evangelist Billy Graham. On this matter, he echoes the views of many of his religious colleagues. Graham also believes that Armageddon can be delayed. "I think that the world is heading right now toward Armageddon," he says, "and that unless there is a spiritual awakening and we turn to God, the world may face its Armageddon in this decade."

The region of Megiddo could not begin to hold all "the kings of the earth and their armies." (Revelation 19:19) Therefore, would this not rule out any fundamentalist teaching that Armageddon will be a world war squeezed into the literal plain of Megiddo? The prophet Jeremiah indicates that Armageddon will encompass "the remotest parts of the earth" and that the casualties will be seen "from one

What Is Armageddon?

Armageddon IS NOT . . .

- ♦ a geographic location
- ♦ a battle between nations
- ♦ a nuclear holocaust
- ♦ a global economic collapse
- ♦ a struggle between good and evil
- ♦ a Middle Eastern conflict

Armageddon IS . . .

- ♦ the worldwide situation where all earthly nations will battle against God's Son, Christ Jesus, and his angelic army in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty"

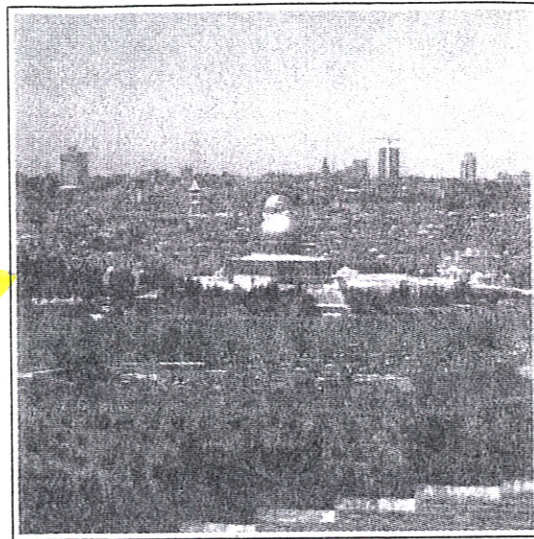
Jenski shows that here the word "until" does *not necessarily* imply some later conversion. (Compare the use of "until" at Acts 7:17, 18 and Revelation 2:25.) Paul is actually saying that the natural Jews' sensibilities would *remain* 'dull' right down to the end. God, however, wisely completes "the full number" of spiritual Israel (144,000) by bringing believing Gentiles into the Christian congregation. "And in *this manner* [not by the Jewish nation's change of heart] all [spiritual] Israel will be saved."

Possessing the Promised Land —"For Ever"?

What, though, about the land on which the State of Israel is situated? Does God have some sort of special interest in it? Many, such as Protestant theologian William Hurst, think so. Said Hurst: "No parcel of land on the face of the earth has been more sought after or more constantly in the attention of the society of nations than has the land of the Jew." Quoting Genesis 13:14, 15, he reminds us that God promised that he would give this land to Abraham's seed "for ever."—*King James Version*.

Is Jehovah God thus obliged to protect the land of Israel from invasion? If so, a Middle Eastern "Armageddon" could be imminent. Nevertheless, God merely told Abraham that his offspring would occupy this land, not *forever*, but for an "indefinite" period of time.* (Genesis 13:14, 15) By rejecting Jesus Christ, they

* Although the Hebrew word *'oh-lam* is rendered by some as "forever," according to Hebrew authority William Gesenius, it means "hidden time, i. e. obscure and long, of which the beginning or end is uncertain or indefinite." *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament* adds: "With the preposition 'ad, the word can mean 'into the indefinite future.'"—Compare Deuteronomy 23:3; 1 Samuel 1:22.



Is Jerusalem the key to the events leading to Armageddon?

lost all claim to this land—and God's protection.

Armageddon—Where?

At Revelation 16:14, 16 the Bible shows that demon-inspired propaganda will lead the world's leaders "to the war of the great day of God the Almighty." It adds: "And they gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon." Does *this* not indicate a final war in the Middle East? No, for no geographic location called "Har-Magedon" (literally, "Mountain of Megiddo") actually exists. In Bible times, there was a Middle Eastern city called Megiddo. It was located in the plain shown on the cover of this issue. Near Megiddo many significant battles took place. But there was, and is, no mountain there. "Har-Magedon," or "Armageddon," must therefore be a *symbolic* location. Symbolic of what?

Ezekiel's prophecy shows that Armageddon is precipitated by the attack of a mul-