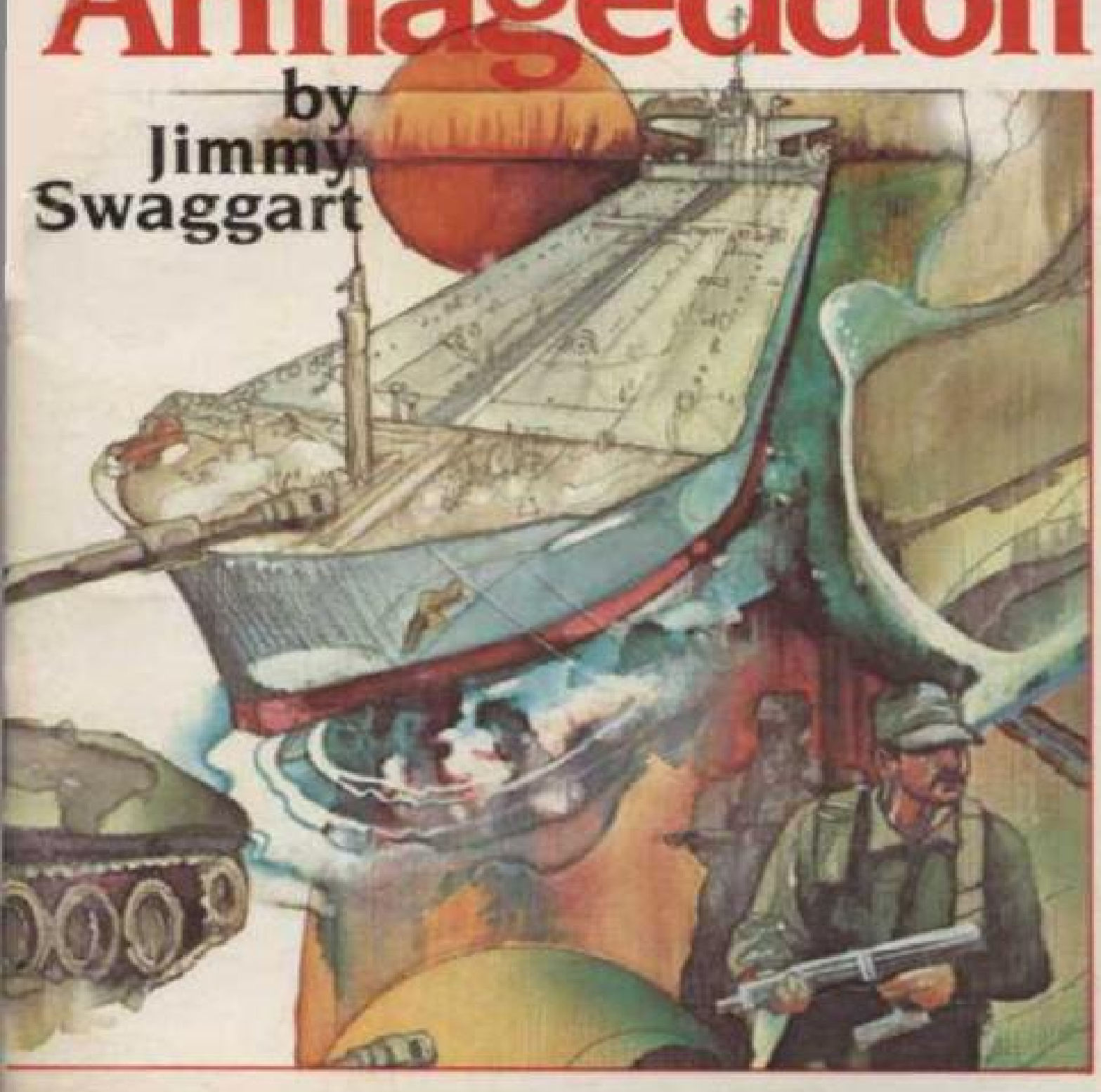
The Battle of Armageddon

by Jimmy Swaggart



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"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:12-16).

MEGIDDO

The other day I had the opportunity to stand amid the ruins of the ancient city of Megiddo.

This ancient city is located six miles southwest of Mount Carmel. It was the capital of the portion of Canaan given to Joshua, as described in Joshua 12:21, 17:11, and Judges 1:27. Its position dominates the entrance to a pass crossing the Carmel Mountain range on the route between Asia and Africa. It is the keystone of the area encompassed by the Euphrates and Nile rivers, and has been the scene of many battles through the ages. Thothmes III, founder of an ancient dynasty, said, "Megiddo is worth a thousand cities."

As I stood gazing over the beautiful valley of Jehoshaphat (Megiddo), I realized that it must be one of the most beautiful sights in the world. Crops grow there year round, and it stretches almost as far as the eye can see. As I stood there amid its ancient ruins, I was overwhelmed by a sense of peace, serenity, and heavenly calm.

At the same time, however, I realized that the very heavens above me would, in the near future, be ripped asunder by the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I realized that every saint of God who has ever lived —from the time of Adam until this very moment—will come back with the Lord Jesus Christ. I realized that this peaceful valley, spread out before me like a beautiful painting, will soon be filled with tanks and screaming jets, as the mightiest army ever known to the world (and under the direction of

the Antichrist) invades to create the great prophetic Battle of Armageddon. This is where it will all take place.

The name "Armageddon" is becoming more and more prominent in newscasts and in the fast-paced order of events of this day. The late General Douglas MacArthur said that the next great conflict might well prove to be Armageddon. He meant, of course, the word "Armageddon" as a figure of speech, a metaphor. He was implying that modern weaponry had reached such a destructive level that it could very well spell the end of the human race—if total war were to lead to *use* of the ultimate weapons now at our disposal.

Just what will actually happen *at* Armageddon? What will precede and signal this terrible struggle? *When* will it happen? Let's look at the order of events leading up to this greatest conflict the world has ever known. The Bible lays it all out for us in chronological order.

1. RAPTURE

The rapture will be the most earth-shaking event in the history of the world. It could take place at any moment (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). There are no Scriptures yet to be fulfilled before *this* awesome event, but there are a *number* of Scriptures to be fulfilled before the Lord's Second Coming. Paul told us about the rapture in I Thessalonians 4:16. It will attract the world's attention as nothing else could. The instantaneous disappearance of multiplied millions of people—from every nation on the face of the earth—will capture headlines as no other event in history.

2. GREAT TRIBULATION

At this point the world will be plunged into the Great Tribulation period. Jesus called it,

"... great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

If we pause to review history and think of Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and all the other despots of the ages, it's hard to comprehend that coming events are going to be worse. But worse they *shall* be. The words of our very Lord confirm this, so we can be sure that this will be a horrible period indeed. *During* the tribulation period the Antichrist will make his public debut and try for world domination. And then will come:

3. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Let's look at the principal cast of characters in this scenario as the Bible outlines them for us.

The Antichrist. The person popularly and commonly referred to as "the Antichrist" by Christians is called by *various* names throughout the Word of God. He is called the Beast, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, the Little Horn, and the Antichrist.

The Antichrist will be a man, not some reincarnated individual who has lived in the past (such as Judas, Attila the Hun, Adolf Hitler, or various other personalities dredged up from profane history). He will be a man who becomes famous and powerful, with one desire before him—total domination of the world. The Antichrist will not succeed in his effort; he will be stopped short of his goal.

The Bible tells us in Daniel 8:25, "... *he* (the Antichrist) *shall also stand up against the Prince of princes* ...." This, of course, refers to our Lord, Jesus Christ. *"But,"* we are assured, *"he* (the Antichrist) *shall be broken without hand."* He emphatically will *not* succeed in his efforts to dominate the world. He will conquer many nations—and overrun many empires—but *some* will escape (Daniel 11:41).

Of course, the question must be asked, "Will the United States be overrun by the Antichrist, and will it *oppose* him?" It is impossible to answer these questions specifically because the Bible does not address them directly.

As we have mentioned previously, the Bible is a Jewish book. It would seem that, basically, God addresses other nations only as they relate to Israel. We would go a step further and say that He seems to relate to other nations only when Israel is being severely punished. Naturally, the United States of America is very much intertwined with Israel today, and Israel's position is very weak. However, even though the danger is very real, it is more of a threatening nature than anything else. So, it would seem that due to Israel's relative safety today, even though she is in an unstable position, that God did not see fit in His Word to relate to this specific time in Israel's history.

So, the United States is not actually mentioned in Bible prophecy. I realize that many contend that the Antichrist will control the entire world, but the Bible does not say this. It *limits* his kingdom, basically, to the area of the old Roman Empire.

We are told in Daniel 7:7 that the great Roman Empire will rise again. It is described as a beast, dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong. In the latter portion of the 7th verse it states, *"and it had ten horns."* It uses the term "little horn" in the middle of the 8th verse. This refers to the Antichrist.

Daniel then goes on to tell how the Antichrist will *defeat* three of the nations comprising the revived Roman Empire, while the other seven will actually *give* their kingdoms to him (Daniel 7:8, Revelation 17:12-14). This will be the basis for his empire until he starts to expand by military means, perhaps defeating even such powers as Soviet Russia, China, and Japan in the process.

Daniel 7:24 refers to "the ten horns." Most Bible scholars see these as the ten nations arising as the restored (or revised) Roman Empire. These would logically include the area encompassed by the *old*

Roman Empire and would today include Poland, Czechoslovakia, parts of Germany, Libya, Italy, and other parts of Europe, plus parts of the Middle East.

It then goes on to speak (in the latter part of the 24th verse and the 25th verse) of the Antichrist arising out of these kingdoms. In other words, he will come from somewhere within this area. He definitely will *not* come from the United States, he will not come from the Soviet Union, nor will he come from China or any of the eastern nations.

In Daniel 8 we are given a more specific indication of his origin. In the 9th verse it says, *"And out of one of them came forth a little horn."* The "one of them" refers to the four kingdoms that developed from Alexander the Great's empire.

Following this it says, in Daniel 11:40, *"and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind."* The north is Syria.

In the 41st verse the Antichrist is *"entering into the glorious land,"* which is Israel. So we know from all this that the king of the north is Syria, and we can conclude that the Antichrist will come from Syria. You must understand, however, that the Syria referred to here is not precisely the Syria we know today. The present-day Syria is much smaller than it was when Daniel wrote these words (under the anointing of the Holy Spirit). Syria then embraced not only present-day Syria, but also parts of what are now Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. So, the Antichrist could come from anywhere

in this area and still fulfill Bible prophecy concerning the king of the north (Syria).

ISRAEL

Next, let's look at the cast of characters who will perform in this grand scenario *composed by God* for the last days. When you mention Israel, you are talking about God's chosen people. These strange people have played a major part in influencing the course of world history.

They sprang from the loins of Abraham. The Mosaic law was delivered to them as the foundation of *all* law on the face of the earth today. Through them came the Branch, the Vine, the Son of David, the Messiah—the Lord Jesus Christ—and yet they rejected Him. This wonderful, strange, *glorious* people—after their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ—saw their city of Jerusalem utterly destroyed by the Roman armies of Titus in 70 A.D. At this point in history they were scattered over the face of the earth—exactly as Daniel said they would be. In the 9th chapter he stated that the Messiah would come and be cut off (verse 26). Then he spoke of the Romans who would come and destroy the city and the sanctuary—which they did in 70 A.D.

There's one thing that must be remembered about the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation—they are composed of a basically Jewish cast of characters. Most everything pertains to the Jews; most everything pertains to Israel. God's dealings with the human race are always influenced by *how they affect Israel.*

The entirety of the book of Revelation will *influence* the whole earth, but it basically has two primary purposes: *One,* for God to pour out His judgment on a world that has forgotten Him days without number; and, *two,* to bring His chosen people, the Jews, back to Him.

The Jews have strayed and wandered for many long years. The Master Himself said

"Oh ... thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

He then went on to say,

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:37-38).

The Jews utterly rejected God until there was nothing left. And they have suffered for their apostasy; oh, how they have suffered! Names like Dachau, Buchenwald, Treblinka, and Auschwitz stand as monuments of

shame to a world gone mad under Hitler as some six million Jews were slaughtered during the holocaust. And the awful words of the Jews ring down through the centuries as we hear them saying,

"... His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25).

Oh, how those very words have come to pass. This is a people who would long ago have been totally exterminated were it not for the awesome power of God—which has somehow kept them over the centuries. But they are coming home. There are going to be dark days ahead, but *they are coming home.*

God told Daniel (in the 14th verse of the 10th chapter), *"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days ...."* In the 1st verse of the 12th chapter we are told, "... *and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."* This speaks of Israel. This speaks of the horror coming during the tribulation period when the Antichrist will make his great effort to destroy the nation of Israel.

The sad thing is that the Master prophesied that Israel would not accept *Him* as their Messiah—but another they would receive (St. John 5:43). "Another" is the Antichrist. At the beginning of the approaching Great Tribulation period, Israel with all her problems (surrounded by the Arab world) will find *her* saviour—the Antichrist!

He will somehow convince Israel that *he* is their source of peace. *He* will be the one to appease the Arabs. The Bible says (in the 27th verse of the 9th chapter of Daniel) that "... *he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week ...."* This particular *week* means a week of *years*, or seven years.

At the beginning of this period he will somehow manage to work out an agreement with the Arabs and with Israel so they can rebuild their temple on the site where the Dome of the Rock now stands.

Precisely *how* he will do this, no one knows, but *somehow* it will be worked out and Israel will rebuild her temple. They will thus hail the Antichrist as the greatest benefactor the world has ever known, and many will actually believe he is the Messiah —the Prince of Peace.

The Antichrist will do many amazing things, and tremendous feats will be accomplished. Daniel 11:36 says that,

"the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished .... "

The Antichrist will worship the god of war, as is pointed out in verse 38. And then in the middle of the Great Tribulation week (in about three and one-half years) he will break his covenant, stop the sacrifice in the temple, and set up a statue of *himself*—thus causing the temple to be profaned (or an abomination, Daniel 9:27). He will then seek to completely destroy Israel, and this is when they will flee the city and seek to escape by going into the wilderness. Some think the ancient city/fortress of Petra will be their place of refuge during this period.

THE ACTUAL BATTLE

Now the stage is beginning to be set for the greatest battle ever fought in all the history of warfare. This will be a battle so unprecedented that it will change the course of history forever.

The Antichrist will by now have moved his headquarters from Babylon to

Jerusalem. He will desecrate the temple and break his covenant with the Jews. His desire at this point is to *annihilate* Israel, which will be his "final solution." He hates them with an irrational hatred inspired by the evil one himself, Satan. But the Bible tells us (in Daniel 11:44),

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many."

Concerning the king of the north and Soviet Russia, we might insert here that many Bible students feel that the king of the north (of Daniel 11:40) is Soviet Russia. But you must remember that in the 44th verse above we read, *"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him…"*

Of course, the "him" spoken of here is the king of the north. We must remember that there is *nothing* north of Soviet Russia. Russia is the northernmost country in the world. So the king of the north (as represented in verse 40) could *not* be the Soviet Union. Actually, it is the Antichrist, out of the heart of the old Alexandrian empire (known then as Syria but which today encompasses Syria, parts of Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran).

After the Antichrist has conquered all of the countries of the old Roman Empire, the armies of Russia—allied with Japan, China, and

perhaps India (the north and the east) —will trouble him. In other words, they will see him accomplishing his goal of conquering the world, and they will amass together to stop him. Of course, they won't be able to *do* this, because as he marches against them he will (with great fury) destroy them and take over their countries and their armies himself. After he has defeated these armies, they will join forces under him and march against Israel—as is recorded in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39—for what is referred to as the Battle of Armageddon.

The Antichrist is referred to as Gog in the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, verse 2. We know this is a man, and "Gog" is actually a title given to the Antichrist. We are assured he is an individual because he is called a "chief prince" and personal pronouns are used in referring to him. He is the leader of a great army that will fight at Armageddon. He is the little horn of Daniel 7:8. He is also called the king of the north in Daniel 11; the man of sin, the son of perdition, and "that wicked" in II Thessalonians 2. He is called the Assyrian in Micah, chapter 5; the Antichrist in I John 2; and the beast in Revelation 13. All these Scriptures speak of a man who will come in the last days and who will make an *almost* successful bid for world domination —while simultaneously trying to annihilate Israel. He will be called Gog. And God said (in Ezekiel 38:3)

"... Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal."

The Antichrist will gather his armies together. They will be comprised of people from many nations, including Russia, Germany, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, and perhaps Japan, China, and India. Then the 9th verse of Ezekiel 38 says,

"Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land" (of Israel).

ARMAGEDDON WILL NOT BE A BATTLE BETWEEN NATIONS

Many people have a misconception concerning the Battle of Armageddon. This will *not* be a battle, or a series of battles, between two sets of *earthly* opponents. It will be a battle between Christ and His heavenly armies, with earthly Israel on one side and Satan and his angels and demons (and earthly armies under the Antichrist) on the other side. The Antichrist will be obsessed with the desire to conquer the entire earth, *and* to destroy Israel.

Of course, the question begs to be asked, "Will the United States help Israel in that day?" There's no way to tell. The Bible doesn't say. There is some indication that no nation will help Israel (Zechariah 14:14-15). Of course it is *possible* that the United States will help Israel and perhaps other nations of the world, but we cannot *know* this, as the Bible does not address this point.

These will be the results of this battle:

1. The Antichrist will experience total defeat and five-sixths of his great army will be destroyed (Ezekiel 39:2).
2. The fowls of the air will eat of the carcasses of these armies for some seven months (Ezekiel 39:4-24).
3. Blood will flow up to the horses' bridles for about 184 miles (Ezekiel 39:17-24).

It will take some seven years to gather up the weapons for use as fuel. These are indications of the sheer *magnitude* of the battle—and of the defeat the Antichrist will suffer. The residue of the war will cover most of Israel and will be concentrated in the valley of Megiddo (because of its level plain) and the city of Jerusalem. This is probably the way in which it will take place:

CATACLYSMIC FINALITY AND THE COMING OF THE LORD

The Antichrist will amass his armies. They will no doubt number in the millions, perhaps even in the *tens* of millions. This will be the greatest single conflict of all time. It will be the "final solution." The "hated Jews" will now be put to death forever.

While Gog (the Antichrist) cannot *personally* fight the Lord Jesus Christ (there being no way to *reach* Him), he can take out his venom and hatred upon those who brought the Messiah into this world— the Jews. As such, this will climax all the hatred of the ages directed against God's chosen people.

The Jews were persecuted by Egypt in the very beginning and by the Assyrians under Sennacherib. Next, it was the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, and then the Medo-Persians under Darius and Cyrus. Then it was Alexander the Great and the Grecian Empire, followed by the mighty Roman Empire which overran Israel to become not only rulers of the pleasant land, but also of all the civilized world of the day in which Jesus was born.

After Jewry's rejection of Jesus, the Jews were scattered over the face of the earth, and their nation ceased to exist until just recently (1948) when they were driven by the Hitler persecution that attempted to annihilate them in the horror of the holocaust.

And now here it is all over again. This is the *final* page in a long history of bloodshed and agony. At least as far as the Antichrist is concerned, it *should* be the final solution. With his millions of men recruited from Russia and China, plus the revised Roman Empire, he will come down to cover the nation of Israel like a cloud of locusts.

Every major television network in the world will no doubt be there to record this climactic moment of history. Through the miracle of satellite transmission, pictures of the Antichrist's mighty armies could reach the homes of millions of Americans and all nations throughout the world. This great event could unfold before the eyes of the world.

Now, the Antichrist, with his mighty armies, will hit Jerusalem. You must remember, the Jews have returned from Petra (or wherever they were when the Antichrist broke his covenant during the *middle* of the Great Tribulation period. They will have retaken the city while he was gone to fight his battles in the north and the east, and now they will endeavor to hold out. But, he (the Antichrist) will *again* appear like a cloud (Ezekiel 38:9). Zechariah 14:2 says, *"For I* (the Lord) *will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle* ...." The term "all nations" does not necessarily mean *every* nation in the world, but it does mean many nations.

The world will watch raptly as Israel defends herself. This tiny country of some three million Jews has stood against approximately 100 thousand Arabs—and miracle after miracle has occurred as they have conspired to hold their own. But this will be the ultimate test. It will be a time of such horror that it beggars description.

The Antichrist will fling his armies against all Israel, but especially against Jerusalem. It will be door-to-door fighting, house-to-house confrontation, and the city will be leveled. The Jews will have their backs to the wall. The Bible says that half the city will fall. It speaks of women being ravished and raped (Zechariah 14). At that moment, with the major networks recording it for all the world to view, the Jews will realize that the die is cast. There is no further hope and all resistance is pointless. They are losing this conflict.

Despite their military superiority, it becomes obvious that they cannot win. Even if the United States were helping them (and there is no record in the Word of God that they will) the battle would still be in jeopardy. The Antichrist is on the verge of realizing his great desire—the desire of all evil men, past and present—the final solution: total annihilation; every Jew dead; what Buchenwald, Dachau, Auschwitz, and Treblinka could not accomplish. This is what Adolf Eichmann, Adolf Hitler, and Himmler could not bring to pass. Gog will apparently accomplish it.

Realizing there is no longer hope, and as a pall of smoke hangs over the city and flames leap from house to house, the roar of artillery and the scream of jets echo over Jerusalem. The city of peace has once more been turned into a city of blood. It looks like Dante's inferno—a veritable hell on earth. The Antichrist spurs his armies to push even harder. Victory is in sight and nothing can stop them. The hated Jew will be annihilated once and for all. This despised Messiah called Jesus Christ will be eliminated from the face of the earth. Gog will become god instead of the God of the heavens and His beloved Christ. The hated Jews who are linked with the Messiah will be exterminated forever, and once that is brought about Gog will be the prince of the earth and god of the mighty.

David Ben-Gurion, before he died, was asked the question, "What is Israel's future —what is Israel's hope?" This man with white locks bespeaking the wisdom of years, looked down toward the ground and finally said, with a faraway look in his eyes, "The hope of Israel is the coming of the Messiah."

The Jews know now that the battle is lost and there is no hope. No one will come to their rescue. The United States either cannot or *will* not help in this hour. Other nations of the world will stand back, fearing the wrath of mighty Gog. It is *then* they will begin to cry. It is then they will weep as never before for the Messiah to come. There will be a sudden cry that will fill the city in the midst of the din—the scream of cannon shells, mortar bursts, and machine-gun fire.

They will wail like babies screaming in pain. They will beg; they will plead. They will *cry* for the Messiah to come.

In Ezekiel 38:18, God said, *"And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face."* He said in the 19th verse, *"For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken ...."* And in Zechariah

14:3, we read, *"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."*

As the television cameras record this appalling series of events, something shall transpire that has never before been seen nor ever shall be seen again.

Just when it seems that the Antichrist has overcome Israel and all hope is gone— with half of Jerusalem fallen and the rest expected to fall at any moment—the television announcer will be struck *tongue-tied* as he tries to comprehend what is occurring. No one will understand.

Suddenly the cameras will pan *upward* as announcers attempt to instruct the waiting world on events *they* don't understand.

Oh, can't you see it? In millions of homes throughout the world, people will be frozen in attention. The sky will be literally *filled*, rank upon rank, troop upon troop, and regiment upon regiment, with the heavenly host of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Lord Jesus Christ; and every saint who has ever lived will be there— riding upon white horses as they come back to fight (as in the days of old). And when this happens, the sky will radiate an eerie, diffused light. The battle will last one day (which shall be known to the Lord as neither day nor night), but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light (Zechariah 14:7). In other words, the light will change. It will be partly dark during the day and partly light during the night.

John recorded it in Revelation 19:11.

"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. 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.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 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. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:11-16).

In Ezekiel 38:22, God said He would pour out pestilence with blood upon the Antichrist. He would rain upon him and upon his bands an

overflowing rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstones. God said,

"And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shall fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 39:3-5).

At the time of this great event—the Second Coming—the Bible tells us (in Zechariah 14:4),

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley ...."

In this terrible conflict the blood shall run to the horses' bridles for miles about— many men will die, requiring seven months for their burial— and Israel will in that hour be *victorious.* Jesus Christ will return. The Antichrist will be killed and cast into the lake of fire.

Satan will be bound, and this will climax the Battle of Armageddon. Israel will suffer losses, to be sure, but the heavenly army will suffer *no* losses. The *bulk* of the casualties will be suffered by the Antichrist and *his* armies.

All this will usher in the great kingdom called the Millennial Age— where Jesus Christ will set up His kingdom to reign 1,000 years. Then *"the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"* and *"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* (Isaiah 35:1 and 11:9).

As John the Revelator said, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Revelation 22:20).



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