

Revelation 16 “It is done!”

Revelation 15 introduces the final 7 plagues. The 7 bowls are brimming with divine wrath – these are the most intense of God's judgments.



John sees the temple in heaven filled with smoke, while the earth is about to get smoked.

One commentator states, “We really do need to read chapter 16 from God’s perspective. If we read this chapter from the perspective of a sinner, we will think that maybe this is awfully harsh of God. We will think that maybe the people who suffer in these seven plagues from the seven bowls of wrath have not been treated fairly. So we need to take God’s perspective on the matter, because our sinful, limited perspective is grossly inaccurate. Our sin-tainted view on the matter is unfair to God. So as we examine this chapter, we must remember that God created the world and humanity good. We must remember the thanks humanity showed God for that – rebellion. And we must remember the way humans responded to him – crucifixion.”

NOTE: *What is shocking about this chapter is the way unrepentant humanity reacts to the wrath of God. PRAY*

Stand with me as we read together Revelation chapter 16 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.” Oh my the finality this wrath will bring!

First Bowl 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.

Second Bowl 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.

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

Fourth Bowl 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.

Fifth Bowl 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.

Sixth Bowl 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 [f] of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. **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." **16** And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. **Seventh Bowl 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!" **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. **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. **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.

Let's break this down... Revelation chapter 16 verse 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." *So the temple in Heaven has just been opened in 15:5, then the seven angels came out in 15:6, one of the four living creatures gave them the seven bowls in 15:7, and now the word comes from the temple for the bowls to be poured out in 16:1.*

Because of the way John will note in 16:9-11 that in response to these bowls of wrath the people curse God and refuse to repent, it appears that these bowls are intended as a final warning, a final call to repentance.

It seems that God is going to show the rebels an awesome display of his unconquerable might to offer them a final opportunity to surrender. God is proving to humanity that there are two possibilities: repent of sin and worship God, or persist in rebellion and face unavoidable judgment.

First Bowl: verse **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. **Those who worshipped the beast and received his mark are now "marked" by God with loathsome sores. The first plague is a saucer full of infection and inflammation. People on earth worship the beast with one hand and itch their running sores with their other.**

It's possible the "foul and loathsome sore" is the result of exposure to nuclear fallout. John Hersey, in his book Hiroshima, describes the victims, "Faces were wholly burned, eye sockets were hollow, fluid from melted eyes ran down cheeks, mouths were swollen, pus-covered wounds." This is what the first bowl brings.



A warning was announced against those who do these things in 15:9-11, and that warning promised God's wrath against those who took the mark of the beast. So now God is demonstrating to these people that the image of the beast and the mark of the beast cannot protect them. God is proving to them that there is something worse than not being able to buy or sell – the displeasure of almighty God.

But it isn't going to get better for those who suffer the wrath of God. If they refuse to repent, it will only get worse.

Second Bowl: verse 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. Revelation 8:8-9 described a partial contamination of the sea. Here the contamination is made complete. **There has never been an act of God like this in the world's history.**

Imagine the smell and the horror of the waters of the oceans of the world being made into something like the blood that remains in a dead body, and in the filthy liquid are the dead creatures of the deep. So in addition to the "painful sores" there is this worldwide stench, no doubt accompanied by heretofore unknown bacteria and infections and unexpected consequences. **Probably blame it on global warming.**

Third Bowl: Verse 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. **The second bowl pollutes the ocean. The third bowl contaminates the drinking water. Jesus has to return soon after the third bowl, or mankind cannot survive.**

CLARKE "THEY THIRSTED AFTER BLOOD AND MASSACRED THE SAINTS OF GOD; AND NOW THEY HAVE GOT BLOOD TO DRINK!"

THEY HAVE REFUSED THE LIVING WATER, AND NOW WILL BE GIVEN THE WATER OF DEATH.

How does this angel, who apparently has authority delegated from God over the waters, respond to the waters being turned to blood? He responds by celebrating God's righteousness. Look at verse 5

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.”

Back in 6:9-11 the souls of the martyrs were under the altar crying out, *“O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”* The answer that came to them was that they were to rest “until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.” Then in 8:3-4, the angel offered up the prayers of the saints with incense on the altar, in response to which God commissioned the seven angels to blow the seven trumpets. When we read in 16:7, ‘And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”’ we are to understand that the souls under the altar are being avenged – note the connection between the martyrs and the altar in 16:6, 7 and 6:9-11. The martyrs are being avenged, and as God visits just judgments against the wicked, the desire the martyrs have for justice is satisfied.

7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.” So we see the first bowls poured out in 16:1-4. Then we see the response of the angels and the martyrs in 16:5-7. As we see the next four bowls poured out, John will tell us how the wicked respond to God’s justice. God is glorified in justice as he visits awesome wrath that fits the crimes human beings have done.

Fourth Bowl: Verse **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, **Ozone depletion is a problem today. In the Great Tribulation it will become a deadly plague. The fourth bowl empowers the sun to singe the earth's sinners.**

In Greek and Roman mythology, the god Apollo was worshiped both as the god of healing and as the god of the sun. Then there was Neptune (or for the Greeks, Poseidon) who was god of the sea, and there were a whole series of river gods. The worshipers of these gods are being shown by these bowls of wrath that **their gods cannot heal if Yahweh wounds, their gods cannot protect the water that Yahweh made, waters** that Yahweh sustains, and their **gods have no control over the sun that Yahweh keeps in the sky.** Yahweh is Lord. He alone deserves worship, and he does not appreciate people giving the worship he deserves to demons.



We have our own version of the Greco-Roman pantheon and cult today. In place of those who worshiped Poseidon and Neptune we have the environmentalists who worship the earth and its plants and animals. In place of those who worshiped Apollo the god of healing we have the worshipers of modern medicine.

and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Walvoord "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."

Albert Einstein "It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man." Douglas Wilson has said that the two statements atheists make are: first, there is no God; and second, I hate him.

The plagues are irrefutable evidence that the only way to be delivered is to repent of sin, surrender to Yahweh, and seek his mercy.

Fifth Bowl: verse **10** Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; **So here we have seen the sun go wrong in both directions – first it flashes out at people and burns them, and now its light fails.** and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. **The ninth plague on Egypt was a literal darkness, with spiritual overtones. It could be felt, as described in Exodus 10:21-22.** The darkness of the fifth bowl is a preview of Hell itself, which is described by Jesus as *the outer darkness* (Matthew 25:30). Those under the judgment of this fifth bowl stand, as it were, on the shores of the lake of fire.

Rather than do the only thing that will bring them relief – repent – these people cause themselves further pain by gnawing their tongues, and they do more wickedness by cursing God, for which they will face more judgment.

11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. **After the fifth bowl is spilled, the wicked sit in darkness bleeding and blistered. You'd think by now the misery would hammer home the message to repent, but rather than cry out for mercy, the wicked shout blasphemies at God. The world is so deceived that men believe God to be their enemy and Satan their savior.**

Sixth Bowl: verse **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. *The Romans considered the Euphrates River a secure barrier against invasion from the empires of the east. In that day it was 1,800 miles long and anywhere from 300-1200 yards wide.*

- **The cradle (and grave) of man's civilization (Zech 10:11; Isa 11:15,16).**
- **Eastern boundary of Israel (Gen 15:18) and the Roman Empire...**

The river Euphrates is mentioned 25X in the Bible: It is 1800 miles long; 300-1200 yards wide; 10-30 feet deep; often deeper, wider...in the 1991 Gulf War, armies of 30 countries

bottled up Saddam Hussein's forces against the Euphrates.

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. "dragon...beast...false prophet": **Unholy trinity?** The spirits are **like frogs** in form. The ancient Jewish people regarded frogs as unclean and repulsive, but the Egyptians revered a frog-goddess. **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. **Again, signs and wonders are used by demons as tools of deception. The false prophet here is the second beast of Revelation 13.**

Hamilton writes in his commentary on Revelation, "John here gives us powerful explanation for why the wicked respond to God the way they do. There is a plausibility structure at work in the world that makes certain realities believable and other realities unbelievable. Those who repent of sin and trust in Christ are amazed that the world would be so foolish as to believe that the right course of action would be to go to war against one who can never be defeated, one who controls all that is. Those who refuse to repent, John explains, see through a grid of meaning that has been built by demonic powers. They are deceived."

This battle is not nation against nation, but the nations against God (Psalm 2:2). This is one of 3 important battles mentioned in prophecy.

The battle of Gog, Magog and her allies come against Israel (Ezekiel 38 and 39).

The battle of Armageddon, when the Antichrist leads the world system against a returning Jesus (Revelation 17:12-16, 17:14, 19:19).

THE FINAL BATTLE, WHEN SATAN AND HIS ALLIES, AFTER THE MILLENNIUM, MAKE WAR AGAINST GOD (REVELATION 20:7-10).

15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Jesus' saying he is "coming like a thief" reinforces what he said in Matthew 24:42-44: ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Paul too said the day of the Lord would come "like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2).



1 Thess 5:4 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

Continuing verse 15... Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk

naked and they see his shame.”

Garments are pictures of spiritual and practical righteousness. We are given the righteousness of Jesus as a garment (Galatians 3:27), but we are also called to "put on" the nature of Jesus in terms of practical holiness (Ephesians 4:20-24). Above all, we must not be "naked" - that is, without a covering, or trying to provide our own covering like Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:7), which is like filthy rags in the sight of God (Isaiah 64:6).

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. **When the sixth bowl is poured out the Euphrates River dries up - what was once a waterway is turned into a high-way. The army of the East comes out of the Orient, and its troops march to Megiddo through the dried-up riverbed.**

In verse 13 frog-like demons draw the armies of the world to the mountain of Megiddo. The final battle is about to be staged. The wicked are about to croak!

Megiddo is in a region frequently associated with decisive battles: Deborah over Sisera ([Judges 5:19](#)); Gideon over the Midianites ([Judges 7](#)); Pharaoh over Josiah ([2 Kings 23:29](#); [2 Chronicles 35:22](#)). It is also a place of end-times mourning ([Zechariah 12:11](#)).

The vast Valley of Megiddo has seen tremendous battles through the centuries. Over 200 battles have been fought in the region, from 1468 B.C. (with Pharaoh Tuthmosis III) to 1917 (with Lord Allenby of the British).

60 miles N of Jerusalem. Megiddo

- Jabin + 900 chariots were overwhelmed
- Gideon's 300 defeated the Midianites, Amalekites & children of the east
- Samson triumphed over the Philistines
- Barak & Deborah defeated Sisera
- Saul was slain by Philistines

- Ahaziah slain by arrows of Jehu
- Pharaoh Necho slew King Josiah
- Saracens, Christian crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, Arabs, et al.
- Napoleon's disastrous march from Egypt to Syria

So the righteous are urged to stay ready in 16:15, but the wicked are duped by the demons in 16:16: “And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.” The great battle is about to be fought. Before it happens in 19:11-21, the fall of Babylon will be lamented and celebrated in 17:1-19:10.

Seventh Bowl: verse **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!"

It is done: This announcement, coming from the throne itself tells us that there will be no more delay. In mercy, God has stretched out this scene as much as He could. The seals were followed by trumpets; the trumpets were followed by bowls; but there will be no more judgments upon the earth after this - **it is done.**

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.

We saw lightning and thunder and rumblings issuing from God's throne in 4:5, after the seventh seal in 8:5, and after the seventh trumpet in 11:19. Now we see the same after the seventh bowl in 16:18: This is like a punctuation mark after judgment that reminds us that judgment issues from God's throne.

19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. **It is as though God seized the surface of the earth and yanked it flat like you would a bedsheet.** And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. **The identification of "Great Babylon" points to this being the destruction of the wicked world system that opposes God and the gospel.**

"The combination of *thymos* and *orge* connotes the strongest kind of outpouring of divine judgment." So Walvoord notes. **20** Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. **Imagine hundred pound blocks of ice raining out of the sky like cannonballs. Yet the wicked are resolute in their vain rebellion.** For verse 21 continues... Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

The seventh bowl ravages the earth. Verse 18 mentions an unprecedented earthquake. Mountains are leveled. Islands are erased. In verse 21 the wicked world gets pelted with 100 pound hailstones. Recall in the Old Testament, the penalty for blasphemy was stoning... In the end, God judges the blasphemers.

They say in a nuclear blast moisture gets compressed - then shot into the upper layers of the stratosphere where temperatures are 60 degrees below zero. Frozen condensation falls back to earth as chunks of ice that weigh as much as 200 pounds. These hailstones could also be produced by a nuclear explosion.

Spurgeon Despite all their suffering, many still will not repent. "I have known people who say, 'Well, if I were afflicted I might be converted. If I lay sick I might be saved.' Oh, do not think so. Sickness and sorrow of themselves are no helps to salvation. Pain and poverty are not evangelists; disease and despair are not apostles. Look at

the lost in hell. Suffering has effected no good in them. He that was filthy here is filthy there. He that was unjust in this life is unjust in the life to come. There is nothing in pain and suffering that, by their own natural operation, will tend to purification."

We might say that [Revelation 16](#) is a "great" chapter.

It describes **GREAT** evil: a **GREAT** city, **GREAT** Babylon ([Revelation 16:19](#)).

It describes **GREAT** tools of judgment: **GREAT** heat ([Revelation 16:9](#)), a **GREAT** river dried up ([Revelation 16:12](#)), a *great* earthquake ([Revelation 16:18](#)), *great* hail and *great* plagues ([Revelation 16:21](#)).

It describes a **GREAT** God: His **GREAT** voice (*loud* is the same Greek word for *great*; [verses 1; 17](#)), and His **GREAT** day of victory ([Revelation 16:14](#)).

But there is only one who is truly God. He mercifully shows that everything humans worship instead of him is bankrupt, and he does so to display his wealth, which he offers to all who will repent and trust in Jesus. But rather than surrender their rebellion, wicked humans respond to the terms he offers by cursing him and gathering to make war upon him.