

Revelation Chapter Sixteen

The Seven Bowls of Wrath (vv. 1-21)

Command to Commence (v.1)

VERSE 1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels

(Καὶ ἤκουσα μεγάλης φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ λεγούσης τοῖς ἐπὶ τὰ ἀγγέλοις [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + adj.gen.f.s. megale great + noun gen.f.s. phone voice + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.s. naos temple (inner) + pres.act.part.abl.f.s. lego say + art.w/noun dat.m.p. angelos angel + adj.dat.m.p. hepta seven*], **"Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God** [*ὑπάγετε καὶ ἐκχέετε τὰς ἐπὶ τὰ φιάλας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν* [*pres.act.imper.2p. hupago lead, proceed + conj kai + pres.act.imper.2p. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.p. phiale bowl, saucer + adj.acc.f.p. hepta seven + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thumos anger; wrath + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + prep eis + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth*])."

ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-2

1. The position of "great" before "voice" stresses the dynamic of the voice.
2. Elsewhere in the chapter the adjective "great" follows its noun which is customary in John's writings.
3. Also, elsewhere in the Apocalypse when used with "voice," it always follows it (cf. 1:10; 5:2,12; 6:10; 7:2,10; 8:13; 10:3; 11:12,15; 12:10; 14:7,9,15,18; 16:7; 19:1,17; 21:3).
4. "And I heard" begins a chapter in which seven angels with seven bowls receive and carry out their instructions to dispense the contents of their respective bowls.
5. The bowls occur in rapid succession, just before the 2nd Advent, suggesting that each takes place in a very short time (a matter of days at the most).
6. The "loud voice" is the voice of God as 15:8 shows.
7. God's mention of His own name in the directive is no obstacle to this identification.
8. No one else has access to the heavenly temple due to the intense smoke that fills the temple (cf. 15:8).
9. This condition continues until at least the completion of the seven bowls and perhaps longer.
10. This is the same "loud voice" that in 16:17 accompanies the pouring out of the seventh bowl (mystery bowl).
11. The adjective "*megas*" occurs 11x in this chapter in 8 verses (16:1,9,12,14,17,18,19,21) translated "loud" and "great" (80x in Rev).
12. God commands all seven angels at once to carry out their assignment (Ps. 103:20 "Bless the LORD, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word.")).
13. Each angel in sequence complies without further instruction.
14. The first imperative "Go" or "Depart" is a present imperative, in effect telling the angels, "Go your way." (cf. Mk. 6:38; 14:13; 16:87; Jam. 2:16).

15. The second imperative “pour out” is an aorist imperative telling them to deposit the contents of their bowls upon the prescribed objects.
16. The plagues contained in the seven vessels are cumulative.
17. The contents of the seven bowls bear some resemblance to the earlier seals and trumpets, but they are not merely a recapitulation.
18. The fourth bowl is entirely new.
19. Personal suffering is the touchstone of these plagues, where no personal suffering is cited in connection with the first four trumpets judgments.
20. Under these bowls humanity is in agony from the very beginning.
21. The bowls are far more intense and universal, showing that this whole series deals with the time of the very end.
22. The fact that the plagues are designated “the last” shows that they are not a recapitulation.

First Bowl (v.2)

VERSE 2 **So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth** (Καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. aperchomai depart; “went” + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. protos first + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. piale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos “his” + prep eis + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth*]; **and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people** [καὶ ἐγένετο ἕλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους [*conj kai + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai become + noun nom.nt.s. helkos a wound; by meton., ulcer, abcess + adj.nom.nt.s. kakos bad; “loathsome” + conj kai + adj.nom.nt.s. poneros evil; painful + prep epi upon + art.w/noun acc.m.p. anthrōpos man*] **who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image** [τοὺς ἔχοντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ [*art.w/pres.act.part.acc.m.p. echo have + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. charagma mark + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. therion beast + conj kai + art.w/pres.act.part.acc.m.. proskuneo worship + art.w/noun dat.f.s. eikon image, likeness + pro.gen.nt.s. auto “his”*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. The formula “went away and poured out” appears only with the first angel, but is implied with the other six (vv. 3,4,8,12,17).
2. The brevity of style whereby “the first” stands for “the first angel” contrast with the trumpet series which used “angel” with each in the series except the first (8:8,10,12,12; 11:15).
3. The target of the first bowl is “into the earth.”
4. The first three bowls affect individuals directly either in personal suffering or through environmental calamity, and the last three are more of an international phenomena.
5. The “earth” is more particular than “earth” of verse 1 which is general in inclusion of the objects of all the bowls (land, sea, water, etc.).
6. “The earth” is the first of the four divisions of nature hit by the first four plagues.
7. The others are the sea, the rivers, and the sky.

8. The earth has humans residing upon it so while the plague affects the skin of humans it is directed “on the earth.”
9. The noun “sore” (*helkos*) strictly means “a wound.”
10. The nature of this wound is an inflamed and running sore that refuses to be healed.
11. The language resembles that of Deut. 28:35.
12. This recalls the sixth plague of Egypt where the Egyptian magicians were also the victims (Ex. 9:9-11).
13. Here the followers of the beast receive the plague and not humanity otherwise.
14. Job was similarly afflicted.
15. No precedent in human history can measure up to the future supernatural intervention of God to grasp the nature of this plague.
16. Whatever is in this bowl is a organism that will result in sores that are “pernicious and malignant.”
17. Furthermore, the plague will not harm those who do not have “the mark of the beast.”
18. Those unaffected by these sores recall the Israelites who remained untouched by the sixth plague over Egypt.
19. This plague is also a sign to those who have not, for various reasons, taken the mark and worshipped the beast.
20. People outside the beast’s conquests would tend not to take it (China, Russia, etc.).

Second Bowl (v.3)

VERSE 3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea (Καὶ ὁ δεύτερος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. deuterios second + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos + prep eis + art.w/noun acc.f.s. thalassa sea*], **and it became blood like that of a dead man** [καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ [*conj kai + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai become + noun nom.nt.s. haima blood + conj hos as, like + adj.gen.m.s. nekros dead*]; **and every living thing in the sea died** [καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ ζωῆς ἀπέθανεν τὰ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ [*conj kai + adj.nom.f.s. pas every + noun nom.f.s. psuche soul; life-principle; breath; natural life + noun gen.f.s. zoe life; descriptive genitive; i.e., every soul marked by life + aor.act.ind.3s. apothnesko die + def.art.nom.nt.p. ta “which”; stands in apposition to the feminine singular psuche which is explainable by noting the neuter plural ktismata for which psuche stands in 8:9 + prep en + art.w/noun acc.f.s. thalassa sea*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. The second bowl judgment is reminiscent of the first Egyptian plague except it affects salt water rather than fresh water (cf. Ex. 7:19-21).
2. Water covers the greater part of the earth’s surface, so this affliction will be worldwide.
3. All earth’s oceans will be affected by this plague.
4. The effect of the bowl’s contents is to leave earth’s oceans totally contaminated with “blood like [that of] a dead person.”

5. This semi-coagulated mess will totally foul the seven seas making them loathsome and foul.
6. Here death will come to “every living thing in the sea.”
7. This will amount to a complete reversal of Gen. 1:21 when God on D+5 of restoration God spoke into existence all aquatic life.
8. This devastating plague constitutes a complete destruction of all marine life, not a partial one as under the second trumpet (Rev. 8:8-9).
9. This plague like the one before it is a miracle or product of the supernatural.
10. It defies all science to explain how the contents of one angel’s bowl could do this, so we take it by faith.

Third Bowl (v.4)

VERSE 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood

(Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς ποταμοὺς καὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων, καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. tritos third + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos "his" + prep eis + art.w/noun acc.m.p. potamos river + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.f.p. pege spring + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. hudor water + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. ginomai become + noun nom.nt.s. aima blood*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 4

1. The contamination of the fresh waters follows that of the sea as is the sequence with the second and third trumpet judgments (8:8-10).
2. The wording prophesying of the third bowl's contents is practically identical with that of the falling star's destination under the third trumpet (8:10).
3. The first Egyptian plague affected the Nile River principally, but this third bowl will affect all rivers, and to frustrate earth-dwellers from doing the same thing as the Egyptians did to find drinking water (cf. Ex. 7:24; cf. Ps. 78:43-44), it will turn the fountains or springs of water into blood too.
4. It contaminates all fresh water sources.
5. This blood is just as literal as the blood of the saints mentioned as a reason for the punishment in the verse 6.
6. The havoc caused throughout the world by the absence of drinking water is unimaginable as is pay-back the many must pay for persecuting and killing saints throughout the tribulation.
7. In the first Egyptian plague the fouling of the Nile lead to the mass fish kills that further fouled the air and made life miserable.
8. This plague was stopped by the supernatural power that started it.
9. So it will be with these plagues in preparation for the Millennium.

Angelic Affirmation and Explanation (vv. 5-6)

VERSE 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying (καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ ἀγγέλου τῶν ὑδάτων λέγοντος [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear + art.w/noun abl.m.s. angelos angel + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. hudor water + pres.act.part.gen.nt.p. lego say*]), **"Righteous are You, who are and who were** [Δίκαιος εἶ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὁ ὅσιος [*adj.nom.m.s. dikaios righteous + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + art.w/pres.act.part.voc.m.s. eimi + conj kai + art.voc.m.s. "who" + imperf.act.ind.3s. eimi "were"*]], **O Holy One, because You judged these things** [ὁ ὅσιος, ὅτι ταῦτα ἔκρινας [*art.voc.m.s. ho + adj.voc.m.s. hosios holy, devout, dedicated + conj hoti for (this reason) + pro.acc.nt.p. houtos "these things" + aor.act.ind.2s. krino judge*]];

VERSE 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets (ὅτι αἷμα ἁγίων καὶ προφητῶν ἐξέχεαν πλεῖν [*conj hoti for + noun nom.nt.s. haima blood + adj.gen.m.p. hagios holy; saint + conj kai + noun gen.m.p. prophetes prophet + aor.act.ind.3p. ekcheo pour out*], **and You have given them blood to drink** [*conj kai + noun acc.nt.s haima blood + pro.dat.m.p. autos “them” + aor.or perf.act.ind.2s. didomi give + aor.act.infin. pino drink*]).

They deserve it (*adj.nom.m.p. axios worthy + pres.act.ind.3p. eimi*)."

ANALYSIS: VERSES 5-6

1. In conjunction with this visitation of misery (3rd bowl) John heard another pronouncement (song?).
2. The speaker is the angel who oversees the earth's seas and freshwater, a different one than the one who poured out the third bowl.
3. Rev. 7:1 has four angels who influence the winds, and in 9:11, and angel who has authority over the abyss.
4. In 14:18 we saw the angel who is over fire.
5. The angel of the waters is of the same category as these.
6. Angelic ministry connects with the elemental forces of nature (cf. Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7).
7. This accords with Jewish thought as per 1 Enoch 66:1-3, where there is angels of punishment with powers over the waters to release them and bring destruction on people.
8. This angel's song is somewhat of a repeat of the one sung by the overcomers in 15:3-4.
9. The justice of God is one of those echoes (15:3; cf. 19:2).
10. God's righteousness and justice assert themselves on behalf of His beleaguered people in vindication.
11. Rather than complain to God for what He has done to the waters, the angel of the waters confirms the justice of the punishment inflicted.
12. The expression “who is and who was” addresses God in the same way as the song of 11:17 (cf. 1:4,8; 4:8).
13. This is a title recalling God's eternality which was expressed in similar terms in Ex. 3:14 when God revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush.
14. Soon after this, God used Moses to bring the principle of *lex talionis* in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage.
15. The bowls apply the same process in a far more extensive and final context.
16. A second mode of address can God “Holy One” another echo of 15:4.
17. “Righteous and “holy” apply to God in 15:3-4 as they do here (cf. Titus 1:8).
18. The closer understanding of the term “Holy One” is “the Sacred One.”
19. In the third bowl judgment God maintains His sacredness by sending a judgment that perfectly fits the crime.
20. The “because” clause gives the reason for calling God “righteous/just.”
21. He judged “these things” in the natural realm, meaning He contaminates the fresh water sources as a punishment against humans who rely on clean water for life itself.
22. “These things” excludes the judgments of bowls one and two because the subject is the shortage of drinking water (cf. v.6) not sea water.
23. “These things” has as an antecedent “rivers and springs of waters.”

24. The angel's song continues from v.5 with an elaboration of the appropriateness of the judgment.
25. Some want to begin a new sentence with "for" or "because" clause the opens v. 6: "Because they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, You have also given them blood to drink."
26. To punctuate the verse this way breaks the continuity in emphasis on the theme of the song, which is the righteousness and sacredness of God.
27. This leaves the thought of v. 5 somewhat incomplete.
28. In addition, the position of the *kai* before "blood" also argues against this meaning.
29. It is better to see this *hoti* clause as parallel to the *hoti* clause of v. 5.
30. Parallelism is perhaps not the best way to express the relationship between these two clauses, though this is the way the first two *hoti* clause of v. 4 are taken.
31. Actually, the second clause explains the first: "God's judging of these things is defined as God's giving the persecutors blood to drink in response to their pouring out the blood of saints and prophets."
32. The doubling of the noun "blood" as direct objects in the forward emphatic positions highlights the correspondence between the crime and its punishment. (cf. Isa. 49:26).
33. This illustrates the principle of *lex talionis*.
34. It is the blood of "saints and prophets" that the oppressors poured out (cf. 6:8; 11:18; 13:7).
35. The prophets refer to the two prophets of Rev. 11.
36. So God "pours out" the third bowl in response to their "pouring out" of the blood of His people.
37. His action deprives them of drinking water and gives them the thing they have been guilty of shedding.
38. The angel ends his song in a rather abrupt manner by adding the blunt assertion: "They deserve it."
39. Those loyal to the beast get exactly what they deserve up to and including their death.
40. This law of *lex talionis* is the law of reaping and sowing, an eye for an eye, falling into the pit which you dig for another, and so forth.
41. The guilty are in this case the worthy ones.

The Altar Speaks (v. 7)

VERSE 7 And I heard the altar saying (καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λέγοντος [*conj kai* + *aor.act.ind.1s. akouo hear* + *art.w/noun gen.nt.s. thusiasterion altar* + *pres.act.part.gen.nt.s lego say*], **"Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments** [Ναί, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαιαι αἱ κρίσεις σου [*part. nai yes* + *noun voc.m.s. kurios lord* + *art.w/noun nom.m.s. theos God* + *art.w/noun voc.m.s. pantokrator all-powerful, omnipotent* + *adj.nom.f.p. alethinos true, correct* + *conj kai* + *adj.nom.f.p. dikaios righteous, just* + *art.w/noun nom.f.p. krisis judgment* + *pro.gen.m.s. su "Your"*])."

ANALYSIS: VERSE 7

1. Next John hears the altar speaking.
2. Here the golden altar of incense is personified as the prayers of the saints for vengeance.
3. The altar concurs with the song of the angel that these prayers will now be answered.

4. A voice from the four horns of the altar in 9:13 has prepared for personification of the altar such as this.
5. Other objects of speech from inanimate objects are Gen. 4:10; Lk. 19:40; Heb. 12:24.
6. The altar addresses God by His title “Lord God, the Almighty” (cf. 15:3).
7. It then voices agreement with the words of the angel in 16:5-6 through a “yes.”
8. God’s actions are “true and righteous” they are never vengeful or capricious like those of the pagan deities.
9. They are in harmony with His perfect essence (cf. Ps. 119:137; cf. Ps. 19:9).
10. In this verse “judgments” replaces “ways” of 15:3, and the order of adjectives describing the judgments is the reverse of that in 15:3.
11. His “acts of judgments” are an integral part of His “ways.”
12. This verse asserts that all God’s judgments are “true and just/righteous.”

The Fourth Bowl (vv. 8-9)

VERSE 8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun (Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἥλιον [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. tetartos fourth + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos “his” + prep epi upon + art.w/noun acc.m.s. hilios sun*]), **and it was given to it to scorch men with fire** [καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ καυματίσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν πυρὶ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.s. autos him, it; “to it” + aor.act.infin. kaumatizo scorch, burn up + art.w/noun acc.m.p. anthropos men + prep en in; with + instr.nt.s. pur fire*])].

ANALYSIS: VERSE 8

1. The fourth angel directs his bowl upon the sun.
2. The preposition *epi* (“upon”) instead of *eis* as in vv. 2, 3, 4, indicates the different destination of this bowl.
3. The fourth trumpet had the sun as its immediate object, but that affliction was a darkening.
4. The form “there was given” shows that God is the sovereign power behind this widespread scorching of men.
5. He interferes with the processes of nature to bring this torment upon men.
6. The fully know who is responsible as evidenced by their blasphemy in v. 9.
7. The immediate agent of the burning was the sun as seen in the pronoun *auto* (“to it”).
8. God through this angel and his pouring out the contents of his bowl on the sun does something to the sun that makes this judgment possible.
9. Its effect, it is a miracle.
10. The victims of this scorching are “the men”.
11. The article could be taken as generic (e.g., mankind), but the repetition of *hoi anthropoid* in v. 9 raises the likelihood that it refers to the same class of men as the one in v. 2.
12. The sufferers of this bowl are the worshippers of the beast and his image.
13. Or it refers to all non-believers regardless of their affiliation with the Beast.
14. This seems the best way to take the noun “men” with the definite article.
15. Believers at least are protected with a sort of sunscreen!

Its Effect on Neg. Vol. (v.9)

VERSE 9 Men were scorched with fierce heat (καὶ ἐκαυματίσθησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ μέγα [conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3p. kaumatizo burn up, scorch + art.w/noun nom.m.p. anthropos man + noun acc.nt.s. kauma heat, scorching heat + adj.acc.nt.s. megas great]; **and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power [authority] over these plagues** [καὶ ἐβλάσφημῆσαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τὰς πληγὰς ταύτας [conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. blasphemeo slander, revile; blaspheme + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. onoma name + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + art.w/pres.act.part.gen.m.s. echo have + art.w/noun acc.f.s. exousia power + prep epi over + art.w/noun acc.f.p. plege plague + pro.acc.f.p. aute “these”], **and they did not repent so as to give Him glory** [καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν δοῦναι αὐτῷ δόξαν [conj kai + neg ou + aor.act.ind.3p. metaneo repent + aor.act.inf. didomi give + pro.dat.m.s. autos “Him” + noun acc.f.s. doxa glory]]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 9

1. A relentless misery accents the suffering associated with the scorching that comes to negative volition at this very late stage in the tribulation.
2. A cognate accusative “heat” with “were scorched” points to the severity of this judgment.
3. The adjective “great” strengthens the effect even more.
4. These features with the addition “with fire” in v. 8 have the effect of the terrible agony of the torment.
5. The human response is verbal maligning of who and what God is.
6. The same response comes in vv. 11 and 21 as well.
7. This chapter and Revelation 13 speaks of widespread slander of God.
8. They blame God for the plagues rather than take responsibility for their own maladjustment to the plan of God.
9. They are right in so far as they acknowledge Him as the One “who has the power (authority) over these plagues.”
10. But their unwillingness to honor Him is typical of those who are inherently negative to the truth (Rom. 1:28; 2:24).
11. “They did not repent” refers to their unwillingness to cast aside their unbelief for faith in Jesus Christ.
12. God’s severity (*apotamia*) no less than His kindness (*chrestotes*) calls men to a change of mind (Rom. 11:22; 2:4).
13. Like Pharaoh, they harden their hearts once again, fully knowing it is God who is behind all this temporal misery.
14. The expression “to give Him glory” points to the result that would have taken place had they repented of their evil human viewpoint.
15. The unbelievers in view here are probably those who could have repented at this late stage in the game, hence, excluding all those who have the mark of the beast.

Fifth Bowl Judgment (vv. 10-11)

VERSE 10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened [Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἐσκοτωμένη [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. pemptos fifth + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos "his" + prep epi + art.w/noun acc.m.s. thronos throne + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. therion beast + conj kai + art.w/noun nom.f.s. basileia kingdom + pro.gen.nt.s. autos "his" + perf.pass.part.nom.f.s. skotoo be darkened*]; **and they gnawed their tongues because of pain** [καὶ ἐμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνο [*conj kai + imperf.act.ind.3p. masomai bite (the lips), gnaw (the tongue) + art.w/noun acc.f.p. glossa tongue + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + prep ekfrom + art.w/noun abl.m.s. ponos pain*],

VERSE 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores [καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑλκῶν αὐτῶν [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. blasphemo blaspheme + art.w/noun acc.m.s. theos God + art.w/noun gen.m.s. ouranos heaven + prep ek + art.w/noun abl.f.p. ponos pain + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + conj kai + prep ekfrom + art.w/noun abl.nt.p. helkos sore*]; **and they did not repent of their deeds** [καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν [*conj kai + neg me + aor.act.ind.3p. metanoeo repent + prep ek + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. ergon deed + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their"*]]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 10-11

1. As with the fifth member of the series, so it is here that God “gives the screw an extra turn.”
2. This bowl along with the sixth and seventh have more of a political orientation than any plague encountered thus far.
3. The target of the bowl is “the throne” of the beast, i.e., the one place where his power and presence reside or the seat of his rule and authority.
4. The first mention of this throne is in 13:2 which notes the dragon’s (Satan’s) gift of that dominion to his agent the Antichrist.
5. So far untouched, that center through which Satan has perverted to the max all human society into the practice of Satanism is now the target of God’s wrath.
6. The people living within the political realm of the beast will be just as helpless against this plague as Pharaoh was against the comparable ninth plague over Egypt (Ex. 10:21-23).
7. “His kingdom” is an obvious corollary to “the throne of the beast” receives the contents of this bowl.
8. The beast’s kingdom refers to the full extent of his political domain.
9. Its basic constituency consists of ten nations within the European Union.
10. By this late stage in the tribulation it includes other nations brought under the military might of the beast, but it does not include the entire world by any stretch.

11. Like the ninth plague of Egypt it is localized including the beast's capital as well as those countries he has occupied militarily.
12. The subjects of the beast kingdom "kept on chewing their tongues" which expresses a most agonizing and excruciating type of pain.
13. The darkness itself is not the immediate source of physical pain.
14. The darkness adds to psychological pain to the suffers who according to v. 11 still suffer from the psychological effects of the previous bowls.
15. In token of their allegiance to the beast and the total blackout of the soul, his subjects once again blaspheme God (cf. v.9).
16. "The God of heaven" occurs one other place in Revelation, in 11:3 where victims of the earthquake respond in an opposite manner.
17. This title recalls Daniel's address to the pride of Nebuchadnezzar.
18. The blasphemy stems from the cumulative effect of the first four plagues, as the plural "pains," suggests, but specifically the lingering effects of the first plague with its "loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast" (cf. v.2).
19. So physical and psychological pain is the reason for the gnawing of the tongue, hence the pregnant singular of "pain" in v. 10.
20. Once again, men refuse to repent of their works as noted in connection at the conclusion of the fifth trumpet (9:20-21).
21. They choose to cling to their idolatry and lawlessness in total defiance of God and in the face of overwhelming evidence that an all-powerful and righteous God is judging the world for its evil.
22. We call this motivational viscosity (the unwillingness to change one's mind when the facts stack up against a person).
23. This illustrates maximum obstinacy.
24. In the Bible it is labeled stiff-necked.
25. Suffering is intended to bring men to a change of mind but short of that it leads to the sin unto death.

The Sixth Bowl (v. 12)

VERSE 12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates

(Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην, καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. hekto sixth + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos + prep epi upon + art.w/noun gen.m.s. potamas river + art.w/adj.gen.m.s. megas great + art.w/noun acc.m.s. Euphrates*]; **and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east** (καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. zeraio dry out + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. hudor water + pro.gen.m.s. autos "its" + conj hina (purpose) + aor.pass.subj.3s. hetoimazo prepare + art.w/noun nom.f.s. hodos way + art.w/noun gen.m.p. basileus king + art.w/noun gen.f.s. anatole east; rising + prep apo from + noun gen.m.s. hilios sun*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 12

1. The sixth bowl, exactly like the fifth seal, has no immediately apparent visitation of wrath against men.
2. It simply looks forward and prepares to a coming visitation from the God of heaven.
3. The target of the bowl's contents is the Euphrates River.
4. This is one of the great rivers of the world that constituted the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire and the land God promised to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:18).
5. The first mention of this river system is in Gen. 2:4 in connection with the geography of the Garden of Eden.
6. The other mention of this river is Rev. 9:14 where four fallen angels are bound waiting to be released to organize a demonic army of 200 million to kill one-third of humanity (9:14-15).
7. The drying up of this river is designed to facilitate the movement of the armies of the kings of the east so as to bring them in a timely fashion to the battle of Armageddon.
8. This is the battle to which the ruler of the earth in 19:18-21 gather to thwart the advent of Jesus Christ.
9. A comparable episode in the OT, the drying up of the Red Sea to allow Israel passage, was literal, so must this one be.
10. According to the historian Herodotus, Cyrus walked across the drained bed of the Euphrates in his conquest of Babylon.
11. At first glance, the stoppage of the river's flow appears to be in a blessing to the kings of the east, but it eventuates in their being brought into a trap just as the parted sea proved to be a trap to the Egyptians.
12. "The kings of the east" here refer to nations with vast populations like China, Indo-China and India.
13. They are oriental rulers and are represented in Bible prophecy by the spotted leopard with two sets of wings in Dan. 7:6, which is distinct from the Anglo-American lion with eagle's wings, the Russian bear, and the unnamed beast of the RRE.

Background to Verse 12 (vv. 13-16)

Propaganda Behind Mustering of Nations (vv. 13-14)

VERSE 13 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 (*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. stoma mouth + art.w/noun abl.m.s. drakon dragon + conj kai + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. stoma mouth + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. therion beast + conj kai + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. stoma mouth + art.w/noun abl.m.s. pseudoprophetes false prophet*), **three unclean spirits like frogs** [*πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι* [*noun acc.nt.p. pneuma spirit + adj.acc.nt.p. treis three + adj.acc.nt.p. akathartos unclean + conj hos like + noun nom.m.p. batrachnos frog*]];

VERSE 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs (*εἰσὶν γὰρ πνεύματα δαιμονίων ποιοῦντα σημεῖα* [*pres.act.ind.3p. eimi "are" + conj gar for (explanatory) + noun nom.nt.p. pneuma spirit + noun gen.nt.p. daimonion demon + pres.act.part.nom.nt.p. poieo do*;

“performing” + noun acc.nt.p. semion sign], which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world [ἃ ἐκπορεύεται ἐπὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης [pro.nom.nt.p. ho “which” + pres.dep.ind.3s. ekporeuomai go out + prep epi to + art.w/noun acc.m.p. basileus king + art.w/noun gen.f.s. oikoumene inhabited earth + adj.gen.f.s. holos whole], to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty [συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος [aor.act.infin. sunago gather up + pro.acc.m.p. autos “them” + prep eis to + art.w/noun acc.m.s. polemos battle + art.w/noun gen.f.s. hemera day + art.w/adj.gen.f.s. megas great + art.w/noun gen.f.s. theos God + art.w/noun gen.m.s. pantokrator all-powerful]].

ANALYSIS: VERSES 13-14

1. Verses 13-16 are not an interlude between the sixth and seventh bowls as have been noted between the sixth and seventh members of the previous series of seals and trumpets.
2. The section is rather a topical expansion or a commentary on v.12.
3. It shows that the leaders (“kings”) of the whole earth will join the king of the west and the kings of the east in the final great battle.
4. Verse 13 supplies an explanation of the impetus to muster such a large fighting force.
5. The three uses of the preposition *ek* (“from”) is indicative of a propaganda campaign through which the unholy trinity will fan the fanaticism of the nations at large to mount a campaign to withstand the Second Advent.
6. The influence of speech can hardly be underestimated in bringing volition to attempt the insane.
7. Satan, called here the dragon, who entered the visional activity at 12:3, 9, has been behind the scenes empowering the beast all along (13:2).
8. The beast is his prime proponent of evil all along, in the picture since 11:7 but more fully described in 13:11ff.
9. This is the first use of the name “false prophet,” but it refers to the second beast or the beast from the earth, encounter in 13:11ff.
10. This designation will be maintained throughout the rest of the book (19:20; 20:10).
11. It expresses his deceptiveness as the lying prophet who is in league with Satan’s front man (13:14).
12. False prophets, along with false christs, spring up all over the place in the last days (cf. Matt. 7:15; 2Pet. 2:1; 1Jn. 2:22; 4:1,3; 2Jn. 7).
13. This is the ultimate false prophet heading up the cult of the Antichrist.
14. From these three false mouths come “three unclean spirits.”
15. “Unclean spirits” is a common NT designation referring to fallen angels or demons (cf. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 1:23-24; 3:11; 5:2,13; Acts 5:16; 8:7), as verse 14 will make clear.
16. In John’s vision these three demons appear as that of “frogs.”
17. Frogs under the Levitical code were declared unclean animals (Lev. 11:10-11, 41).
18. Frogs recall the second Egyptian plague (Ex. 8:5); but no pestilence arises from this sending out.
19. Verse 14 clarifies the power and the mission of the three demons.

20. A parenthetical explanation introduced by *gar* (“for”) extends through “signs” and explains the power of the unclean spirits.
21. These spirits possess the same capacities to effect miracles that the second beast has in deceiving people (13:13-14; cf. 2Thess. 2:9-10).
22. Their deceptive work is reminiscent of the deceiving spirit that lured Ahab into battle (1Kgs. 22:19-22).
23. The agents of persuasion are the three demons.
24. Their mission is to persuade the existing rulers of the nations to muster armies and bring them to the Middle East.
25. The already advancing armies of the kings of the east supply an impetus for these kings to muster their forces for this great confrontation.
26. The expression “the whole inhabited world” appears in 3:10 and 12:9 with the same meaning as here.
27. The infinitive “to gather” expresses the purpose of the demonic expedition.
28. Under the sixth bowl this gathering takes place.
29. The battle proper occurs in connection with the seventh and final bowl.
30. This gathering of world forces at the very end of the tribulation is in line with OT prophetic teaching that God’s enemies would gather against Israel in the last days (Joel 2:11; 3:2; Zech. 14:2-3).
31. This is the ultimate battle predicted in Ps. 2:1-3.
32. John terms it “the battle of the great day of God the Almighty.”
33. Divine omnipotence will be fully demonstrated on this day.
34. This is the day of Christ’s coming to do battle with the Antichrist and all those forces vying for supremacy over the Land of Promise.

Exclamatory Parenthesis (v.15)

VERSE 15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief" (Ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης [*part idou behold + pres.dep.ind.3s. erchomai come + conj hos like + noun nom.m.s. kleptes thief*])).

Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes (μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ [*adj.nom.m.p. makarios blessed, happy; fortunate, lucky + art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. gregoreo keep awake; be alert + conj kai + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. tereo keep, guard + art.w/noun acc.nt.p. himation garment (outer) + pro.gen.m.s. autos "his"*]), **so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame** [ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῇ καὶ βλέπωσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ [*conj hina so that + neg me + adj.nom.m.s. gymnos naked + pres.act.subj.3s. peripateo walk around + conj kai + pres.act.subj.3p. blepo see + art.w/noun acc.f.s. aschomosune shame + pro.gen.m.s. autos "his"*]].")

ANALYSIS: VERSE 15

1. Abruptly, in the middle of the sixth-bowl description, a parenthesis interrupts the narrative.
2. This tendency toward this sudden kind of utterance is characteristic of Revelation (cf. 1:8; 8:13; 9:12; 11:14; 13:9-10, 18; 14:12-13; 16:5,7; 19:20; 20:6).
3. The voice is unidentified, but the saying so resembles two earlier sayings that there is little doubt that it is the voice of same glorified Son of Man who appeared to John in chapter 1.
4. This warning and exhortation is reminiscent of those by Christ to the church of Sardis in 3:3 and to the church of Laodicea in 3:18.
5. Who are addressed in this warning?
6. The words cannot be addressed to the churches in this setting removed from the scene of "the hour of testing," which period includes the beast's persecution of the saints.
7. If the warning is intended to be an encouragement to the oppressed remnant under the beast, Christ's coming is the one in 19:11-16, which from the prospective of the sixth bowl is almost upon the human race.
8. Some interpreters think that this is for the church and not tribulational saints since at this late hour in the tribulation it would be pointless to warn believers.
9. Along this line of reasoning, the tribulation martyrs are complete in their number and hence there is no need to warn believers on earth.
10. Then there is the believers (Jewish) who are in places of refuge and it wouldn't apply to them, so the reasoning goes.
11. But consider that there are other believers who survive and who are not so protected.
12. These believers show up at the Judgment of the Nations (sheep of Matt. 25).
13. So even if the warning is to be restricted to believers on earth during the days of the sixth bowl, they too need to be encouraged.
14. This warning is for all believers living on the earth and under duress, Jews and Gentiles alike.
15. It is important that these believers do not abandon their faith and good works even though the hour of His return is a matter of days at the most.

16. All believers can apply this verse to the CWL, but it is intended in context for those who suffer in the Angelic Conflict until Christ appears in the heavens and defeats the forces of evil.
17. Remember, there are believing Jews in Jerusalem who will face the ordeal of the siege of Jerusalem, and they must not loose faith (cf. Zech. 14:5).
18. God's plan for them is to fight and flee, according to the verse just cited.
19. Believers living in places of refuge are to stay put.
20. God's plan for believers is to identify there post in the Angelic Conflict and persevere.
21. Again, this verse has wide application.
22. The context relates it to saints on earth at this late hour.
23. Even at this point believers can panic and do something stupid.
24. And that something is to subvert their Ph2 sanctification which includes understanding one's duty and niche.
25. Jesus announces His coming employing the thief motif.
26. A thief comes suddenly, unexpectedly, and under the cover of darkness (usually).
27. His coming as a thief is not to be understood from the perspective of believers but unbelievers, who are typically asleep in the dark.
28. This theme also occurs at 1Thess. 5:2, 4 in connection with humanity stumbling into the tribulation.
29. Peter uses this motif telling his readers that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief," defining that day as including all history from the outset of the tribulation to the dissolution of the heavens and the earth (2Pet. 3:10).
30. This figure is used in a localized way for future divine discipline as applied to the church at Sardis as a threat in the absence of repentance (Rev. 3:3).
31. Here is its directed to those on earth who must stay faithful to God and his plan for the life of each and every saint until they are rescued by the Lord at the Second Advent.
32. Unlike unbelievers, believers are supposed to be awake and alert lest that day overtake them and bring their Ph 2 into disrepute (cf. 1Thess. 5:1-10).
33. That passage clearly informs us that believers of the church age can and will be asleep like their unbelieving counterparts at the Rapture phase of Christ's coming.
34. What they will experience is shame and loss at the Bema.
35. Unbelievers lose their immortal souls.
36. But this admonition/warning is for believers.
37. It applies to believers living in the shadow of Christ's return (CA, tribulational).
38. The "blessed" believer is the one who "watches and keeps his garments."
39. The beneficiary of the beatitude is the one who first "watches."
40. Watching or alertness is a daily admonition to believers lest they slip into reversionism.
41. The verb *gregoreo* occurs 22x in the NT.
42. It occurs in Jesus' teaching in the parable of the homeowner (Matt. 24:43//Lk. 12:37) and the parable of the absentee landlord (Mk. 13:34-37).
43. Jesus called his disciples to alertness in connection with his impending arrest and sufferings (Matt. 26:40,41//Mk. 14:34,37,38).
44. Jesus used the term in connection with the uncertainty of the day of His return (Matt. 25:13).
45. Paul enjoins the Ephesian elders to alertness in light of his prophecy that leaders in the church would defect into apostasy (Acts 20:31).
46. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to alertness in 1Cor. 16:13.

47. In Col. 4:2 Paul connects alertness to prayer.
48. Believers are told to be alert with respect to the rapture in 1Thess. 5:6,10, which is accomplished by knowing the true doctrine of immanency.
49. Peter warns believers to be sober and alert because the devil seeks to neutralize the vulnerable (1Pet. 5:8).
50. In Christ's criticism of the church at Sardis He called them to alertness with respect to "the things that remain" (e.g., doctrine still in their F.O.R.; Rev. 3:2).
51. Also, He warned them to "wake up" in light of His threat to come against them with divine discipline (Rev. 3:3).
52. The final occurrence of the term is Rev. 16:15 where it is coupled with a call to keep/guard one's garments.
53. The believer's garments are the doctrines that protect from the shame of spiritual nakedness when Christ returns.
54. Just as physical nakedness brings shame before the general public, so shame due to the absence of doctrine in the soul will bring shame when believers' works are judged.
55. Those who see said nakedness are those who are present at the judgment of men.
56. So great shame awaits those who fail to line up with the directive will of God during their days on earth (cf. 1Jn. 2:28; Phil.3:19).
57. All unbelievers will face shame (cf. Ps. 31:17).
58. Only by clinging to the doctrines of the faith can a believer avoid shame (Ps. 119:31).
59. Failure on the part of those who are called to teach doctrine will led to shame at the Bema (2Cor. 4:2).
60. The Laodicean church was in a state of nakedness and was called to remedy the situation by securing the pure gold of BD so they could purchase garments of white so that the shame of their nakedness not be revealed (Rev. 3:18).
61. Keeping one's garments is adhering to the doctrine both in word and deed to the end.

Armies Gathered to Armageddon (v.16)

VERSE 16 **And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon** (καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Ἑβραϊστὶ Ἀρμαγεδών [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. sunago gather, collect + pro.acc.m.p. autos "them" + prep eis to + art.w/noun acc.m.s. topos place + art.w/pres.pass.part.acc.m.s. kaleo call + adv Hebraisti Hebrew + noun acc.nt.s. Armagedon; the fortress overlooking the valley through the Carmel mountains into Galilee*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 16

1. The connective *kai* resumes the main account of the sixth bowl following the brief aside of verse 15.
2. Like *exporeutai* ("go out") in v.14, the verb *synegagen* ("they gathered") is singular as is customary with a neuter plural subject, which in this case is understood as the *pneumata* ("spirits") of v. 13.
3. The subject of the verb "they gathered" is demons.

4. In Revelation, neuter plural subjects have singular verbs in a number of instances (e.g., 8:3; 13:14; 14:13; 16:14), but most of the time they follow the koine Greek pattern of using plural verbs.
5. The antecedent of the plural “them” (*autous*) is the kings/leaders of the whole world who are named in v.14.
6. For most of Revelation’s immediate readers who were Gentiles in Asia Minor, a Hebrew word had to be translated or transliterated.
7. So John clarifies the Hebrew connotation of the name with the preceding “in Hebrew.”
8. He does this also in 9:11, but that passage differs from this one in giving the etymological significance of the Hebrew word in Greek (cf. Jn. 5:2; 19:13,17).
9. The transliteration “Harmagedon” more precisely written “Har Magedon” means “the Mount of Megiddo.”
10. Megiddo is in the valley of Esdraelon (i.e. the plain of Jezreel) and is not the name of a mountain in the OT.
11. It was by the waters of Megiddo (the Kishon River) that Barak gained a decisive victory over Sisera that is celebrated in the song of Deborah and Barak (Judg. 5:19; cf. Judg. 4).
12. The plain of Jezreel was also the scene of Gideon’s victory over the Midianites (Judg. 7; cf. Judg. 6:33).
13. A literal and geographical understanding of *Harmagedon* is preferable to several symbolic interpretations that have been advanced.
14. The Hebrew *har* can mean “hill-country” so *Har Megidon* can refer to the “hill-country of Megiddo.”
15. “Megidon” is the name of a Canaanite fortress in the Plain of Jezreel, that the Israelites under Barak and Deborah captured later (Josh. 12:21; Judg. 5:19).
16. It was the scene of Josiah’s defeat (2 Chron. 35:22).
17. The phrase “plain of Megiddo” occurs in Zechariah’s prophecy (Zech. 12:10-11).
18. From OT times to modern times this was a renowned battleground.
19. Armies from the east would have to cross the Euphrates to get here, as 16:12 indicates.
20. The plain of Megiddo is not large enough to accommodate the armies from all over the world, so this must be the focal point for the conflict between Christ and the armies of the world that covers a two hundred mile distance from north to south (cf. 14:20).
21. The conflict will extend into Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-3).
22. The preparations for the sixth bowl look forward toward the battle of Rev. 19:11-21, and Armageddon is the name given to this much wider conflict.

The Seventh Bowl (vv. 16-21)

VERSE 17 Then the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air (Καὶ ὁ ἑβδόμος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἄέρα [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. hebdomos seventh + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos “his” + prep epi + art.w/noun acc.m.s. aer air*], and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done [καὶ ἐξηλθεν φωνὴ μεγάλη ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου λέγουσα, Γέγονεν [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. exerchomai go out + noun nom.f.s. phone voice + adj.nom.f.s. megas great + prep ek + art.w/noun gen.m.s. naos temple + prep apo from +*

art.w/noun gen.m.s. thronos throne + pres.act.part.nom.f.s. lego say + perf.dep.ind.3s. ginomai come about, come to be; "It is done."])."

ANALYSIS: VERSE 17

1. The target of the seventh and final bowl is "upon the air."
2. Other plagues targeted the earth (16:2), the sea (16:3), the fresh waters (16:4), and the sun (16:8).
3. Air is what people breathe suggesting that this plague has even a more far reaching impact than the others.
4. The "loud voice" is none other than the voice of God which thundered from Sinai.
5. The phrase "from the throne" confirms this.
6. It is altogether appropriate that the One (God the Father) who sits on the eternal throne should speak in the administration of the very last plague (cf. 21:3) and that the voice should emanate from the heavenly temple.
7. Only one other verse in Revelation mentions the heavenly temple and the throne together, and that is 7:15.
8. The voice from the throne delivers a climatic message in one word, "it is done."
9. The perfect tense of the verb "to become" (*ginomai*) indicates that what has been on-going has now reached its conclusion.
10. It is proleptic in the sense that it covers everything connected with the 7th bowl judgment.
11. It moves closer to the culmination spoken of in connection with the blowing of the 7th trumpet in 10:7: "but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He announced (good news) to His servants the prophets."
12. In 21:6 this same verb form occurs except it is in the third person plural but the event is the heralding of the new creation.
13. This bowl and its execution makes it possible for the opening of heaven and the procession of the Son of God and the armies that accompany Him for the final great battle (Rev. 19:11-21).
14. This is the *last* of the plagues connected with the seven-seal scroll first introduced in chapter 5 which only Jesus Christ is found worthy to open.
15. Strictly speaking the wrath connected with this scroll is in view in this divine pronouncement (cf. 15:1).
16. More wrath follows as seen in the battle of Armageddon, the Judgment of the Nations (Matt. 25), and the Gog and Magog revolution (Rev. 20:8).

The Super Earthquake (vv. 18-19)

VERSE 18 **And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder**

(*conj kai + aor.dep.ind.3p. ginomai "were" + noun nom.f.p. astrape lightning + conj kai + noun nom.f.p. phone "sounds" + conj kai + noun nom.f.p. bronte thunder*); **and there was a great earthquake** [*καὶ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας [conj kai + noun nom.m.s. seismos earthquake + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai "was" + adj.nom.m.s. megas great]*, **such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth** [*οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἂφ' οὗ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς*

γῆς [*pro.nom.m.s. hoios what sort of, of what kind + neg ouk + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai “had been” + prep apo + neg ou + noun nom.m.s. anthropos man + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai “came” + prep epi upon + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*], **so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty** [τῆλικούτος σεισμὸς οὕτω μέγας [*adj.nom.m.s. telikoutos so great + noun nom.m.s. seismos earthquake + adv houto in this way, so + adj.nom.m.s. megas great*]]).

VERSE 19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell (καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη καὶ αἱ πόλεις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔπεσαν [*conj kai + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai + art.w/noun nom.f.s. polis city + art.w/adj.nom.f.s. megas great + prep eis into + adj.acc.nt.p. treis three + noun acc.nt.p. meros part + conj kai + art.w/noun nom.f.p. polis city + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. ethnos nation + aor.act.ind.3p. pipto fall*]]).

Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath (καὶ Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη ἐμνήσθη ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ δοῦναι αὐτῇ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ [*conj kai + noun nom.f.s. Babulon Babylon + art.w/adj.nom.f.s. megas great + aor.pass.ind.3s. mimneskomai remember, think about again + prep enopion before + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + aor.act.infin. didomi give + pro.dat.f.s. aute “her” + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. poterion cup + art.w/noun gen.m.s. oinos wine + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thumos anger; “fierce” + art.w/noun gen.f.s. orge wrath + pro.gen.m.s. autos “His”*]]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 18-19

1. As on previous occasions in connection with the seventh trumpet series and allusions to the temple setting in heaven (8:3-5; 11:19; cf. 4:5), a recurrence of the storm theophany appears.
2. The storm theophany signals wrath against the nations under the seventh bowl.
3. These heavenly phenomena signal divine wrath falling upon the earth.
4. These phenomena are tokens of divine displeasure (cf. Isa. 29:6).
5. This signals on earth an unprecedented earthquake.
6. It is of far greater proportions than ever before (cf. 6:12; 11:13; cp. 8:5; 11:19 for a heavenly earthquake).
7. The timing of the storm theophany comes after the pouring out of the seventh bowl upon earth's atmosphere.
8. These disturbances signal that the end has arrived, not just the end of the bowl series, but also the end of the seal and trumpet series as well.
9. The judgmental aspect of the seventh bowl includes this earthquake as well as the hail that follows in v. 21.
10. At this point in the narration the earthquake is the most notable item.
11. John reports what he sees in an authentic vision.
12. Writing from an area of the world that is especially earthquake prone, he carefully distinguishes this final seismic upheaval from the super quakes of history.
13. This earthquake will prove to be a calamity unprecedented in earth's historical geology.

14. The language employed here adds special emphasis through the adjective *megas* (“great”) and the quantitative correlative *telikoutos* (“so mighty”), and through the redundant *houto megas* (“so great”).
15. Two uses of the verb *ginomai* (“there was” and “there had not been”) enhance the focus on this massive earthquake.
16. A third *ginomai* in v. 19 in close sequence tells the instantaneous result of this super earthquake.
17. Verse 19 in a kind of parenthetical aside tells of the impact on “the great city,” “the cities of the Gentiles,” and “Babylon the great.”
18. In the OT there is at least one occasion when an earthquake and warfare take place in the same time frame (Hag. 2:21-22).
19. This earthquake the hailstorm which follows it is immediately followed by the heavenly invasion.
20. It is quite clear from Rev. 11:8 that “the great city” is in reference to Jerusalem.
21. This identification does justice to this context with predicted topographical changes that will take place around Jerusalem in conjunction with the Second Advent (Zech. 14:4, 10).
22. At the midpoint of the tribulation Jerusalem experiences a rather severe earthquake killing 5000 residents (Rev. 11:13).
23. This earthquake will divide the city into three parts.
24. This division will include the splitting of the Mount of Olives ridge so that those Jews fighting against the siege of Jerusalem might have an avenue of escape (Zech. 14:4).
25. The cities of the Gentiles will experience far greater damage than Jerusalem.
26. “The cities of the Gentiles” refers to the capitals of these nations.
27. This punishment is directly related to the sin of attacking Israel as per Gen. 12:3.
28. All of this devastation is designed to show God’s utter contempt towards man’s evil plans to shape the world in his own fallen image.
29. It is in this sense that there follows the in v. 19c, “And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the anger of His wrath.”
30. This carries a kind of déjà vu, the illusion of having already experienced the present situation.
31. This final earthquake brings to remembrance before God the very reason why the nations are being so thoroughly ravaged.
32. What Babylon the great experiences in the tribulation is approximated but not duplicated in the destruction of Babylon the great of Revelation chapter 18.
33. Since both religious Babylon (Rev. 17; RCC) and commercial Babylon (Rev.18) are designated “the great” (Rev. 17:5; 18:2), it is best to conclude that is the Babylon of the angelic announcement of Rev. 14:8 that is in view here.
34. Verse 19c functions as a memoriam to the satanic ideology that brought the nations into the jeopardy justifying the wrath of the tribulation.
35. That ideology was primarily but not exclusively sponsored by the whore of Rev. 18.
36. Among all the nations America is held most accountable for the international evil associated with the NOW (a one world political and religious system).
37. The total annihilation of commercial Babylon (USA) of Revelation 18 serves as a frame of reference to the world system in the last days going into the tribulation.

38. Commentators who see this as either the destruction of Babylon on the Euphrates or the kingdom of Antichrist fail to account for all the data contained in the relevant prophecies dealing with this mystery end-time nation in the OT and in Rev. 18.
39. Suffice to say this would not be a logical time to judge commercial Babylon since the fall of said entity causes both massive consternation on her foreign business interests (Rev. 18:9-19) as well as universal rejoicing on the part of those she has abused (Rev. 18:20; Jer. 51:48).
40. The greater part of chapter 18 is devoted to the consternation of the world leaders and their merchant classes, which is impossible to contemplate while humanity is agonizing under the cumulative effects of the first six bowl judgments, not to mention all that has gone on before!
41. The timing of her destruction just before the advent of Christ would hardly see her sitting in the seat of material prosperity considering all the havoc put down on humanity over the course of the seven years (the citizens of commercial Babylon would hardly avoid economic hardship this late in the trib.).
42. Most interpreters of Revelation fall into the trap of imagining that the judgment of Babylon comes in connection with the 7th bowl since Revelation chapters 17 and 18 follow in sequence followed by the Second Advent chapter, chapter 19.
43. The foil to this is the data found in chapters 17 and 18 that preclude this timing.
44. By the time of the great earthquake the armies of the nations are poised for Armageddon and the destruction of Babylon #1 or religious Babylon is accomplished by the Antichrist and the 10 nations he initially heads up (cf. Rev. 17:16), and this occurs before he has to take out three rebellious nations within his confederation (Dan. 7:8, 24).
45. Also, note that the city of Rome is clearly one of the great cities of the nations (cf. Rev. 17:18) and will no doubt be leveled by this earthquake.
46. The Antichrist will take out the Roman Catholic Church headquartered in Rome, Italy in accordance with his policy of suppressions of all faiths outside his cult (2 Thess. 2:4; Dan. 11:37).
47. Babylon #2 or commercial Babylon (America) is taken out at a time when she is in a state of prosperity, an impossible scenario to imagine at the time of the seventh bowl.
48. In addition, how could God's people immigrate from this commercial nation as per the command in Rev. 18:4 (cf. Jer. 50:8, 51:6, 9) to the nations of their ancestry under the conditions connected with the Second Advent?
49. So v.19c must refer back to something that has already transpired to as not to contradict that date found in Scripture concerning commercial Babylon.
50. "The cup of the wine of the anger of His wrath" is the fulfilled in the nuclear annihilation of the US under the second seal by Russia (further documentation to follow in connection with Rev. 18).

Earthquake's Effect on Earth's Topography (v. 21)

VERSE 21 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found (καὶ πᾶσα νῆσος ἔφυγεν καὶ ὄρη οὐχ εὐρέθησαν [*conj kai + adj.nom.f.s. pas every + noun nom.f.s. nesos island + aor.act.ind.3s. pheugo flee + conj kai + noun nom.nt.p. oros mountain, hill, hill country + neg ouk + aor.pass.ind.3s. eurisko find*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 21

1. Verse 20 resumes a description of the earthquake's effect.
2. "Fled" is normally reserved for animate objects, but here it refers to islands sinking into the sea.
3. Here and in Rev. 20:11 the verbs "flee" and "find" occur together in connection with radical changes within the creative order of things.
4. The terms here "islands" and "mountains" refer to literal topographical changes and are not figurative of political upheaval.
5. These changes will effect the landscape of Israel, which might help explain how so many people can occupy the land of Israel and fulfill Rev. 14:20.
6. This will affect the shape and size of earth's land masses.
7. This change in earth's topography will set up the new geography of the nations in the Millennium.
8. This is in every way comparable to the changes that occurred in connection with Noah's flood.
9. There is no information provided on the loss of life connected with this earthquake, but humanity will survive but only by the skin of its proverbial teeth (cf. Mk. 13:20)!

Super Hailstorm (v. 21)

VERSE 21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each (καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη ὥς ταλαντιαία καταβαίνει [*conj kai + noun nom.f.s. chalaza hail + adj.nom.f.s. megas great + conj hos "about" + adj.nom.f.s. talantiaios talent weight = 90.16 pounds*], **came down from heaven upon men** [*καταβαίνει ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους* [*pres.act.ind.3s. katabaino descend + prep epi upon + art.w/noun acc.m.p. anthropos man*]; **and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail** [*καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τῆς χαλάζης* [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. blasphemeo blaspheme, defame + art.w/noun nom.m.p. anthropos man + art.w/noun acc.m.s. theos God + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.f.s. plege plague + art.w/noun gen.f.s. chalaza hail*], **because its plague was extremely severe** [*ὅτι μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφόδρα* [*conj hoti because + adj.nom.f.s. megas great + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi "was" + art.w/noun nom.f.s. plege stroke, plague + pro.gen.f.s. aute "its" + adv sphodra exceedingly*]]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 21

1. The final element associated with the seventh bowl is a bombardment of huge hailstones.
2. The weight of each hailstone is approximated as "a talent's weight."
3. The Hebrew talent was equivalent to 40 kilograms or 90.16 pounds.
4. Such would kill humans and animals and cause massive property damage.
5. Hailstones are an indication of divine judgment (Job 38:22-23; Isa. 28:2, 17; Ezek. 13:11-13; 38:22-23).
6. The Egyptian plague of hail was literal, so this one is also.
7. The article associated with *anthropos* ("men") in this verse is generic for all humanity.

8. The hailstones do not kill everyone as there are those left to blaspheme God.
9. The defiance of –vol. continues form that of the fourth and fifth bowls (16:9, 11).

END: Revelation Chapter Sixteen

Jack M. Ballinger

May, 2026