



Armageddon

Armageddon was never meant to inspire fear about the end of the world; rather, it was meant to give hope to persecuted Christians that forces of good would eventually win.

Goal for the Session

Participants will learn the origin and meaning of the word "Armageddon" and consider its usefulness today.

Preparing for the Session

- Read the Participant Handout at least once, highlighting key points and information. Look up all the biblical references mentioned so that you are familiar with them.
- Read through this Leader's Guide and adapt it for your group. If your group prefers to simply read the handout and discuss it, perhaps some of the questions raised in this guide may be useful.
- This guide assumes that participants have not read the handout prior to the session. Time is allowed for participants to read the various sections discussed. If your group has already read the handout, the session will move more quickly. It is helpful to allow time for participants to review each section, as some may have forgotten what they previously read.
- Locate a map that shows Megiddo. Most biblical maps will have it.
- If your group is interested, consider mentioning the related Thoughtful Christian studies suggested at the end of this Leader's Guide.
- Arrange the room before participants arrive with chairs in a circle or around a table so that everyone can see one another. This is the optimal way to welcome input and to show that every participant is an equal member of the group.

Session at a Glance

OPENING

- Initial reactions
- Opening questions
- Prayer

EXPLORING

- Origins of Armageddon
- Find Megiddo on a map
- How Armageddon was originally understood
- Armageddon and Revelation today

RESPONDING

- Elevator speech
- Drawing the second coming

CLOSING

- Closing remarks
- Final reading

Materials Needed

- Copies of the Participant Handout
- Map of Megiddo (found in most study Bibles)
- Bibles
- Drawing paper, colored pencils or crayons (optional for Responding activity)

Teaching Tip

Much of this session is designed for large group discussion after reading portions of the Participant Handout. Be mindful that some are faster readers than others. Some may not read well at all due to education levels or eyesight. If this is an issue in your group, consider preparing summaries of each section that you can lead, or that another volunteer can prepare and lead.

Opening (10 minutes)

1. Initial Reactions

Welcome participants and introduce any visitors. Have participants turn to a neighbor and spend a minute sharing what comes to mind when they hear the word “Armageddon” and to attempt to define the word. While it is possible that some may have never heard the word before, most will have heard it used in popular culture or perhaps in Bible study.

After one minute, invite brief reports from the pairs. Provide a very brief summary of the introduction from the handout, mentioning the movies and books the author cites that are about the final judgment.

2. Opening Questions

As a large group, briefly discuss the following questions:

- Does the Bible, properly studied, tell when the world will end and what will happen?
- Where is the word “Armageddon” found in the Bible?

Do not feel that you need to agree on the first question’s answer. Tell people that uncertainty or disagreement is part of the study today. The second question has a specific answer: Armageddon is found once in the Bible and that is in Revelation 16:16, though it may be spelled differently.

Tell participants that the theme of the study today is the word “Armageddon,” what it meant originally, and how it might be used today.

3. Prayer

Lead the group in an opening prayer, such as this one:

Heavenly Creator, we thank you for the opportunity to gather and study your word. Open our hearts and

minds to receive your good news for your world today. Amen.

Exploring (30 minutes)

4. Origins of Armageddon

Distribute copies of the Participant Handout if you have not already done so. Have participants spend a few minutes reading the section titled “Origins of Armageddon.”

After a few minutes, invite brief reactions to what the group has read. Reinforce the information in the section that explains that it is referring to a real, physical place.

5. Find Megiddo on a Map

Call attention to a biblical map and have participants find Megiddo on it. Have a volunteer summarize again how the word “Armageddon” is formed from Megiddo and what the historical importance of Megiddo was.

6. How Armageddon Was Originally Understood

Allow a few minutes for participants to read this section in the Participant Handout. Discuss why King Josiah’s death at Megiddo was so devastating to Judah. Participants may mention several reasons, including the following:

- Josiah was a popular king trying to instill reforms after a long line of corrupt kings had violated the covenant with God.
- His death crushed many people’s dreams of reform.
- Prophets were warning that bad things would happen if reform did not come about. Perhaps this was the beginning of the unfortunate events that were about to take hold of Judah.

7. Armageddon and Revelation Today

Allow a few minutes for participants to read “Interpreting Armageddon Today” and “The Value of Studying Revelation Today.” Discuss the following questions:

- As a persecuted Christian in late-first-century Rome, what would Armageddon mean to you?
- How should Christians today interpret the word?

Responding (10 minutes)

Depending on how much time is available, choose one of the following activities.

8. Elevator Speech

Form pairs and inform the group that you are going to give them a situation in which they will have exactly one minute to respond, as though they are on an elevator and have a very limited time. The other person in the pair will keep time and stop the speaker after one minute has passed. They will then change roles. Each person in the pair may briefly collect his or her thoughts about the situation before the response minute begins. Here is the situation:

Someone approaches you on an elevator and hands you a religious tract titled *Armageddon is Here! Are You Going to Heaven? Or Hell?!* The person tells you that God is about to wipe out the world and that all sinners will go to hell unless they repent. How will you respond? Incorporate your understanding of Armageddon in your answer.

9. Drawing the Second Coming

Distribute drawing materials and paper. Invite participants to draw their image of the second coming based on today's discussion. After several minutes, allow a few volunteers to share their drawing and explain it.

Closing (5 minutes)

10. Closing Remarks

Encourage people to take time in the next few weeks to read the book of Revelation in one sitting as the Participant Handout suggests. Invite people to tell briefly one thing that they learned in today's study. If there is further interest in studying the book of Revelation, consider how this will be done. You may want to use the resources mentioned at the end of this study.

11. Final Reading

Have a volunteer read the final two paragraphs of the handout aloud. Then have someone read Revelation 22:17–21.

Teaching Alternative

Make a collage of images of people suffering today cut out from magazines or newspaper articles. Add some Scripture verses from the study that show where hope may be found. Write a title for the collage at the bottom that explains the meaning of Armageddon.

Key Scriptures

Revelation 16:16, 22:17–21

For More Information

Related Thoughtful Christian studies include:

- Revelation (2 sessions)
- What's Behind *Left Behind?* (2 sessions)