



Swept off your Feet

Beyond Worship-as-Usual

CHAPTER 32

A Contested Periphery

Throughout history, Megiddo Valley (commonly called Jezreel Valley) has served as a buffer zone between powerful empires. Historian Eric Cline designated this valley a “contested periphery” because it represents “a contested region situated on the periphery of two different and more powerful world systems”.¹ Mitchell Allen coined this term in 1997 to describe a world systems theory involving Philistia and the Neo-Assyrians.² According to Cline, “Allen identified ‘contested peripheries’ as ‘border zones’ where different systems intersect.”³ Chase-Dunn and Hall formally define this term as, “a peripheral region for which one or more core regions compete.”⁴

Cline regards the Megiddo Valley as a zone of intense military activity because of its location and its volatile political affiliations. Outside forces fought against one another at this intersection to gain a strategic advantage. Of the battles fought in the Megiddo Valley during the last two and a half millennia, “at least seventeen have been fought because this area was in an unwelcome geographical predicament—a contested region situated on the periphery of two different and more

¹ Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p. 9.

² Eric H. Cline, *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol vi, 1, spring 2000, 7-16.
<http://jwsr.ucr.edu/> (Allen 1997: 49-51, 320-21, Fig. 1.4; cf. also Berquist 1995a, 1995b)

³ Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p. 8; (Allen 1997:320)

⁴ Eric H. Cline, *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol vi, 1, spring 2000, 7-16.
<http://jwsr.ucr.edu/> (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997:37) (accessed 8-7-07)

powerful world systems.”⁵ In 13 of those 17 battles, neither opponent lived permanently in the Megiddo Valley.⁶

Due in part to its rich oil reserves and sacred holy sites, this region remains hotly contested. Operatives from within and from without vie for its occupation. Obsessed with geopolitical and religious power, Jews, Christians, and Muslims contend for its control. Clarence Fisher (one of the archeological excavators of this region) wrote that the city of “Megiddo, and the Megiddo Valley as a whole, was a ‘contested periphery’ throughout much of its history.”⁷

From Periphery to Epicenter

Since Israel’s rise to statehood in 1948, the peripheral dynamics of this region have changed. As prime real estate, it no longer constitutes an occupied buffer zone. Israeli citizens now inhabit this land with Palestinians and others. It represents more than a convenient crossroad. Israel governs this territory and defends it directly. World superpowers participate as international stakeholders in securing her unstable borders. Forces from within this region now compete in their own right with forces from without.

External rulers no longer contend for this valley simply as an overlapping fringe separating competing nations. Rather than being an international periphery, Israel rivets global attention as an epicenter nation. The powerbrokers are not exclusively alien empires as were Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Babylon, Greece, Turkey, Rome, France, and Great Briton. Israel’s military and geopolitical outcome depends on the prophetic destiny of its occupants based on complex spiritual dynamics.

More than a Periphery

In a broad sense, the entire world serves as a contested periphery. Wedged between two kingdoms, our planet revolves around the epicenter of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Darkness. God

⁵ Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p. 8-9.

⁶ Cline, The Battles of Armageddon, p. 186.

⁷ Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p.10.

and Satan contend for more than land. They fight for the eternal destiny of its occupants. With angels and demons at their command, God and Satan muster supernatural warriors to extend their influence beyond conventional borders.



When John received the revelation concerning Har-Magedon (i.e., Armageddon), history had only recorded thirteen major battles in the Megiddo Valley. Since that time, at least twenty-one additional battles have transpired.⁸ Cline

surmises that “sometime between now and the final battle of Armageddon” additional battles will take place in this Valley. After quoting George Santanyanna: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”, Cline asserts,

In the case of Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley, the list of doomed participants repeating the past over and over again is already far longer than it is for any other place on earth. It remains to be seen how many more participants and how many additional battles have yet to be added to this list before Armageddon is at our door.⁹

Modifications and Discoveries

Before the 1920’s, much of this valley remained swampy except during the driest part of the summer. The Kishon River, with its numerous tributaries and poor natural drainage, contributed to muddy conditions. During the 20th century, occupants altered the natural terrain of this valley. Draining the swamps with buckets and managing the river improved the landscape and reduced the incidence of malaria.¹⁰ These changes improved the usefulness of the soil. Along

⁸ Cline, The Battles of Armageddon, p. 179.

⁹ Cline, The Battles of Armageddon, p. 187.

¹⁰ Cline, The Battles of Armageddon, p. 10

with cotton, wheat, and barley fields, olive groves and brackish Tilapia ponds now dot the plain.



More importantly, these improvements upgraded the potential for multitudes of warriors and/or worshipers to gather there.

Since engineers have changed the landscape of this valley, oil companies have discovered an immense oil trap with natural gas fields below the Megiddo Valley region. After conducting extensive research in 2004, Russian geophysicist Tovia Luskin discovered nearly one billion barrels of oil reserves in central Israel. An Orthodox Lubavitch Jew, Luskin founded Givot Olam, an Israeli oil company named from Deuteronomy 33. It means everlasting hills.¹¹



Exploration estimates in 2004 by Ginko Oil Exploration claim that 20 billion barrels of oil reside in the Dead Sea Basin alone.¹² Based on wells drilled near Megiddo, Gene Sotero (president and CEO of Zion Oil) confirms these findings.¹³ According to the Jerusalem Post, Liquefied Natural Gas started flowing into Israel from Mediterranean wells west of Megiddo in January of 2013.¹⁴

¹¹ Rosenberg, Joel C, Epicenter, Why the Current Rumbings in the Middle East Will Change Your Future, Tyndale House, 2006, p. 57.

¹² Rosenberg, Joel C, Epicenter, Why the Current Rumbings in the Middle East Will Change Your Future, Tyndale House, 2006, Chapter 5 Endnote 13, p. 286.

¹³ John Brown, a Christian from Texas founded Zion Oil in 2000. Gene Sotero is an MIT-trained economist and petroleum engineer. Rosenberg, Epicenter, p. 59 and 62

¹⁴ <http://www.jpost.com/Enviro-Tech/LNG-gas-to-start-flowing-into-Israel> (Accessed 6-13-130

Joel Rosenberg confirms that, “there is, in fact, both oil and natural gas under the region known in the Bible as Armageddon, where the scriptures say the final cataclysmic conflict of history will occur.”¹⁵

The Kings of the World will meet at Armageddon

In The Revelation, John highlights one mention of Armageddon (ESV, NKJ, and NIV) or Har-Magedon (NAS). This location is poised to accommodate a final gathering of international leaders for good or evil—for worship or warfare. While the Bible does not actually describe an army or a battle at this gathering, John saw the kings of the whole world gather there for battle after the sixth angel pours out a bowl of God’s wrath. The Euphrates River dried up,

*so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. And I [John] saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the **kings of the whole world**, to **gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.** (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”) And **they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.** (Rev 16:12-16 NAS)*

Without mentioning the presence of soldiers, weapons, or a battle, John saw an unprecedented earthquake disrupt this demonically mustered gathering. In addition, he saw 100-pound hailstones bombard the earth. In John’s words,

No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. ... Every island fled away and

¹⁵ Rosenberg, Epicenter p. 58

the mountains could not be found. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. ... (Rev 16:17-21 NIV)

Earlier in The Revelation John witnessed another massive military gathering. Limited by ancient vocabulary, John documents this battle near the location where four angels rally from the Euphrates River to destroy one third of humanity. After a sixth angel sounded his trumpet, John heard:

*a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. **The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million** [Gk, *urias*]. I heard their number. (Rev 9:13-16 NIV)*

Most English translations render the Greek word *urias* as 200 million. The English Standard Version and the Message render the word, "twice ten thousand times ten thousand". This word also denotes other numerical values in different parts of the Bible. It refers to ten thousand, an innumerable multitude, an unlimited number, or an innumerable host. The New American Standard Version uses *urias* 9 times translating it as fifty once, many thousands twice, myriads thrice, thousand once, thousands once, and two hundred million once.¹⁶ Since John heard the number, quantifying its exact count remains a challenge.

John witnessed sights and sounds associated with future military conflicts. He wrote about modern events while handicapped by a limited vocabulary and an ancient context. Apocalyptic realities appeared with insufficient terminology to describe them. Over two-thousand years of weapons innovation overwhelmed his first-century perspective. Force multipliers generated indescribable technological and political riddles. A force multiplier refers to "a factor that

¹⁶ <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/Greek/> (7-17-07)

dramatically increases (hence ‘multiplies’) the combat effectiveness of a military force.”¹⁷

John describes what he saw in his own words.

The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury. (Rev 9:17-19 NIV)

Territory matters in epic conflicts because eternal souls inhabit its borders. Supernatural rivals are battling for global dominance at the epicenter of earth’s contested periphery. Some are attempting to transform the spiritual climate of this intersection for good while others for evil. Spiritual rivals battle to control both its worshipers and its warriors.

As the wrath of God and the rage of Satan erupt at the end of this age, every nation will experience unprecedented pressure. Informed worshipers have a responsibility to redeem the past and influence the future. They possess vast potential to shine like stars as they proclaim praise and assert worship in spirit and truth. Worshipers from this generation have a proactive chance to show their Heavenly Father that which He seeks, especially in locations where epic battles are poised to occur.

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “**Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and***

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_multiplier (accessed 1-13-07)

worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” (Rev 14:6-7 NKJ)

