

WEEK 20: CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 16

- We are coming to the end of the Tribulation with the final judgments of God being poured out on an unrepentant and blasphemous mankind.
- Three times mankind's response was refusal:
 - **Revelation 16:9** "Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory."
 - **Revelation 16:11** "...and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds."
 - **Revelation 16:21** "And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe."
- This is precisely why, speaking of God's judgments, an angel said in **verse 6** "They deserve it."
- Chapter 16 moves God's judgments from "partial" to "full." Meaning that while other judgments were 1/3 of trees or sea, these final bowl judgments are going to be completely devastating on the whole globe.
- At this time, as was seen in the previous verses, mankind's rebellion is at its highest point. Therefore, God's judgment is at its highest point as well.
- This is seen clearly in the text...the Greek word μέγας (mega/s) means great, large or mighty. The word is used 11 times to indicate the intensity of these final judgments.
- v. 1 – **loud** voice...v. 9 – **intense** heat...v. 12 – **great** river...v. 14 – **great** day of God...v. 17 – **loud** voice...v. 18 – **severe** earthquake...v. 18 – **tremendous** earthquake...v. 19 – **great** city...v. 19 – Babylon the **Great**...v. 21 – **huge** hailstones...v. 21 – **terrible** plague
- "Walvoord emphasizes a structural distinction in Revelation 16 compared to earlier cycles. While there were dramatic conversational pauses and interludes between the 6th and 7th Seals, and the 6th and 7th Trumpets, the Bowl judgments feature no such delays. They hit the earth in rapid-fire succession because the timeline is collapsing directly into the Second Coming."
- "For Walvoord, the ultimate introduction to these judgments is that they serve to explicitly break down the geopolitical structures of the Antichrist, clear out the demonic sphere of influence in the air, and reshape the physical topography of the earth to prepare it for Christ's Millennial Kingdom."

CHAPTER 16:1 ~ THE COMMAND

Revelation 16:1 “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.’”

- This voice is no doubt the voice of God from inside the heavenly temple.
- Remember, the temple at this time is filled with the “smoke from the glory of God and His power.” Also, “no one was able to enter the temple.”
- This is, by all accounts, God’s full wrath which has been stored up by mankind. There is not more grace and mercy in the temple, just God’s righteous judgment upon sinful mankind.
- “The bowls are literal — shallow saucers, the Greek word *phiale*. The wrath inside is poured out at once, not dripped slowly. This is the final outpouring of God’s wrath just before Christ returns to set up His millennial kingdom.”¹

CHAPTER 16:2-12 & 17-21~ 7 BOWL JUDGMENTS

Revelation 16:2 “So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image...

- The first judgment is upon all who have taken the mark of the beast and worshipped his image.
- “The judgment is in the form of a physical affliction of unusual severity bringing widespread suffering.” (Walvoord)
- These are festering, painful, and unusual boils that are open and oozing sores.

Revelation 16:3 “The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.”

- “The area of the judgment is similar to that of the second trumpet where one-third of the sea is turned to blood and one-third of the creatures of the sea die. Here the judgment is universal. The reference to the sea may be limited to the Mediterranean, but the same word would be used if the judgment extended to all large bodies of water.” (Walvoord)
- All marine life is gone and the oceans completely contaminated.

¹ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-47>

- “The sea becomes blood like that of a dead man — congealing, coagulating, dark. Every living thing in the sea dies. The world’s food chains and the planet’s essential hydrologic cycle collapse in an instant. The sea, once a spring of life, becomes a turgid pool of death.”²

Revelation 16:4-7 “Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. [5] And I heard the angel of the waters saying, ‘Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; [6] for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.’ [7] And I heard the altar saying, ‘Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.’”

- “Rivers and springs become blood. This is no regional plague but a comprehensive global judgment. All inland water is affected. Bottled water, tankers, towers — all of it runs out. The nightmare of dying of thirst becomes the reality facing the entire planet.”³
- Apparently there is an angel of the waters...an angel who has jurisdiction over the water. Throughout this letter, and in the Bible in general, there are various ministries which are given to angels.
- “The destruction of what is left of the earth’s fresh water will cause unthinkable hardship and suffering. There will be no water to drink; no clean water to wash the oozing sores caused by the first bowl judgment; no water to bring cooling relief from the scorching heat that the fourth bowl judgment will shortly bring. The scene is so unimaginably horrible that people will wonder how a God of compassion, mercy, and grace could send such a judgment. And so there is a brief interlude in the pouring out of the judgments while an angel speaks in God’s defense.”⁴
- God’s judgment upon mankind at this stage is declared righteous by the angels. Wicked and unrepentant man has “poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets.”
- Now, in poetic justice, they are all that is around them is turning to blood and they themselves are suffering with terrible physical pain.

Revelation 16:8-9 “The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. [9] Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.”

- The past judgment regarding the heavenlies the sun and moon and stars were darkened.
- Now, men are going to be scorched with great heat as the sun is greatly intensified.
- Since man worships the creation and not their Creator, God is showing them that He is the one which true sovereign power.

² <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-47>

³ Ibid.

⁴ MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 142.

- “In 1965 the alarm was global cooling. By 1975 *Newsweek* was warning of a coming freeze. Today the dogma is global warming. The temperature of planet Earth has risen one degree since 1880, and a single year of solar activity has erased nearly all of it. There is a coming season, however, when both rumors will be right at once. The world is heading for global warming and global cooling at the same time — and it will not be CO2 emissions or carbon footprints. It will be the hand of God controlling the environment to deliver one act of judgment after another.”⁵
- Remember, those who are born again at this time and still on the earth are not suffering from the effects of these plagues.
- Again, as John is observing what is taking place, he notes that mankind did not repent but rather they blasphemed the name of God.
- Those who chose to follow the Antichrist, their hearts hardened and even after seeing and experiencing God’s wrath, they only respond with wickedness.
- “The wishful thinking of some that men would repent if they only knew the power and righteous judgment of God is shattered by frequent mention in this chapter of the hardness of the human heart in the face of the most stringent and evident divine discipline (cf. w. 11, 21).” (Walvoord)

Revelation 16:10–11 “Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, [11] and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.”

- “The lights go out on the antichrist’s capital. The Greek implies that anything that gives light no longer will — a match could be struck and the heat felt, but no flame would be seen. The pitiful strength of Satan’s throne is no match for the throne of God. This is a precursor of eternal outer darkness for all who refuse the true and living God.”⁶
- Darkness is frequently used in the Old Testament to talk of this coming day:
 - **Zephaniah 1:15** “A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness...”
 - **Amos 5:18–20** “Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; [19] As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. [20] Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?”
 - **Isaiah 13:9–10** “Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. [10] For the stars of heaven

⁵ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-48>

⁶ Ibid.

and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light.”

- Those who are suffering at this point are in so much pain all they can do is gnaw at their tongues.
- Again, repentance is not on the minds of those who are suffering.
- “The Scriptures plainly refute the notion that wicked men will quickly repent when faced with catastrophic warnings of judgment. When confronted with the righteous judgment of God, their blasphemy is deepened and their evil purpose is accentuated.” (Walvoord)

Revelation 16:12 “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.”

- The sixth bowl is poured out, and the Euphrates River is dried up...this is the judgment.
- This is done for a very specific purpose...to make way for the final battle.
- The “kings of the east” are coming to make war.
- “The sixth vial has occasioned more comment on the part of expositors than any of the preceding vials, and numerous interpretations have been offered.” (Walvoord)
 - Again, it is important that we make no final decisions where the Bible is not explicit. The armies are coming from the East, but who they are specifically are not mentioned.
 - Furthermore, this prophecy could be fulfilled 100 years from now after the world powers have shifted multiple times.
 - After Israel became a nation again in 1948, it seems that the countdown timer for the end days started ticking a little faster.
- “There has been endless speculation about ‘the kings from the East, with many expositors trying to relate them to some contemporary leaders of their generation. A survey of 100 commentaries of the Book of Revelation reveals at least 50 interpretations of the identity of the kings of the East. The simplest and best explanation, however, is that this refers to kings or rulers from the Orient or East who will participate in the final world war. In the light of the context of this passage indicating the near approach of the second coming of Christ and the contemporary world situation in which the Orient today contains a large portion of the world’s population with tremendous military potential, any interpretation other than a literal one does not make sense.” (Walvoord)
- It would seem that these armies are coming from our modern-day Russia, China and/or India. Again, be careful when thinking about countries. This event is always at least 7 years away from our current timeframe and takes place after the church has been raptured.

- **Before looking specifically at Armageddon, the 7th bowl of God's wrath.**

Revelation 16:17–21 “Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.” [18] And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. [19] The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. [20] And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. [21] And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.”

- “The vial of the seventh angel is declared to be poured out into the air and the resulting action is catastrophic. It is accompanied by a great voice out of the Temple in heaven and from the throne stating in emphatic terms, “It is done!” In the Greek, the statement is one word, *gegonen*, in the perfect tense, indicating action accomplished. It is the final act of God preceding the second coming of Christ.” (Walvoord)
- “A loud voice from the throne announces, “It is done.” The greatest earthquake in human history splits Jerusalem into three, levels mountains, sinks islands, and re-shapes the planet for the coming kingdom. Hundred-pound hailstones fall from the sky — sudden global cooling, and a final stoning of those who blasphemed the name of God.”⁷
- There are a number of catastrophic events which come at this time:
 - Flashes of lightning and Crashes of thunder (v. 18)
 - An earthquake of such a magnitude as never before felt in the history of the world (v. 18); it will literally shake the globe
 - The division of the great city (either Jerusalem – cf. Rev 11:8; or Rome or a rebuilt city of Babylon) into three parts (v. 19)
 - The downfall of the cities of the world (v. 19), reducing them to rubble and resulting in great loss of life
 - The destruction of islands and mountains (v. 20)
 - One hundred-pound hailstones which will cause great death and destruction (v. 21)
- This is a final picture of God's awesome and complete destruction of Satan's plan to rule the earth.
- There may be a return to what the world looked like, geographically, to the pre-flood environment. There may be gentle rolling hills now instead of high mountain peaks.
- Deserts and ice caps may be gone and people are able to inhabit land that was once uninhabitable.

⁷ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-48>

- There is a chance that this leaves Jerusalem as the highest place or location on earth.
 - **Isaiah 2:2** “Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.”
 - **Jeremiah 3:17** “At that time they will call Jerusalem ‘The Throne of the LORD,’ and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.”
- “Everything that humanity has built will crumble before their eyes. Quite literally the whole world will collapse around them, yet they will persist in thinking that they are still masters of their own fate, without any need for God.”⁸
- “Though from the contemporary point of view all the details of these dramatic judgments are not immediately understood, the unmistakable impression of the Scriptures is that the whole world is being brought to the bar of justice before Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. There is no escape from divine judgment except for those who avail themselves of the grace of God in that day by faith in Jesus Christ.”
(Walvoord)

CHAPTER 16:13-16 ~ ARMAGEDDON

Revelation 16:13-16 “And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; {14} for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. {15} (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”) {16} And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”

- Most people know some popular phrases or thoughts from the Bible...specifically from Revelation.
- The number 666 and its meaning is very popular:
 - “Tucked away in the western United States, **the highway was renamed US Route 491 in 2003 because, in the book of Revelations, “666” symbolizes ‘the mark of the beast,’ a prophesied anti-Christ...** This Satanic connotation, combined with a high fatality rate along the New Mexico portion, convinced some people that the highway was cursed. It has been hailed as one of the most haunted places in America, **with a long, bizarre history of all manner of weirdness, bad luck, inexplicable accidents, ghosts, apparitions, specters, and various other unexplained**

⁸ Ryrie, *Revelation*, 134-135

phenomena. The road features a pretty spooky reputation, and some of the strange activities witnessed include a haunted truck, the girl in the white dress, weird lights, hell hounds, disappearing drivers, the Skin Walkers, or Satan's sedan."⁹ (most signs are gone because of theft...)

- Most people know something of the Rapture or 2nd coming.
- Most people have also heard of Armageddon.¹⁰ Even if they don't know it comes from the Bible, it is used as an idiom for some sort of world-ending cataclysm or total destruction of the earth. Perhaps the final nuclear war between nations or an asteroid impacting the earth.
- "The McDonald's of Armageddon most famously refers to a real-life McDonald's located at the ancient biblical site of Megiddo in northern Israel. According to biblical prophecy, this very region is believed to be the site of the final apocalyptic battle."¹¹
- Looking at **verse 13**, there are 3 unclean spirits which come out of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet.
- They go out around the world to round out the nations so that they will follow the unholy trinity into battle against God Himself.
- This is the ultimate act of deception that the world is going to follow. This makes sense as to why the world needs to be judged by God as they have all turned against Him.
- **Verse 15** is likely the words of Jesus Himself to those believers who are in the Tribulation.
- Jesus is telling them that He is coming with His church at the end of the Tribulation. Since they don't know the exact timing of His coming...He is encouraging them to be awake and stay clothed.
 - In other words, keep watch, don't get caught up in what's going on around you, but know that I am on my way to lead you into the Millennial Kingdom.
- "...a believer should not live in such a way that the return of Christ becomes an embarrassment due to compromises or a life lived in a manner unbecoming to a child of God."¹²
- **Verse 16** is the place where more battles have taken place than anywhere in the world and the place that Napoleon referred to as "the greatest battlefield I have ever seen."
- Since this is the place of the final battle between Christ and the followers of the antichrist, the 6th plague was in preparation of this battle.

⁹ <https://www.dangerousroads.org/north-america/usa/4993-route-666.html#:~:text=It%20has%20been%20hailed%20as,and%20various%20other%20unexplained%20phenomena.>

¹⁰ Most like made popular by the 1998 movie by the same name.

¹¹ <https://flashtrafficblog.epicentermedia.net/2012/11/18/i-visited-the-armageddon-mcdonalds-in-northern-israel-yesterday-but-the-kids-who-work-there-dont-know-the-prophecy/>

¹² <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-48>