

The Final Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:17-21)

Jesus is coming again. When He arrives from heaven He'll face a massive mobilization of the armies of the earth. They'll surround Jerusalem in a last ditch effort to throw off divine rule and maintain their rebellious, idolatrous power. However, Jesus will defeat these armies in a moment by the power of His spoken word. This final battle often goes by the name "Armageddon," a word used only in Revelation 16:16. Armageddon, or the hill of Megiddo, will be the staging point for earth's armies in their approach to Jerusalem and the name of this battlefield gives its name to the final battle. There will, of course, be multiple battles during the Tribulation Period, nations warring against each other as the Antichrist quickly takes power. The final battle, however, will unite the armies of the world against their common enemy, Jesus Christ.

There are several Old Testament references to this final series of battles. That day will see an invasion from the north (Ezekiel 38:1—39:24; Daniel 11:40-45), the west (Daniel 9:27), the south (Daniel 11:40-45; Isaiah 34:1-6), and the east (Daniel 11:40-45; Revelation 9:13-19). These armies will eventually converge on Jerusalem, but Jesus will mount His own invasion from above (Revelation 14:14-20; 16:15-16; 19:11-21), defending Jerusalem and God's people (Joel 3:2, 9-17; Zechariah 12:1-14; 14:1-4). Jesus Christ will prevail over these opposing armies, defeat the Antichrist and his False Prophet, and establish His kingdom on earth. The final Battle of Armageddon will prove that Jesus Christ, the Lamb who is Lord, will defend every friend and defeat every foe. We can follow Jesus with confidence and hope. Revelation 19:17-21 paints a graphic picture of Armageddon.

Because the Lamb is Lord His victory is certain (19:17-18).

The Battle of Armageddon will demonstrate the absolute power of Jesus Christ over His enemies. His victory is certain.

John saw an angel who cried out for the birds of the air to gather in anticipation of a great feast (19:17).

John saw a specific, special angel (literally "one angel") who was standing in the sun, possibly in the light of the sun or with the sun as a backdrop. This angel, like others before him, made a proclamation with a loud voice. He addressed all the birds that fly in mid-heaven (the atmospheric heavens as opposed to the celestial heaven). The angel invited the birds to gather for a great supper, the great supper of God.

The angel indicated that the birds would feast on those who would die in the final war against God (19:17b-18).

In contrast to the joyful, celebrative marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9) will be the dreadful great supper of God at which the birds of the air will gorge on the flesh of God's enemies. The angel indicated to the birds of the air that the menu would include the flesh of

kings, generals (literally “chiliarchs,” rulers of a thousand soldiers), mighty ones, horses and their riders, and all people free or slave, small or great. In other words, all who stand in opposition to Jesus Christ will be subject to immediate physical death at His Second Coming. The final Battle of Armageddon will result in the death of every member of the opposing armies of the earth. Jesus’ victory is certain.

**Because the Lamb is Lord
His victory will be crushing (19:19-20).**

The final Battle of Armageddon will turn out to be no contest at all. Jesus will crush His enemies quickly and decisively.

John saw the beast and a coalition of kings with their armies gathered to make war with the rider on the white horse (19:19).

Next, John saw the Beast. The “beast out of the sea” of Revelation 13:1, the Antichrist, so ferocious in appearance and powerful in influence will face off with Jesus Christ. Accompanying the Beast will be the kings of the earth and their armies. Revelation 17:12 indicates that a coalition of ten kings will share power with the Beast for one hour, a brief reign indeed. These kings and their armies will assemble to make war with the rider on the white horse, Jesus Christ, and His army from heaven. This will be a contest between heaven and earth, right and wrong, wickedness and righteousness, the enemy and Jesus Christ.

The beast and the false prophet who led people in opposition to God were captured and thrown into the lake of fire (19:20).

Although the Battle of Armageddon will include the armies of the earth, their resistance will be both brief and futile. In an instant the Beast will be taken captive. Along with the Beast, the False Prophet will be taken prisoner. The False Prophet, the “beast out of the earth” (Revelation 13:11-17), had performed miraculous signs to sway the hearts of earth’s inhabitants into worshipping the Beast. He enticed people to receive the damning mark of the Beast and to worship his image. This deadly duo will together be thrown alive into “the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.” These two hideous human beings will be judged and condemned immediately upon Christ’s return. Their destination will be eternal judgment, and both will still be present in the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:10). The image of fire related to eternal torment for God’s enemies is consistent in Scripture. Jesus described hell in similar terms (Matthew 5:22; 13:40-42, 50; 18:8-9; 25:41; Luke 16:23-24). The Apostles likewise described hell as a place of fiery judgment (James 3:6; Jude 7) and eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). There is no textual evidence to take these descriptions in less than a literal way, but even taken figuratively they would point to a horrible, eternal existence separated from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus’ victory will be crushing.

**Because the Lamb is Lord
His victory will be complete (19:21).**

The final Battle of Armageddon will be a complete and comprehensive defeat of Christ's enemies.

The armies of the earth were destroyed with the sword of the rider on the white horse (19:21a).

Having cast the Beast and the False Prophet into the lake of fire, Jesus will next put to death the coalition of kings and their armies. They will be killed "by the sword" of the one sitting on the white horse, Jesus Christ. This sword proceeds from His mouth, implying the power of Jesus' spoken word (Revelation 19:15). Jesus will destroy the opposing armies of the earth with a spoken word. The final battle will be swift and complete.

The birds of the air gorged themselves on the corpses of the defeated armies of the earth (19:21b).

Because the armies of the earth will be executed by the powerful word of Jesus' their bodies will lie dead on the battlefield, the food of scavenger birds. The Lamb's victory will be complete. The path will be open for Jesus Christ to judge the people living on earth in that day (Matthew 25:31-46) and then to establish His physical kingdom on earth (Daniel 2:44). Jesus Christ, the Lamb who is Lord, will defend every friend and defeat every foe. Therefore, we can follow Jesus with confidence and hope.