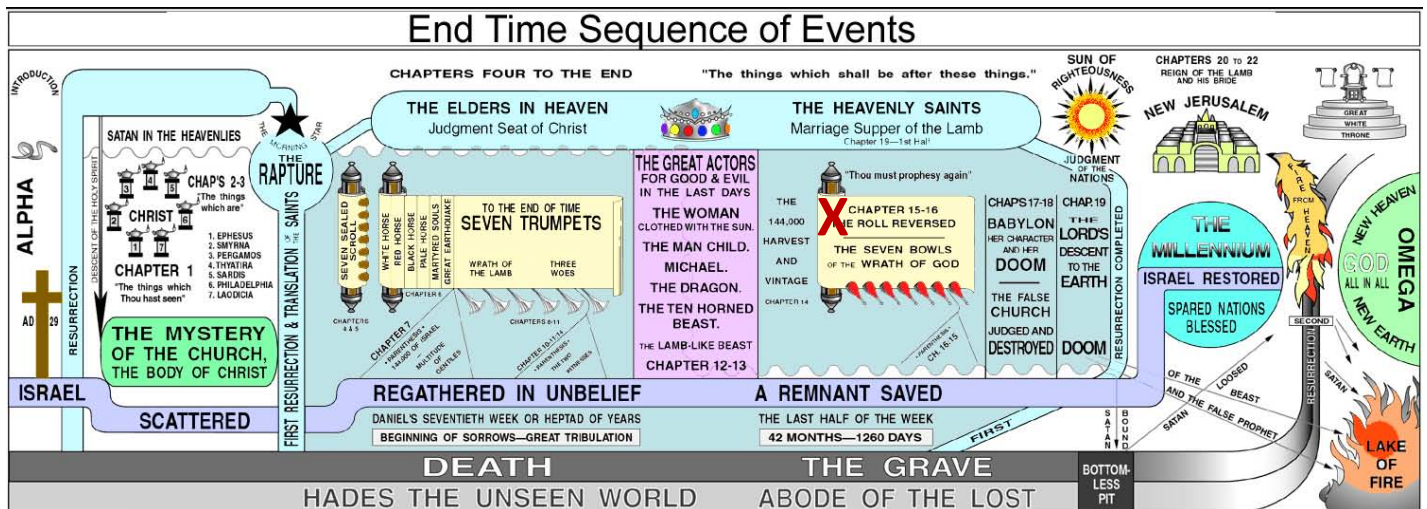


INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

- The interlude between the 2nd set of judgments (Trumpets) and the 3rd set (Bowls) is now over. There will be a very rapid pouring out of the final set of judgments – the 7 last plagues.
- These bowl plagues are an introduction to Armageddon, where the armies of the world will begin to converge on the plains of Megiddo for the final world war.
- The judgments have gotten progressively harder and more severe. As background information, the Trumpet and Bowl judgments can be compared and contrasted as follows:
 - Both are divided into groups of 4, then 3, for a total of 7
 - The trumpets are 1/3 destructive, and bowls consume ALL (seals were 1/4)
 - The first four of both are on the natural world (similar locales)
 - The last 3 are supernatural
- Some say these Bowl Judgments happen concurrently, all at the same time. Others say they follow one another. We are not given a time reference here, so any of this is speculation. It makes logical sense, however, that they would follow one another, and seemingly very quickly. The red "X" below marks where we are now as we begin chapter 16.



- A background in the Old Testament is critical for understanding the book of Revelation. We have said before that there is little in Revelation that is not already been prophesied somewhere else in the Old Testament. The book of Revelation merely brings all these things together in one place to mark the fulfillment of these ancient prophesies, with the added element of the revelation (unveiling) of the glorified Jesus. One example of this is Isaiah 24, which is an excellent passage to help us understand what is happening during the Tribulation, and especially during this last "great" part of the Tribulation. **It is worthwhile to print the whole of the text here for review:**

¹ Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants. ² And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master; As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller; As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor. ³ The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word. ⁴ The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. ⁵ The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left. ⁷ The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh. ⁸ The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases. ⁹ They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. ¹⁰ The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in. ¹¹ There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone. ¹² In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction. ¹³ When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. ¹⁴ They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the LORD They shall cry aloud from the sea. ¹⁵ Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light, The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. ¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously." ¹⁷ Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. ¹⁸ And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit, And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare; For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken. ¹⁹ The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. ²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again. ²¹ It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth. ²² They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished. ²³ Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

This amazing passage from Isaiah is an excellent summary of what we are about to see happen in chapters 16 through 18 of the book of Revelation.

¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

- From the temple indicates that this comes **directly from the Presence of God.**
- We should note that some people will argue that the trumpet and bowl judgments are virtually the same thing, only described differently. We thought it best to include here a piece of commentary written on this subject:

"The question has been raised as to whether the bowls of the wrath of God are chronologically subsequent to or identical with the seven trumpets of the angels. There is clearly much similarity between the trumpet judgments and the bowl judgments. They both deal with (a) the earth (8:7) or the land (16:2), (b) the sea (8:8; 16:3), (c) the rivers and springs of water (8:10; 16:4), and (d) the sun, moon, and stars (8:12) with only the sun

mentioned in the bowl judgments (16:8-9). The fifth trumpet dealt with demon possession with the sun and sky darkened (9:1-3), which is similar to the fifth bowl in which darkness will cover the earth and sores will cause agony among men (16:10-11). The sixth trumpet deals with the river Euphrates (9:13-14), and the sixth bowl will dry up the Euphrates (16:12). The seventh trumpet implies that the Great Tribulation is coming to its end (11:15-19), and the seventh bowl of the wrath of God records a loud voice from heaven, saying, "It is done!" (16:17) with resulting destruction of the earth by earthquake and hail, which is also included in the seventh trumpet (11:18-19).

Similarities, however, do not prove identity, and a comparison of the trumpets with the bowls of God's wrath reveals striking differences even though the order of the judgments is the same. In the trumpet judgments, generally speaking, a third of the earth or heaven is afflicted, whereas in the bowl judgments the effects of the judgments are on the entire earth and are much more severe and final in character. Accordingly it seems best to follow the interpretation which has long been held in the church that the seven bowls are an expansion of the seventh trumpet, just as the seven trumpets are an expansion of the breaking of the seventh seal. The order is climactic and the judgments become more intensive and extensive as the time of the second coming of Christ approaches. All indications are that the bowl judgments fall with trip-hammer rapidity on a world that is reeling under previous judgments and a gigantic world war. Some bowl judgments are selective and extend only to the wicked (16:2, 16:8-11), and several affect parts of nature (sea, rivers, sun, etc.).

In the first bowl judgment people who followed the Antichrist received painful sores. Sores also come with the fifth bowl (16:10-11). (Walvoord and Zuck, "The Bible Knowledge Commentary")

- This voice indicates **there is no more delay**. The time for the final outpouring of God's wrath is now.



1st BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: "Loathsome" sores

² So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

- "noisome and grievous" is the KJV translation for "foul and loathsome" used here in the NKJV. **The actual Greek words give us more information.** The word for "noisome" is *kakos* in Greek, literally meaning "depraved, evil, wicked." The word for "grievous" is *poneros*, another interesting word that literally means *evil* and *calamitous*; also diseased, derelict, implying evil mischief, malice, wicked. These are interesting words to describe physical sores.



- Notice that these sores **come only on those who had taken the mark of the beast and who worshipped the beast's image**. It would seem that these sores are a direct result of evil behavior. People who take the mark of the beast in their body, will suffer greatly in the body, and this plague is just the beginning.
- These sores are an outward sign of inward corruption. It is similar to the analogy of leprosy for sin in scripture.
- Physical sores were **the 6th plague in Egypt**.
- Some speculate that these sores, and the other judgments “clear up” or go away after they are temporarily given. **There is no scriptural evidence of ANY of the judgments merely going away**, making way for the next one (*with the exception of the locust/scorpion stings, the 5th trumpet judgment. Apparently these last for only 5 months*). It is quite possible these are compounded, added to one another.
- **COMMENTARY: It is interesting to note that Moses predicted coming judgment upon Israel similar to this. It has not as yet been fulfilled. This prediction is found in the Book of Deuteronomy: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee" (Deu 28:15). Now here is a list of them: "The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed" (Deu 28:27). These diseases are incurable, according to Deu 28:35: "The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head." These are predictions of Moses. (McGee)**



2nd BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: Seas become blood, everything in them dies

³ Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.

- Waters into blood was the first plague of Egypt. This plague is on the **seas, all of them**.
- **“...blood as of a dead man...”** is a pretty wretched and disgusting description of this plague. This is literal blood, and blood like this is very smelly, congealed and nauseating. Not only will this be an environmental disaster, but it will spell the end of any viable economy on the planet. There will be no food from the sea, and no movement of global trade. **One commentator called this the “horrible rotting witness to the wickedness of men.”**
- **“...every living creature in the sea died.”** This will kill ALL sea life, not just fish and edible food. Without the oceans as a necessary bio-system for cleansing, the planet will soon die, but will beforehand become a place of rotting filth and disease.



3rd BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: Fresh water becomes blood



4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

- While this is similar to the 3rd trumpet judgment (1/3 of rivers and streams bitter, undrinkable), it goes even further. **Now ALL of the drinking water sources become blood.**
- We do not know if these two plagues (2nd and 3rd, waters turned to blood) only affect unbelievers, not touching the believers, or not. It would seem fairly impossible to turn the rivers and seas into blood, but only for unbelievers. However, God cannot be limited. If He chooses to make only those who have taken the mark or worshipped the beast subject to these judgments, He will. Somehow, even if it is beyond our ability to imagine, believers may be immune. But they may not be for these bigger plagues. Nothing concrete is said in regard to these. Some plagues, like the first one regarding sores, do specify they are only affecting unbelievers (the “inhabitants of the earth”).



5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”

- “...angel of the waters...” from this phrase we can speculate that angels have been given authority and power over various aspects of the creation. Here, there is an angel who controls our water supplies.
- This angel reminds the world that although these are wrathful plagues, that even they are anointed and authorized by a righteous God who does right, whether we think so or not. His acts are righteous, **His judgment is righteous.**
- It is interesting to note that in the original Greek the phrase “and who is to be...” is omitted. Our English translators have added this, since it appears together with the rest of the phrase elsewhere. But we know that God’s Word never makes a mistake. It would appear that this phrase is omitted because He has already come. There is no point in saying “who is to come” or “who is to be.” He is. Period. The “is to come” already IS! (Especially at this point.)
- “**it is their just due.**” This is a sobering statement. Unbelievers have either directly or indirectly spilled the blood of the saints through the ages. Now they are given blood to drink. The shedding of blood leads to the shedding of blood. Many will die from this plague. We have a saying for this: “What goes around, comes around.”
- The **reason for this plague** is given here. It is righteous payback.

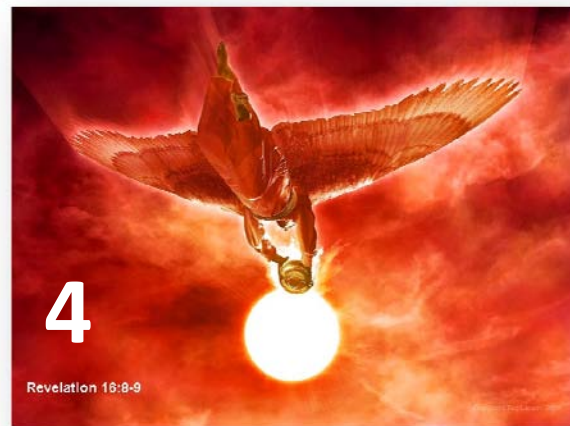
- **“...another from the altar...”** The word for another here is *allos*, which implies another of a different kind. That means this voice is not the same as the angel, so is probably not an angel. “From the altar” may imply that these are the souls under the altar mentioned in the 5th seal judgment. They confirm what the angel of the waters first said, that God’s judgments are indeed righteous and deserved. This is probably a partial answer to their prayers of “How long...?”



4th BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: Sun scorches, man blasphemes, does not repent

⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. ⁹ And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

- **Sun worship was the earliest form of paganism**, or rebellion from God, originated at Bab-el. (see Genesis 10:8-10, and ch 11). The Mazzeroth was also corrupted to become the zodiac. All of paganism began here. It is fitting that God would use the sun to bring about a plague on humankind.
- We don’t know the exact nature of this plague, but apparently the sun becomes so hot that people are actually scorched. We know today that our ozone layer is being depleted, and we have had increased solar flares. Perhaps this is the beginning of the fulfillment of this plague, which will be much worse than we can imagine.
- It is amazing to see that **people here who are affected by this plague KNOW that God is behind these judgments, and yet they did “not repent and give Him glory.”** They would rather suffer and die than bow their knee to God’s authority, or accept His free gift. This seems unimaginable to us, but it is happening today, and it will happen then, even when people are fully aware of God’s truth and His penalty for rebellion. They refuse to lay down their own pride and give up unrighteousness. This may be part of what we read in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12... **“...and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”** This may be the “unpardonable sin” when man turns away from the drawing power of the Holy Spirit in spite of the plain truth in their faces. **One commentator said “This illustrates the most severe rebellion and hostility to the will of God found anywhere in the annals of human history.”** Albert Einstein said *“it is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of men.”* Human pride is indeed ugly, and the top of the list of things God hates (Proverbs 6, 16).



5th BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: Total darkness in Beast's Kingdom, "gnawed" their tongues and blasphemed God, did not repent



¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

- *"...throne of the beast..."* Would most likely indicate the earthly headquarters of the antichrist. This judgment seems limited to his kingdom. But his kingdom is really global at this point. We don't know if this darkness extends across the planet, or is limited to a region of the planet. Or maybe only affects the "citizens" of his kingdom. Knowing how God works, he may even blind everyone but the saints! We don't know for sure. Whatever and wherever this is, apparently electrical power or other attempts to generate light don't work.
- **This is complete and total darkness**, the absolute absence of any light whatsoever. It is a darkness and blackness unlike anything we know, except for perhaps what can be found in the deepest darkest recesses of places like underground caverns. It is a darkness that is tangible and can be felt and is actually painful. It is literally a taste of hell, since if God is Light, separation from Him is the absence of light of any kind.
- **Darkness was the 9th plague of Egypt**, which immediately preceded the final plague of the death of the firstborn.
- Back in chapter 13 we heard the inhabitants of the earth boast about the antichrist and ask the rhetorical question, "who is able to make war with the beast?" **Well, apparently we now have the answer: God!**
- Notice that these people now are also **gnawing their tongues** (extreme agony and pain) because of *"their pains and their sores..."* This would seem to indicate that the previous plagues are not removed as each consecutive judgment is poured out. The sores, the scorching heat and the blood are still with them, and now in this darkness all combine to cause incredible pain. But do these people go to God? Absolutely not. They have been deluded, they hang on to their pride, and they even go so far as to blaspheme God, knowing He is the One doing these things.
- *"...and did not repent of their deeds."* This is the last time this phrase is used. It may be the last time they have opportunity to repent.



6th BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: Euphrates River dried up, 3 unclean spirits, gather whole world to battle



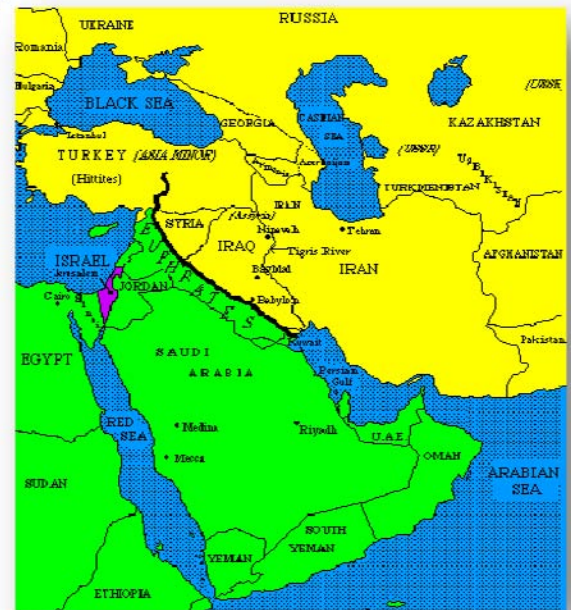
12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

- This sixth bowl is **preparation for Armageddon**, and is a **striking parallel to the 6th Trumpet**: *“Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.”* (9:13-21)



- The **Euphrates River** would be relatively unknown to most except for its presence in current news due to the wars in Iraq. This is a good sized river, nearly 2,000 miles long and anywhere from 900 feet to more than a ½ mile wide in places, and here is this passage it **dries up completely**. Here are few facts to consider about this river:

- The Euphrates is mentioned 25 times in scripture. It is both the **cradle and the grave of all civilization**.
- The Euphrates flows through Babylon.
- It is the eastern most border of the land God promised to Abraham.
- Cyrus the Great of Persia rerouted the Euphrates river in order to walk under the huge city walls of Babylon, and take the city without much of a fight. That night ended the Babylonian empire and began the Persian empire.



- It was also the eastern border of the Roman Empire. The Romans were fearful of the Parthians who lived north of the Euphrates.
 - In ancient days the Euphrates provided protection for Israel from invasion. If it dried up, that protection was gone.
 - The greatest part of mankind is north of the Euphrates (includes Europe, China, India, Japan, Russia, all of Asia, Persia, etc.). In scripture, Israel's enemies were said to be from the north. As this plague unfolds, mankind will be marching south into Israel.
- **Drying up waters frequent in scripture.** God did it, and will do it, a number of times: The Red Sea (Exodus 14:21, the exodus from Egypt); The Jordan River (Joshua 3:17, entrance into the Promised Land); will dry up the Sea (Jeremiah 51:36, future prophecy regarding destruction of Babylon); All the depths of the Nile (Zechariah 10:11, regarding future downfall of Egypt)
 - **“kings from the east...”** The word “east” here is literally two Greek words *anatole helios*. Anatole means the rising of light, or dawn, and is only *east* by implication. *Helios* is the sun. This phrase then literally means the kings of the “rising sun” or “sunrising.” Today Japan is known as the land of the rising sun. This does not mean that these “kings” are from Japan, or even from the orient, although they could be. It means the direction from which these armies flood into Israel. A LOT of lands are east of Israel. This may be a confederate force of several peoples and nations.
 - **This plague has two parts:** 1) the drying up of the Euphrates River, and 2) demonic activity that prepares and deceives the world into war against God. This is all preparation for Armageddon.
 - **“...unclean spirits...”** These are demonic spirits. We see them coming out of the mouths of each of the unholy, counterfeit trinity: dragon, beast, false prophet. Apparently the human antichrist and false prophets are inhabited and used by demonic forces. This may indicate they speak lies and deceit to deceive the nations. You'd have to be totally deceived in order to think you could war with God and win.
 - **“...like frogs...”** Frogs have long been symbols of demonic activity. In Persian lore they are the god of evil, an agent of plagues; in Egypt a frog was the goddess of resurrection and fertility (one of the gods the Almighty used against Egypt, and here); to the Jews they are unclean (an abomination) and demonic by tradition.
 - The goal of these “frog spirits” is to speak lies to the leaders of the all the nations of the earth, and to talk them into gathering in a specific place in order to make war against God. These leaders are not just the kings of the east. The verse says **“the whole world.”** The world's armies will gather to the **“battle of that great day of the God Almighty.”** This is it. The final confrontation between God and the Enemy. Choose sides now!



- Scripture tells us that this gathering is a joke. Psalm 2:1-3 states: *“Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”* What is God’s response to this gathering together for battle against Him? *“He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.”* (2:4)
- The *“great day”* is the **final culmination of the Day of the Lord**. We could do a major study just on the phrase the *“Day of the Lord.”* This is a term used frequently in scripture. Psalm 2 and Joel 3 deal exclusively with this day and there are several other OT references to it. There are varying opinions about how much actual time this “day” covers. Some say it is literal, 24 hours. Others say it is a period of time that includes final judgment (tribulation) through Armageddon. Some say it is only Armageddon. An Old Testament review of the use of this term will tell us that this “day” is: near, full of darkness, full of anguish and distress, full of plagues, sudden, and the earth shakes and nations gather together against God. This is not a good day! It is the day of God’s wrath poured out on all the unbelieving, and the final battle. It is an interesting study, but one we will not undertake here.

¹⁵ *“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*

- *“Behold...”* pay attention, now He comes! These are the words of Jesus. Coming as a thief means He is coming suddenly. The one who watches, keeps alert and is waiting for His return is blessed.
- *“...keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame...”* The garments here are the spotless garments of righteousness, the covering of Jesus. The word “keeps” might imply that one could lose salvation, but this phrase does not necessarily say this. It merely means that those caught without the righteous covering of Jesus will be seen as naked, shamed and judged.
- **COMMENTARY: "Blessed is he that ... keepeth his garments." What garments are these? Edersheim sheds light on this phrase by explaining that the captain of the temple made his rounds during the night to see if the guards were awake and alert. If one was found asleep, he was either beaten or his garments set on fire. I suppose it could be paraphrased, "Don't lose your shirt. Be sure that you are clothed with the righteousness of Christ." [which cannot be removed!] (McGee)**
- These words from Jesus are addressed to the saints on earth at this time (not the Church). We have spoken before that the people who will benefit most from a study of the book of Revelation will be those who live through this time. The saints will be following the signs and matching them to this book. When they see the last plagues poured out, they know His coming is imminent.

¹⁶ *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

- *“They”* here are the demonic forces of the unholy trinity.
- *“Armageddon...”* a topic that could take another major study all to itself!

- In essence, Armageddon is the Greek rendition of “Har Megiddo” and is the name of an actual place, the mountain, or hill, of Megiddo. The word Megiddo literally means “place of troops.” Many scriptural battles have taken place here. Barak and Deborah defeated Sisera and Canaanites here (Judges 5:19); Gideon met the Midianites at Megiddo (Judges 7:1-25); Samson won over the Philistines (Judges 15); Saul died here in battle (1 Samuel 31:1-13); Pharaoh Necco killed Josiah here (2 Kings 23:39) and several others. It is the most famous of all battlegrounds in Jewish history. Titus and the Roman army used this natural corridor, and so did the Crusaders in the Middle Ages, as well as British General Allenby when he defeated the Turkish armies in 1917. Even Napoleon called this place an *“ideal battleground for all the armies of the world.”* Megiddo is well known, and well used, throughout history.
- This area is located on the south rim of Esdraelon, and is also known as the **Plain or Valley of Esdraelon**, and the **Valley of Jezreel**. Many believe it is also the **Valley of Jehoshaphat** referenced in Joel 3:12, which seems likely from a reading of this passage (literally “the valley of God judges”). It is helpful to read the entire 3rd chapter of Joel. This area is also referred to as the “valley of decision” in Joel 3. This is indeed the final world battle before the Millennial Kingdom.
- There is a lot of speculation about this place and this name. Some say that it really means Jerusalem, though it would seem unlikely to enable all the armies of the world to gather. Other scriptures, such as the reference to the 1600 furlongs earlier in this chapter, would seem to indicate it is not just symbolic, but a real place where a real battle takes place. The 1600 furlongs is about the length of this entire corridor.
- At the time of John, this place was relatively unknown, forgotten in history, but **well known through Old Testament scriptures**. It signified a place of great slaughter, terrible retribution for the wicked, and a place of mourning. Megiddo carried a very bad reputation.



- This is the **only place in scripture this word (Armageddon) is used**, but there are many other references to Megiddo. Man's imagination has run wild with Armageddon. Everyone seems to know it means the last big battle of good and evil, or the final world war. There is no end to disaster movies and books and video games about this so-called Armageddon. Few know the real meaning of this word, however, nor the terrible history of this place, and the terrible future it will see. We should note that while the world uses this term to mean a war to end all wars, the actual word used here is merely to name the place of this war.
- It might seem to us like the whole world is gathering for war against God and against His people on their own, like they are in control. However, we must remember that all this is **according to God's plan, and HE is in control**.
- This "war" has a very **anti-climactic end**, as we will see. It becomes a supper for the birds of the earth, and is over with one word, one "breath of his word" from Jesus. The actual event of this war is most likely not here at this moment, it is in chapter 19. Here, the world's armies are merely gathering for war.
- It's not over yet. There is one last plague to be poured out, even now.

7th BOWL (PLAGUE) JUDGMENT: "It is done!" huge earthquake, cataclysmic events, giant hailstones



17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

- Ephesians 2:1-2 tells us something interesting about the Enemy: *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience..."* Satan is called "the prince of the air, or "prince of the power of the air..." This pouring out of the final bowl of wrath is upon satan's realm of power. This is fitting.



- Another voice comes from the temple (last time it is mentioned) announcing that *"it is done."* **God's wrath is complete**. The only thing left is the final disposition of Armageddon that we read of later. The word for "done" here is the Greek *ginomai*, which literally means "accomplished." God has accomplished the fulfillment of His prophetic plan perfectly. This should bring to mind another English phrase "it is finished" which is actually the Greek *tetelestai* which means "paid in full." Jesus uttered this one from the Cross. The payment for our sins was complete at that time. One phrase provided the payment for our eternal salvation. The other accomplished the final last bit of God's pre-ordained wrath on disobedient mankind. Salvation and wrath are both accomplished, and both announced.

¹⁸ *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

- **Noises, thunderings and lightnings** are common in the book of Revelation and usually occur around God's throne or presence. They also were seen at Mt Sinai when God appeared there to give the Law. They are a reminder of God's awesome nature and great sovereignty. These here appear to signal the final blows, judgments, to earth before the second coming of Jesus – the imminent presence of God on earth.
- **We now have another great earthquake.** This is the third one in this book. But this one will probably be bigger than all the others, since we have the phrase *“as had not occurred since men were on the earth.”* That is going to be some earthquake and it will most likely shake the entire earth, and will be like no other.

¹⁹ *Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.* ²⁰ *Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

- **The big question here is “what city?”** Many speculate it is Jerusalem, since Zechariah prophesied of a huge earthquake that would change the entire topography of Jerusalem: *“And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.”* (14:4) But this earthquake in Zechariah is clearly associated with the coming of Jesus to Jerusalem on his return to earth. The city that appears in the same context as this verse in question is Babylon, and the idea we are to get is that Babylon will be destroyed and is under the judgment of God. There will be more information about the destruction of Babylon in coming chapters 17 and 18.
- Notice that this earthquake is **not limited to one “great city”** whatever city that is (probably Babylon). This earthquake is worldwide, affecting the “cities of the nations” which fall in the quake. It would seem appropriate that when the feet of the Almighty touch the earth, the whole earth would shudder violently!
- We have previously discussed the “cup” of God's judgment, and we have here another reference of the *“fierceness of His wrath.”* **Most likely this earthquake's epicenter is indeed Babylon**, which will be completely and utterly destroyed as has been prophesied for thousands of years, but the whole earth will feel it and much will be destroyed.
- This is not your typical earthquake. *“Every island fled away and the mountains were not found.”* God is redesigning the earth here, destroying what man has corrupted. Mountains are leveled, islands disappear. It would seem that nothing could live through such devastation.
- **A note of consideration...**In chapter 6 we presented the 6 seals of the first judgments as a possible “overview” of the entire tribulation period. The 6th seal is a huge earthquake, which has been called the “wrath of the Lamb.” In this earthquake the skies roll up and every mountain and island are affected: *“Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.”* (6:14) It seems logical, and quite possible, that these earthquakes are one and the same. Chapter 6, in the overview sense, told us it was coming at the end of the tribulation. Now, in chapter 16, it happens, at the end of the tribulation.

- **Keep in mind here that we have no reason NOT to take these things very literally.** However, some people believe the reference to islands and mountains is really symbolic for “republics and nations” meaning that all human government falls here. Both are most likely true. There will be no more human government past this time.

²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

- And now, on top of this worldwide devastating earthquake is added one final blow, literally. God brings **huge hailstones, big enough to kill**, upon the earth and upon “men.” This one does not say it is upon only the “inhabitants of the earth” (unbelievers). It may be upon the entire earth, affecting everyone.
- **“Each hailstone about the weight of a talent”** would be like something from a horror movie. Depending on which measurement system you used (Greek, 86 lbs; Hebrew, 110 lbs; Babylonian, 125 lbs.) you would have one VERY large hailstone, able to smash buildings and kill instantly. The only safety from this judgment would be in an underground bunker.
- It is interesting to remember here that the **penalty for blaspheming**, what we have been told repeatedly that these earth “dwellers” do in the face of God’s work, was **stoning**. How appropriate. God is instituting the Old Testament Law as punishment against the blasphemers of the earth. He is doing the stoning.
- **Hail is used throughout scripture** as a plague, and as judgment on Israel’s enemies.
- An appropriate verse: **“Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?”** (Job 38:22-23; God speaking to Job from the whirlwind reminding Him of His power and sovereignty.)
- If all of this is literal, and we have no reason to believe it isn’t, then we have some very catastrophic, violent and totally devastating topographical changes happening on earth at this time. The earth is a mess here. This is to be expected, considering what we know of Zechariah 14. This chapter is amazing, and worthy of a careful read in this study. Here is a portion: **“Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You. It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish. It shall be one day Which is known to the LORD— Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light. And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— “The LORD is one,” And His name one. All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”** (14:5b-11) Zechariah 14 reads as the culmination, the ending up and completion, of God’s plan immediately prior to the Millennial Kingdom. Notice here that that Jerusalem will be raised up and all other places “turned into a plain,” or flattened. This is precisely what is happening in Revelation 16.

- It is helpful to read the entire 14th chapter of Zechariah (*in fact, the entire book, as we consider it one of the "Apocalyptic Triangle, along with Daniel and Revelation*). Consider this verse about the Lord's return: ***"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. (14:4)***

COMMENTARY "...The cleaving in two of the Mount of Olives in Zechariah 14:4 is regarded by most commentators as being quite beyond a literal interpretation: and yet, a few years ago, The Illustrated London News gave some interesting drawings of the scene of the great volcanic eruption in the North Island, New Zealand. It will be remembered that the outburst of volcanic energy began by the explosion of Mount Tarawera, a mountain, which had no crater upon it, and showed no signs of recent activity. Tarawera was split in two by the sudden opening of a great chasm or line of craters four miles long, about 500 feet wide, and, in many places, 400 feet deep." (Bullinger, E.W., The Apocalypse, © 1909)

(Notice this was written over 100 years ago!)

All seven plagues are poured out in rapid succession, or even all at once. With the 7th plague, IT IS DONE. There are still some "loose ends" to finish and relate in John's vision, however, most chiefly the final judgment and destruction of Babylon, and the actual return of the Messiah. Both of these events may take place at the end of these last plagues. They will be detailed in chapters 17, 18 (Babylon) and 19 (the return of Yeshua and the Saints).

