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## CHAPTER 40

### A Contested Periphery

#### Megiddo Valley

Historian Eric Cline labelled Megiddo Valley a “contested periphery” because it occupies “a contested region situated on the periphery of two different and more powerful world systems”.<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Allen coined this phrase in 1997 to describe a world systems theory.<sup>2</sup> Chase-Dunn and Hall define it more concisely as “a peripheral region for which one or more core regions compete.”<sup>3</sup> Archeologist Clarence Fisher wrote that the city of “Megiddo, and the Megiddo Valley as a whole, was a ‘contested periphery’ throughout much of its history.”<sup>4</sup>

Cline regards Megiddo Valley as a territory of intense military activity because of its strategic location and political affiliations. Outside forces from Africa, Asia, and Europe fought at and for this intersection to gain a tactical advantage. Of the battles engaged in 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 powerful world systems.”<sup>5</sup> In 13 of those 17 battles, neither opponent lived permanently in the Megiddo Valley.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 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)

<sup>3</sup> 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)

<sup>4</sup> Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p.10.

<sup>5</sup> Cline, J. of World-Systems Research, p. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> Cline, *The Battles of Armageddon*, p. 186.

## **From Periphery to Epicenter**

Since Israel gained statehood in 1948, the peripheral dynamics of this region have changed. Megiddo Valley no longer constitutes an occupied buffer zone. Israeli citizens possess this land, residing there with Palestinians and other ethnic identities. Megiddo Valley represents more than a convenient crossroad. Israel governs and defends it directly with ancillary support from world superpowers. They contribute as international stakeholders to secure her borders. Forces from within this region now compete in their own right with forces from without.

Consumed with political power and religious domination, Jews, Christians, and Muslims contend for control of Megiddo Valley. The prophetic destiny of the world relies on the spiritual significance of this region. Besides compelling spiritual dynamics, this fiercely contested real estate contains profitable natural resources (oil and gas), agricultural value, and revered holy sites.

External rulers no longer vie for this valley simply as an overlapping fringe separating competing nations. Israel attracts global attention as an epicenter nation rather than a transitional periphery. Megiddo's powerbrokers and stakeholders are not exclusively alien empires as were Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Babylon, Greece, Turkey, Rome, France, and Great Britain.

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

When John referenced Har-Magedon (Armageddon) in "The Revelation", history had only recorded thirteen major battles in Megiddo Valley. Since that time, at least twenty-one additional battles have transpired.<sup>7</sup> 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

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<sup>7</sup> Cline, *The Battles of Armageddon*, p. 179.

how many additional battles have yet to be added to this list before Armageddon is at our door.<sup>8</sup>

### **Geographic Modifications and Resource Discoveries**

Before the 1920's, much of this valley remained swampy except during the driest part of the summer. The Kishon River generated marshy conditions with its poor drainage and constrained tributaries. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, occupants altered the natural terrain of this valley. They improved the landscape and reduced the incidence of malaria by draining saturated soil and managing the river's hydrodynamics.<sup>9</sup> These physical changes enriched the usefulness of the soil. Wheat, barley, cotton, olives, and Tilapia ponds now populate the plain.



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.<sup>10</sup>

Exploration estimates in 2004 by Ginko Oil Exploration claim that 20 billion barrels of oil reside in the Dead Sea Basin alone.<sup>11</sup> Based on wells drilled near Megiddo, Gene Sotero (president and

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<sup>8</sup> Cline, The Battles of Armageddon, p. 187.

<sup>9</sup> Cline, The Battles of Armageddon, p. 10

<sup>10</sup> Rosenberg, Joel C, Epicenter, Why the Current Rumbings in the Middle East Will Change Your Future, Tyndale House, 2006, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

CEO of Zion Oil) confirms these findings.<sup>12</sup> According to the Jerusalem Post, Liquefied Natural Gas started flowing into Israel from Mediterranean wells west of Megiddo in January of 2013.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Kings of the World will meet at Armageddon**

Improving the terrestrial landscape has also enhanced the military potential for multitudes of warriors (and worshipers) to gather in the Valley of Megiddo, aka, Armageddon. The Revelation to John highlights one solitary mention of Armageddon (ESV, NKJ, and NIV) or Har-Magedon (NAS). This epicenter is poised to accommodate the final assembly of international leaders for good or evil—for worship or warfare.

While the biblical narrative does not describe an army or battle at this site, John saw the kings of the whole world gather for battle. He observed the sixth angel pouring out a bowl of God’s wrath, which dried the Euphrates River to prepare the way for kings from the east. John also saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. He identified them as *“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.**”*<sup>14</sup> John identified the site of this apocalyptic meeting.

*Then they [unclean spirits] gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called **Armageddon.*** (Rev 16:16 NIV)

Without mentioning the presence of soldiers, weapons, or a battle, John saw an unprecedented earthquake disrupt this demonically mustered assembly. 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 the mountains could not be found. ...* (Rev 16:17-21 NIV)

Earlier in “The Revelation” John witnessed another massive military gathering. Limited by his 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 blew his trumpet, John heard a voice from the horns on the golden altar before God. It commanded the sixth angel to

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<sup>12</sup> 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

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

<sup>14</sup> Rev 16:12-14 NAS

*"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 denotes various 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.<sup>15</sup> Since John only heard the number, quantifying its exact count remains a challenge.

John witnessed other sights and sounds associated with future military conflicts. He wrote about modern events while handicapped by a limited vocabulary and an ancient technical context. Apocalyptic realities appeared to John with insufficient terminology to describe them. Over two-thousand years of weapon innovation overwhelmed his first-century perspective. Force multipliers generated indescribable technical, scientific, genetic, and political riddles. A force multiplier refers to "a factor that dramatically increases (hence multiplies) the combat effectiveness of a military force."<sup>16</sup>

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)*

In epic conflicts, territory matters because eternal souls inhabit their borders. Supernatural rivals are battling for global dominance at the earth's epicenter, a contested periphery in the cosmos. Some stakeholders are contending to transform the spiritual climate of this intersection for good and others for evil.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/Greek/> (7-17-07)

<sup>16</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force\\_multiplier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_multiplier) (accessed 1-13-07)

Spiritual rivals battle with supernatural aggression 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 spiritual, emotional, material, and political pressure. Informed worshipers have a responsibility to redeem the past and secure the future. They possess immense potential, shining like proactive stars as they proclaim praise and assert worship in spirit and truth. Worshipers from this present generation have an opportunity to show their Heavenly Father what 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 worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.**” (Rev 14:6-7 NKJ)*

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