

Revelation Chapter 16

Revelation chapter 16 describe the final seven Vials of the wrath of God, representing the climax of God's punishment of sinners during the Tribulation period. No repentance is invited or shown. The judgments are somewhat parallel both to the 10 plagues on Egypt and to the trumpets of chapters 8 and 9.

The vials (also called bowls), are more total and universal in their effects than were the trumpets, and generally affect people more directly.

Revelation 16:1 "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."

The seven angels, each holding a vial (bowl), containing the judgments that are about to fall on the earth, seem reluctant to cast forth their bitter judgments. However, they are obedient to the voice of God when He speaks: These bowls constitute what the Lord Jesus referred to as the "great distress" (Matt. 24:21), or the last 42 months of the Tribulation period.

Four of these seven judgments occurred literally in Egypt among the ten plagues and have never been accepted by credible Bible teachers as anything but literal. In addition, part of the 6th judgment; that of drying up the Euphrates River and producing frogs, was also literally fulfilled during the history of Israel. Frogs were generated as one of the plagues of Egypt, and both the Red Sea and Jordan River were rolled back so that God's people could walk forth on dry ground.

Therefore, nothing new will be transpiring when God dries up the Euphrates River in order that the kings of the East may march over on dry ground.

If the plagues of Egypt were literal, and they certainly were, why should we not expect these awful judgments likewise to be literal?

Revelation 16:2 "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and [upon] them which worshipped his image."

The First Vial Judgment. Foul and Loathsome Sores: When men choose to worship Antichrist rather than Christ and demonstrate their allegiance by accepting the mark of the beast, God responds by sending on them a plague of "a noisome and grievous sore". John makes it clear that these awful sores afflict only those who worship the Antichrist and who have accepted the mark of the Beast; no Tribulation saint suffers from them.

The first "vial" produces a painful "sore" on all the followers of the "beast", wherever they are. This parallels the boils of the sixth plague on Egypt (Exodus 9:9-11; compare Deut. 28:27; Job 2:7-13).

The Septuagint (LXX), uses the same Greek word to describe the boils that plagued the Egyptians (Exodus 9:9-11), and afflicted Job (Job 2:7). In the New Testament, it describes the open sores that covered the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:21). All over the world, people will be afflicted with incurable, open, oozing sores.

“Mark of the beast”: Only the worshipers of Antichrist will be afflicted (see note on 13:16; compare 14:9-11).

Further confirmation that the three judgments; the seals, the trumpets, and the vials are sequential, not concurrent (as some bible teachers suggest), is clarified in the time of this judgment.

Antichrist will not be set up as the object of worship until the middle of the Tribulation period. This judgment falls on the human race because of their worship of Antichrist, which can only occur after the middle of the Tribulation.

The recipients are the beast worshipers. The selection from among the peoples on the earth is clearly seen in this passage: Only those containing the mark of the beast and worshipping his image will be selected for those awful sores.

This indicates that God in His marvelous grace will not bring judgment on believers during this latter half of Tribulation, but will protect them as He did the Israelites during the plagues of Egypt.

This further confirms our assumption that in the previous judgments, when He slays 25 % and then another third of the world's population that's remaining, (making a total of 50%) He will exempt believers.

Revelation 16:3 "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead [man]: and every living soul died in the sea."

The Second Vial Judgment. Became as the blood of a dead man”: Now the second angel “poured out his vial upon the sea”, and it turns into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea dies.

“Second ... vial ... every living soul died in the sea”: This is reminiscent of the second trumpet (8:8-9), and of the first plague against Egypt (Exodus 7:20-25). However, this plague will be far more widespread. The water in the world’s oceans will become thick, dark, and coagulated, like the blood of a corpse. The death and decay of billions of sea creatures will only add to the misery of this judgment.

We have already seen that God will cause a third part of the sea to turn to blood during the 2nd trumpet, but this second bowl includes the entire sea. Imagine when all living creatures in the seas die. Think of the unbearable stench and the potential for disease.

“The “blood of a dead man” is coagulated and rotting. No evaporation for rain would be possible.

This judgment may well interfere with commercial shipping and send whole populations into confusion as people grope for an adequate supply of water, not to mention destroying what is left of the fish industry.

Verses 4-7: The third “vial” turns all fresh “water” to “blood”, so that no pure water for drinking is left on earth. This again parallels the first Egyptian plague, but also the third trumpet (8:10-11). That it is “righteous” for God to judge the earth thus, is shown by the fact that the Beast and his followers “had shed the blood of saints and prophets”. Those who shed the blood of God’s people must now “drink” blood (compare Isa. 49:26).

Revelation 16:4 "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."

The Third Vial Judgment. Poured out his vial upon the rivers”: The third vial, a sequel to the second, carries with it an interesting explanation as to why God will permit it. God will destroy the only remaining sources of water, the rivers and fountains or springs of the deep, by letting them turn to blood.

“Third ... vial ... rivers and fountains of waters”: Fresh water, already in short supply because of the prolonged drought (11:6), will now suffer the fate of the oceans (compare Exodus (7:19ff), in addition to suffering from thirst, the worshipers of Antichrist will have no clean water with which to wash their sores.

Whether this means literal “blood”, is inconsequential, for if Christ can turn water to wine, He certainly can turn water to blood. What is significant is that it will become corrupt blood, which will breed disease and pestilence. One of the basic needs of humankind is water. Unless God provides water from another source or engineers by some process can turn this corrupted water into pure water, the world will be in a state of riot and confusion, seeking this necessity of life.

All of this describes devastation beyond what we can comprehend. The judgment of God has fallen. Sometimes, God uses wars to bring His will about. At any rate, this no doubt does away with a good part of humanity.

Revelation 16:5 "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus."

Notice here, this is not the people saying that God is righteous. This is the angel saying God is righteous. At no time do the people repent. The angel here is saying that this judgment that God has brought is justified. This God mentioned here is the great “I Am”.

“Which art, and wast”: This phrase expresses God’s eternity (compare 1:4, 8; 14:8; 11:17). Verse 6 says that the eternal God will judge justly because they have killed the believers and preachers of the gospel (6:9-11; 7:9-17; 11:18; 17:6; 18:20). This slaughter will have no parallel in history (Matt. 24:21), and neither will the vengeance of God (compare Rom. 12:19-21).

Revelation 16:6 "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

“Given them blood to drink”: The thick, blood-like substance which the fresh waters have become is all that is available to drink (compare verse 4).

“They are worthy”: The angel exonerates God from any charge that His judgments are too harsh. The unspeakably wicked generation then alive will shed more blood than any before. It, including that of saints (6:9; 17:6), and prophets (11:7-10). God’s judgment is fair and proper (compare Exodus 21:25-27; Lev. 24:19-20; Heb. 10:26-31).

It seems that blood in their water supply is in punishment for the blood of the saints and prophets. Throughout the ages, the world and its evil system has been opposed to God and His people. They deserve this punishment.

Revelation 16:7 "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous [are] thy judgments."

“Altar”: The personified altar echoes the words of the angel, reinforcing the truth that God is just in all judgment (19:1-2; compare Gen. 18:25; Psalm 51:4; Rom. 3:4).

As bad as these judgments are, they are deserved. As it was said before, everyone likes to think of God as love, but few remember also, that He is the Judge of the world. Thank God His grace saved me. He is longsuffering, not willing that even one should perish. However, there is a day of reckoning when the God of the entire world will judge fairly. This seems to be that time.

Verses 8-9: The fourth “vial” scorches the earth with “fire” from the “sun”. This is the opposite of the fourth trumpet (8:12). The followers of the Beast are scorched as well (contrast 7:16). Since they have by now made a permanent decision to reject God and follow the Beast, they blaspheme “the name of God” and refuse to repent. Like Pharaoh, their hearts have become hardened (compare Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34-35).

Revelation 16:8 "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire."

The Fourth Vial Judgment. “Scorch men with fire”: Their mouths already parched from lack of water, those who are unrepentant suffer even more intense thirst when God causes the sun to “scorch them with fire”.

“Forth ... vial ... scorch men with fire”: The sun that normally provides light, warmth, and energy will become a deadly killer. With no fresh water to drink, earth’s inhabitants will face extreme heat. The scorching heat will melt the polar ice caps, which some estimate would raise the level of the world’s oceans by 200 feet, inundating many of the world’s major cities and producing further catastrophic loss of life (compare Amos 9:5-6). The resulting disruption of ocean transportation will make it difficult to distribute the dwindling resource of food and water.

How right the angel was who said to God, "True and righteous are Your judgments" (16:7). Like Pharaoh, their hearts have become hardened (Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34, 35).

The environmentalists are telling us every day that we are destroying the Ozone layer above the earth. Every time a person sprays their hair or uses an aerosol spray of any kind it does away with Ozone. The scientists tell us that this is so thin that it might just go away altogether. And if it did, people would die by the thousands from harmful rays from the sun that had not been filtered to make them safe.

You see, God put this earth together very intricately and man, in changing God's ways, has messed up the atmosphere. An interesting thing to note in connection with this is, that it takes just a very thin coat of the shed blood of Jesus to protect us from the enemy. What a comparison.

Revelation 16:9 "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."

"Scorched with great heat". But even this does not drive the rebels to their knees in repentance. Instead, they blaspheme the name of God "who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory."

“They repented not”: Incredibly, sinners will still refuse to repent (compare verses 11 and 21), but instead blaspheme God, the One they know has caused their afflictions.

With this type of rays from the sun, they would be covered with sores. This terrible plague is vented at the beast and its followers. The worst thing they could possibly do was to curse God, and that is just what they did. They did not repent; their hearts had been hardened. They either were not aware of God's power or just did not want to give Him the glory. Either way, they are in trouble.

This type of "heat" would burn up all crops, cause droughts, and probably even melt all the polar ice region.

Verses 10-11: The fifth “vial” produces “darkness” on the “seat” and “kingdom” of the “beast”. His seat is his throne or headquarters, probably either Rome or Jerusalem. His followers suffer “pain” agony, and fear. There are parallels with both the ninth plague on Egypt (Exodus 10:21-29), and the fourth trumpet (8:12). The “sores” of the first vial continue, and the Beast’s followers continue to blaspheme God and refuse to repent of their sins.

Revelation 16:10 "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,"

The Fifth Vial Judgment. Darkness: What's John talking about when he refers to the judgment falling upon the throne or seat of the beast and his kingdom? It's probably best to think of the beast's throne as a reference to his entire kingdom since his kingdom was full of darkness. Some see this to mean the city of Babylon, but his kingdom will be worldwide.

“Fifth ... vial ... seat of the beast”: This refers to either Antichrist’s actual throne, or his capital city, but extends to all his dominion. Regardless of where the darkness begins, it eventually covers Antichrist’s entire kingdom.

“Darkness”: Worldwide darkness is elsewhere associated with the judgment of God (compare Isa. 60:2; Joel 2:2; Mark 13:24-25).

Notice also that tremendous darkness envelops the beast's kingdom. This same phenomenon occurred in Egypt during the plagues; the whole land was consumed in darkness so oppressive that Moses said you could actually feel it. That's the sort of thing that will come upon the kingdom of the Antichrist at this time. This divine judgment will give a physical illustration of their spiritual darkness.

You see, the beast may have control of evil men upon the earth, but he cannot control God or nature.

This "darkness" here was not just physical darkness, which is bad enough; but this "darkness" is of the spirit as well, bringing depression, attempted suicide, and all sorts of evil attacks on the mind.

“Gnawed their tongues”: A futile attempt to alleviate the pain from their sores, the drought, and the fierce heat.

Two things indicate that this darkness will prevail for some time on the earth: the predictions of other prophets, and the effects on human beings. This judgment, a repetition of the 9th plague of Egypt, is to be understood literally:

Amos 5:18 "Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light"

Nahum 1:6 "Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him".

Nahum 1:8 "but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into darkness".

"That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness" (Zephaniah 1:15).

Revelation 16:11 "And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

“Blasphemed the God of heaven”. A sign of their continued loyalty to Antichrist and their anger at God for the cumulative miseries brought about by the first 5 bowls. “God of heaven”, a frequent Old Testament title for God, appears in the New Testament only here (and in 11:13).

Christ's own prediction was: "But in those days, following that distress, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light" (Mark 13:24). The effects on people, described in:

Rev. 16:10c "And they gnawed their tongues for pain", indicate that the relief from the heat will soon produce an exasperating, frustrating darkness. We may forecast that human ingenuity in producing electricity may solve this problem, but we must remember that the water supply produces electricity, and with the tampering of the water supply, as seen in the second and third judgments, people may be incapable of continuing to draw electrical power and illumination from the rivers and bodies of water.

These judgments are so clearly supernatural that everyone will know that they descend from the God of heaven. But instead of falling down before Him to become the recipients of His mercy, people only "cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done." They not only blaspheme God, but refuse to change their ways. Let it be understood that those who reject the Lord do so, not because of philosophical doubts or unexplained answers to unanswered questions, but as a result of hardness of heart and love for sin.

“Their sores”: The lingering effects of the first bowl are the chief cause of their blasphemy.

Verses 12-16: The sixth “vial” results in the gathering of the armies of the “whole world” together in Palestine for the battle of Armageddon”. The “river Euphrates”, at the northeastern boundary of the promised kingdom of Israel, is “dried up”, so that the “kings of the east” may come into Palestine. These kings are unidentified (perhaps they are from China, India, or other Oriental nations), but there may be a parallel with the sixth trumpet (9:13-21), and its two million horsemen (9:14, 16). The “three unclean spirits” are demons who support the activities of Satan, the “beast”, and the “false prophet”. By means of “miracles”, they will convince the eastern “kings” and all the armies and “kings of the earth and of the whole world” to “gather” in Palestine to fight against the second coming of Christ (compare 19:19). This is Satan’s final attempt to prevent Christ’s return. Verse 15 is an exhortation to the surviving believers to be watchful and alert (compare Matt. 24:32 - 25:13), and to remain faithful and loyal to Christ during a time of intense persecution. To have “garments”, rather than be “naked”, relates to spiritual preparedness. Verse 16 identifies the place of the final battle as Armageddon, for the “Hebrew Har Megiddon (the Hill of Megiddo). The hill country of Megiddo and the adjacent valley of Esdraelon have been the site of many important battles (compare Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29).

Revelation 16:12 "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

The Sixth Vial Judgment. Euphrates Dried Up: The sixth bowl judgment comes in 2 parts.

- (1) The drying up of the Euphrates River, which will be a preparation for the "battle on the great day of God Almighty;" and
- (2) The tremendous demon forces that will bring the rebellious armies of the world to the Valley of Megiddo for the purpose of opposing the Lord.

"Sixth ... vial ... Euphrates": Called "the great river" five times in Scripture (compare 9:14; Gen. 15:18; Deut. 1:7; Joshua 1:4). It flows some 1800 miles from its source on the slopes of Mt. Ararat to the Persian Gulf (see note on 9:14). It forms the eastern boundary of the land God promised to Israel. With its flow already reduced by the prolonged drought and intensified heat, God supernaturally will dry it up to make way for the eastern confederacy to reach Palestine (Isa. 11:15).

"The kings of the east": God providentially draws these kings and their armies in order to destroy them in the battle of Armageddon (verse 14). Their reason for coming may be to rebel against Antichrist, whose failure to alleviate the world's suffering will no doubt erode his popularity. Or, this may be a final act of rabid anti-Semitism intent on destroying Israel, perhaps in retaliation for the plagues sent by her God. Since the sun may have melted the ice caps on Ararat, flooding the valley of the Euphrates as the river overflows its banks and bridges, the land will be swamped. God will have to dry it up; miraculously for the eastern army to get to Armageddon.

The Euphrates River is the eastern border of the land God gave to Abraham (Gen. 15:18). It is about 1800 miles long and so large that it forms a natural barrier against the armies of the world. Most people are not particularly conscious of the fact that it served as the eastern border of the Roman Empire. The sixth bowl judgment will dry up that river to make way for the "kings of the East."

It is likely that when the Euphrates River, the natural boundary between east and west is dried up," the "kings from the east" will march a sizable army across to battle with the King of kings. That army will probably be 3 to 5 million strong. These forces will be joined in the valley of Megiddo by huge armies from all over the world, and while that valley is vast as Napoleon has said, "the most ideal, natural battlefield in the world", even it has a limit to how many people it can hold.

This river could have dried up because of the problems caused by some of the other vials. There will be such a drought that this waterway will dry up and these armies from the east will come into Israel on dry land.

These kings from the east have befuddled Bible prophecy scholars for many years, for few scholars mentioned anything about them. That is, until the communist takeover of China after

WWII. Since then it has become apparent that this largest of all countries, by population, has a prophetic role in end time events.

China is controlled by some of the most dedicated Communists in the world. They are not "reformers" or "progressive" as our media tried to represent them a few years ago. They are a ruthless group of elite gangsters who have never wavered in their plan to use China as a military platform from which to conquer the world. The events of the next 2 decades, if indeed we have that long, will prove that point. One thing we can be certain: China is not going to go away. John the Revelator saw them as players on the world scene in the end times.

Even so, the Bible has very little to say about China. In fact, what is said includes more than just China, for the terms "kings from the east" really means "kings from the rising sun," which would include Japan and possibly other Asian countries.

Dr. John F. Walvoord was considered perhaps the world's foremost interpreter of biblical prophecy. He was a member of the Dallas Theological Seminary faculty. He was born in 1910 and died on December 20, 2002. He was 92 years old.

He was considered the dean of prophecy scholars when he wrote: There has been some tendency to take the expression "the kings of the east" literally, "the kings of the sunrise" as referring specifically to Japan where the rising sun is a symbol of its political power. However, it is more natural to consider the term "rising sun" as a synonym for east. The Euphrates River, one of the first rivers mentioned in the Bible, has served for centuries as the natural dividing line between East and West.

The significance of the rise of China to become a principal player among the nations of the world was not lost on Dr. John Walvoord. He saw the prophetic significance of the Chinese rise to prominence back in 1967 when he wrote: The fact that the rise of Asia has occurred in the 20th century with so many rapid and unexpected developments is further evidence that the world is moving toward its final climax and the end of the times of the Gentiles. In Asia, as in other parts of the world, the stage is being set for the final drama in which the kings of the east will have their important part.

If he were writing on that subject today, he might be inclined to say the curtain is about to rise. We are the first generation to witness the sleeping giant of China reach the potential of fulfilling this prophecy. No one doubts that unless something drastic and unforeseen occurs soon, China will gain control of most of the countries of the East, with whom she shares many religious and cultural similarities.

It is realistic to believe that she could be led in these very days by her master, the dragon, "that old serpent, the devil," to rebel against God that she would actually join the armies of the world in opposition to the coming of Jesus Christ. What is needed to bring her to that point? Very little! Merely the deceiving spirit forewarned by John the Revelator. She is almost there today and could gain control of the entire Orient in 10 or 20 years.

Remember, the events of Revelation (Rev 16:12), do not take place until 7 years after the rise of Antichrist, which follows the Rapture of the church. More than enough time to be fulfilled and just one more reason to believe Christ may return for His church in our generation.

Revelation 16:13 "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [come] 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”: A common New Testament designation for demons (compare Matt. 12:43; Mark 1:23; Luke 8:29). These are especially vile, powerful and deceitful (verse 14). They are demons who support the activities of Satan, the beast and the false prophet. By means of miracles, they will convince the eastern "kings" and all the armies and kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather in Palestine to fight against the second coming of Christ (Rev. 19:19). This is Satan's final attempt to prevent Christ's return.

These unclean spirits will no doubt perform supernatural signs as part of their deception. Undoubtedly, they will work lying wonders to deceive the eastern kings, seducing them to make the difficult journey to their doom at Armageddon.

“The dragon ... the beast ... the false prophet”: The “un-holy trinity”, composed of Satan (the dragon; see note on 12:3), the Antichrist (the beast; see note on 11:7), and Antichrist’s associate (the false prophet; see note on 13:11), spew out this plague.

“Like frogs”: This figure further emphasizes their vileness (compare Lev. 10:11, 41). Frogs were unclean animals according to Old Testament dietary laws (Lev. 11:10-11, 41). Persian mythology viewed them as plague-inducing creatures. The demons are thus described as slimy, cold-blooded, loathsome beings.

Revelation 16:14 "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, [which] go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

“Miracles”: These are supernatural wonders (compare 13:12-15), designed to deceive (compare 19:20; 1 Kings 22:20-23; Mark 13:22), the kings into invading Palestine. Their impact will be so great that the unclean spirits are able to induce the kings to make the journey to Palestine in spite of their sores, the intense heat, drought, and darkness.

Kings of ... the whole world”: No longer just the eastern confederacy, but now all the world begins to gather in Palestine for the final, climactic battle (Psalm 2:2-3; Joel 3:2-4; Zech. 14:1-3).

“The battle of that great day of God Almighty”: The Battle of Armageddon (verse 16). It is the great war with God and Christ (see notes on 2 Thess. 1:7-10; compare Joel 2:11; 3:2, 4). The war will end when Christ arrives (19:17-20).

You see, it tells you here that these are "spirits of devils". In other words, they are the followers of the devil. Demons are the fallen angels who followed Lucifer out of heaven. These "spirits of devils" have power to do miracles, just like the Egyptian magicians copied some of Moses'

miracles. Their power is limited, just as was the Egyptians. When Moses threw his rod down and it became a snake, the Egyptians threw two rods down and they became snakes. The only difference was that Moses' snake swallowed their snakes (Exodus 7:9-12).

The Bible says that at the end, the devil will have power enough to call down fire from heaven. His miracles will be so convincing that people will believe a lie. This is deception to the utmost. These evil spirits are so deceiving, that they convince these armies to come against Israel. They willingly come to the battle of Armageddon, believing they will win. This battle is actually the forces of evil coming against God Himself. This war has actually been going on for centuries, but here is the culmination of it all.

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

“Blessed” (see note on 1:3).

“He that watcheth, and keepeth his garments”: Our Lord stresses the need for constant readiness for His return (compare 1 John 2:28). The imagery pictures a soldier ready for battle, or a homeowner watchful for the arrival of a thief (see also 3:3; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Peter 3:10).

We see here that this comes unexpectedly. The garment spoken of here is the robe of righteousness. We must not despair of His coming and fall away into sin. We need to walk in righteousness after we receive our robe of righteousness, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Verse 15 is an exhortation to the surviving believers to be watchful and alert (Matt 24:32 - 25:13), and to remain faithful and loyal to Christ during a time of intense persecution. To have garments, rather than be naked, relates to spiritual preparedness.

Revelation 16:16 "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Armageddon is the place where this great battle is to be fought is in Israel. The blood will run up to the horses bridle in this valley of Megiddo during this battle. This valley is called by the name Jezreel also. There have already been twenty battles fought at this very spot, but never a battle of this magnitude. This battle will be the twenty-first (3 x 7). Three means God. Seven means spiritually complete. God Himself will settle the outcome of this once and for all. This truly will be the war to end all wars. Shortly after this battle, Jesus will set up His Kingdom.

“Har-Megedon”: The Hebrew name for Mt. Megiddo, 60 miles north of Jerusalem. The battle will rage on the nearby plains, site of Barak’s victory over the Canaanites (Judges chapter 4), and Gideon’s victory over the Midianites (Judges chapter 7). Napoleon called this valley the greatest battlefield he had ever seen. But the Battle of Armageddon will not be limited to the Megiddo plains, it will encompass the length of Palestine (see note on 14:20).

Verse 16 identifies the place of the final battle as Armageddon, from the Hebrew “Har Megiddo” (the Hill of Megiddo). The hill country of Megiddo and the adjacent valley of Esdraelon have been the site of many important battles (Judge 5:15; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29).

Verses 17-21: The seventh “vial” produces the destruction of Babylon, “the great city. Babylon” is further described and identified (in chapters 17 and 18). The statement “It is done” shows that with this vial and the return of Christ Himself, the judgments are now finished. A tremendous “earthquake” destroys the great city and “the cities of the nations”. The “cup” symbolizes the “wrath” of God (compare 14:10). The large “hail” (a “talent” weighting about 60 to 100 pounds), may help to destroy the “cities” (compare Joshua 10:11; Ezek. 38:18-22). But unbelieving mankind still blasphemes “God” and has no opportunity for repentance. The seventh vial is the last of the seven plagues (15:6-8), and also completes both the seventh trumpet (11:15), and the seventh seal (8:1).

Revelation 16:17 "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."

The Seventh Vial Judgment. The Wrath of God: Then came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. 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.

“Seventh ... vial ... It is done”: This bowl will complete God’s wrath (except for final judgment on the rebellion at the end of the Millennium; 20:7-10), and immediately precedes the second coming of Christ. It will usher in the worst calamity in the history of the world. The voice from the temple in heaven is undoubtedly that of God Himself. “It is done” is best translated, “it has been and will remain done” (compare John 19:30).

This "great voice out of the temple" was probably God. In Genesis, when God made the earth in six days, then He said "it is finished". When Jesus hung on the cross six hours, He said "it is finished". I believe that is just what this "It is done" means here. I believe this is at the close of the six-1000 year days of work for the earth, just before the 1000 year Sabbath of rest. God would be the one to decide, and I believe this is Him speaking here.

When the seventh angel pours out his bowl into the air a voice will be heard from the Temple of God before the throne, conveying a most welcome message: "It is done!" It is most welcome because it signifies the consummation of the Tribulation, the conclusion of the day of God's wrath on the ungodly, the end of the time of Jacob's trouble.

Revelation 16:18 "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, [and] so great."

God will punctuate the completion of His wrath with a devastating earthquake, the most powerful in earth's history (compare verses 19-21).

This final judgment of God will appear in the form of the world's greatest earthquake, one that "has never occurred like it since man has been on earth." As prophesied in Haggai;

Haggai 2:6-7 "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;" "And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

Revelation 16:19 "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

"The great city" (compare 11:13; 21:10; see notes on Zech. 14:1-8). Jerusalem will be split into 3 parts (Zech. 14:4), not as a judgment (compare 11:13), but as an improvement. The additional water supply (Zech. 14:8), and topographical changes (Zech. 14:4-5), will prepare the city for its central place in the millennial kingdom. Jerusalem is the only city to be spared the judgment (compare 1 Chron. 23:25; Psalm 125:1-2; Micah 4:7), and will be made more beautiful (Psalm 48:2), because of her repentance (see 11:13).

"Cities of the nations": God's purpose is very different for the rest of the world's cities, they are to be destroyed.

"Babylon": The capital of the Antichrist's empire will receive a special outpouring of God's wrath as prophesied (in Isaiah 13:6-13). Chapters 17 and 18 give details of its destruction.

God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.

In (chapter 11:8), we see where the witnesses were killed described as "the great city". This is Jerusalem where it is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

The massive earth quake will split Jerusalem into 3 parts. When the Mount of Olives splits in two, it will create a chasm into which the believers can seek refuge until the awful carnage is completed. Its interesting to note that there is a fault line that runs under the Mount of Olives that moves in exactly the same direction that the Bible prophesies.

Zech. 14:3-5 "Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah."

Jerusalem is being prepared for the central role it plays during the millennial kingdom. This is where New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven and rest.

In addition, "cities of the nations collapsed," meaning that all of the cities of the world will be destroyed.

Revelation 16:20 "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

"Every island fled ... mountains were not found": This powerful earthquake will radically alter all the earth's topography, preparing it for the coming millennial kingdom (compare 6:12-14; Isa. 40:4-5; Jer. 4:23-27).

In addition, every island will vanish and the mountains will not be found. This will indicate a complete renovation of the earth, which may be a fulfillment of 2 Peter, which predicts that the entire earth will be destroyed;

2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

When it is done, the earth will be basically flat with no seas, no islands and no mountains, preparing it for restoration to something like its pre-flood condition.

Revelation 16:21 "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, [every stone] about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

"Every stone ... the weight of a talent": The huge size of the hailstones indicates unparalleled atmospheric convulsions. Such massive chunks of ice will cause unimaginable devastation and death. It is difficult for us to conceive of hailstones that large or the devastating effect they will have on the people they hit.

Dr. David L. Cooper draws attention to "what the Lord said in Job 38:22-23. He has filled His armory full of hail and snow "against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war."

Even now, these men do not repent. Instead of repenting and asking for God's help, they curse Him. You see, in all of these plagues, God wants them to repent and turn to Him.