

## CHAPTER 16

The first verse of Chap 16 reminds us that we have returned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, which is *the day of the Lord*, the time of God's wrath upon unrestrained wickedness on the earth. The events described in this chapter will begin shortly after the reaping (or rapture) of Christ's church which was detailed in Revelation Chap 14. This chronological interpretation of the text is further confirmed by the vision of the 'sea' of believers who were viewed by St. John in heaven, *'having harps of God'* which is found in Chap 15.

### Revelation – Chapter 16 – The King James Version

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

The 1<sup>st</sup> Vial:

The first bowl describes a sore which afflicts those who have taken the mark of the beast. While this is not the same plague as revealed in the 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet Judgment, do not be dissuaded: This bowl judgment is the portrait – a closer and more intimate view - of this additional and accompanying judgement that one would have observed when witnessing this plague from an earthly perspective.

Many writers have discussed the nature of this 'sore:' Some have postulated that this could be a physical manifestation (perhaps an immunological rejection, for instance) to an implanted computer microchip, and thus by inference, the 666 mark. Others have assumed that this may be more akin to a tattoo or marking on the skin which contains certain toxins causing a severe allergic reaction. Those who hold the view that the beast-empire is a revived Islamic caliphate believe that this mark may take the form of an imprinted or inscribed oath of allegiance expressed through the shahada: 'There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger.'

More recently, some people believe that 'the mark' here is referencing a new technology, perhaps a chimeric molecule with incorporated DNA.

It is certainly conceivable that our sun, playing a significant role in many of these plagues, will also cause electromagnetic disturbances so severe that it may affect any implanted microprocessing devices, even causing them to overheat and dissolve within the skin itself, and thus resulting in a painful, festering sore for those who had taken this blasphemous mark.

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

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vial:

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bowl (Vial) Judgment we see not only a complementary pattern emerging, but in fact, the very same judgments viewed from, albeit, a slightly different perspective, because these bowl judgments are being viewed from the earth, as opposed to the trumpet judgments which were being witnessed from heaven, and therefore, from a heavenly perspective.

Remember, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet was described as a *burning mountain* (probably a volcano, a super-volcano, or even an underwater volcanic) '*thrown into the sea, killing a third of the sea creatures:*' Volcanologists have long recognized that the very largest of the super volcanoes are actually located underwater. As we have previously alluded to, in addition to the direct toxic effects from a massive volcanic eruption, the temperature of the surrounding waters would be raised, leading to an explosion in the growth of various algae and other microorganisms, thus robbing the oceans of their oxygen: This is exactly what is described here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bowl Judgment, because, as we know, the blood of the dead carries no oxygen: This oxygen deficit leads to the deaths of many sea creatures.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet Judgment we are shown (from a heavenly perspective) that this had only impacted about a third of the earth's seas; but from an earthly perspective (and possibly a Jerusalem-centric perspective ?) this event affected (or, at least appeared to impact), everything in the surrounding environment.

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

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Vial:

Notice that in both the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bowl and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet Judgments the drinking water is affected. Here in verse 4, the phrase '*on the rivers and fountains of water,*' is used; this is exactly the same language used to describe the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet, and for good reason: This is the very same judgment. It is important to reiterate that these plagues are reserved for those who had actually martyred God's servants, the 'saints and prophets,' as stated in verse 6.

The blood reference could suggest that the color of the water had become red through various toxins and impurities, or that, alternatively, it had become depleted of its dissolved oxygen, and therefore, physiologically, like the blood of a dead man. We have already seen in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet that this calamity is most likely from the toxic substances being released from an asteroid's impact, leading to the production of acid rain and other harmful impurities, poisoning both the surface and ground water.

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

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

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

*7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

## The 4<sup>th</sup> Vial:

The Fourth Bowl (or 4<sup>th</sup> Vial) presents a picture of men being tormented by intense sunlight and heat. This plague, as previously noted, could result from a shifting of the earth's axis of rotation resulting in more direct and intense solar rays striking the earth's surface. Moreover, significant alterations in the earth's protective magnetic field will have almost certainly occurred at this time allowing destructive solar flares, and other discharges of solar particles to strike the planet. Some commentators have suggested that this may, as well, imply the actual impact by CMEs (coronal mass ejections) from the surface of the sun - thus, a form of liquid or partialized 'fire' raining down on the earth's inhabitants.

At first glance, this judgement appears to be inconsistent with the 4<sup>th</sup> Trumpet, who's plague is described as the heavenly bodies being darkened by a third: Interestingly, though, a shifting polar axis, while potentially diminishing the number of hours of daylight, for instance, could at the same time result in a far greater intensity of heat and damaging solar radiation reaching the earth's surface. Even more simply and directly interpreted, though, a large solar event (CME or micro-nova) could essentially darken a third of the sun, because this portion of the sun would effectively be expelled out into space and directed toward the earth and her unrepentant inhabitants, exposing them to extreme heat and deadly electromagnetic radiation.

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

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

The 5<sup>th</sup> Vial:

The 5<sup>th</sup> Bowl Judgement mentions both darkness and pain: These themes are, in fact, repeating exactly the same subjects that were revealed in the 5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Judgement, which had been caused by the smoke from the burning pit, and the releasing of the scorpion-like locusts who's toxins caused pain so intense that men would actually long for death, respectively.

*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.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> Vial:

Here, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl, we find an unimpeachable parallel with the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet, for both of these judgements expressly concern themselves with the River Euphrates.

The first question we might ask is: Why must the Euphrates River be dried up? In considering this, there may be two primary reasons based on pure practicality:

First, at this point in time, near the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, we have already seen dramatic changes in the earth's topography: These extraordinary changes - including the movement of islands, destruction of cities, and the collapse of mountains - as described within the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, could result in the influx of large amounts of seawater

into the Euphrates River delta, even causing flooding for hundreds of miles upstream, and thus making the movement of vast numbers of troops impossible. Moreover, due to the enormous earthquakes occurring during this period there will very likely be no standing bridges left, and because of the ongoing calamities and plagues, little time or resources to rebuild them;

Second, the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet has already informed us that the size of this army is a staggering two hundred million men, and thus the logistics for moving, quartering, and supporting such a vast force would by no means be an easy matter. Remember, this army has an appointment with destiny, and it cannot arrive even a single day late.

Much has been written about this phrase, 'the Kings of the East.' Historically, many writers have ascribed this reference to China, as China would have been the only country who could have possibly fielded such a vast force. Some modern interpreters have emphasized the plurality of this description: It is not a single entity, but an alliance or association of various rulers and nations with a common purpose. To this end, some commentators have postulated that this could be a reference to a coalition of nations east of the Euphrates River, likely from the Islamic world. Such an association of nations might include Pakistan, Afghanistan, India (the Muslim part), Bangladesh, Indonesia, and others, including those Islamic republics from the former Soviet Union, as well. When one considers the large and rapidly expanding populations of many of these nations it is not difficult to imagine that they could, together, quite easily form such a large army, and fully independent of the Chinese.

The imagery in verses 13 and 14 is gripping: Three demonic spirits coming out of the mouths of:

- 1) The dragon (Satan)
- 2) The beast-empire ruler (the anti-Christ)
- 3) The false prophet.

These demonic forces are working in concert to bring this vast army to battle, not against an earthly foe, but against the Lord God Almighty. Remember, the coming battle is not primarily military, but spiritual.

Verse 16 makes the intended location of the battle clear, Armageddon. Geographically, Har Megiddo (meaning the Mount of Megiddo) is found about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. What is so special about this place?

This location is the site of an ancient battle between the land of Israel and its Canaanite neighbors as recounted in Judges chapters 4 and 5: The prophetess Deborah and an Israelite commander, Barak, led a force of ten thousand (10,000) men against a more powerful army of Jabin, a local warlord, commanded by Sisera, and possessing a whopping nine hundred (900) iron chariots. This pagan force was routed and utterly destroyed by the Israelites. In the following text, it is strongly hinted that the chariots may have been caught up in a flash flood: Judges Chap 5:

*19 "Kings came; they fought.  
Yes, the kings of Kena'an fought  
at Ta'anakh, by the waters of Megiddo;  
but they took no spoil of silver.  
20 They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses;  
yes, they fought against Sisra.  
21 The Kishon River swept them away,*

*that ancient river, the Kishon River.  
O my soul, march on with strength! [CJB]*

In addition to any historical significance that this location may have, I would suggest that there is a practical consideration here, as well: Remember, there will already be a large military force associated with the Beast-ruler and his Beast-empire, and to this will now be added a vast armed force of two hundred million (200,000,000) troops from central and east Asia, so a pertinent question quickly becomes: Where could such a vast force be quartered? This river valley, and its surrounding plain provide one of the largest suitable topographical areas in the entire region where such a vast force comprised of so many troops and their associated entourage could set up quarters.

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

*13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

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

*15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

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

The description of the 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl here is both startling in its simplicity, but, at the same time, made unnecessarily confusing by the chapter and verse divisions that we find in our Bibles, for the expression, '*It is done!*' means precisely that: Jesus has come, defeated his enemies at Armageddon, and set up his reign upon the earth. '*It is done.*'

And the second exposition of what John saw and heard is done, as well.

It is important to remember that this is not the only description of this vision that we find in the book of Revelation: This is the second telling, and as such is confirmatory information provided to us on the back of the scroll. We have already been given much vital information and a chronological framework in the first narration, found in chapters 5-11 and contained within the Seven Seals. We will be given additional information in the third account (or third vignette), which is yet to come. With verse 18 we return to the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, and are therefore still referring to that which was written on the outside (on the back) of the scroll.

*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!"*

**This is so important that I'm going to repeat it:**

**With verse 18 we return to the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, for the third and final vignette!**

Everything that we discover in the following passage directly concerns itself with events known to occur within the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal. I propose that we have, in these verses, returned to those events previously described in the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal and will now be given additional, important

information to supplement what we have already been told: '*... in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*' This vision is so important that much of it will be given by 'three witnesses' (by three complementary accounts): Thus, here begins the third exposition (the third vignette) of the Revelation of Jesus Christ as revealed to St. John.

Let's look at these now-familiar events described in verses 18-21:

- noises (voices)
- thunderings and lightnings
- a devastating earthquake
- the division of Jerusalem into three parts
- cities across the world leveled by this earthquake
- the destruction of Babylon
- islands disappearing or moving
- mountains falling or moving out of their geographical location
- enormous hail stones

I respectfully submit that these events cannot possibly be what would follow the jubilant heavenly announcement: '*It is done!*' However, they are a perfect recapitulation of that which will be occurring during the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal – right around the time of the destruction of Babylon and the removal the Christian church, and therefore just before the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal Trumpet and Bowl Judgements are poured out upon the Beast and his empire.

*18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*

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

*20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

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

These events are so significant, and so predictive when taken as a whole, that we should compare them once again with the other descriptions found in Chapters 6 and 11, in this table, though, listing each of the events in the order they are revealed in the individual texts. The complementarity between these various portraits is self-evident, recognizing that the 'signs,' while not identical, occur in the same chronological sequence in all accounts.

## - The signs of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal -

Revelation 6:12-17	Revelation 11:19	Revelation 16:18-21
	Lightnings	Voices
	Voices	Thunders
	Thunderings	Lightnings
Great earthquake	Earthquake	Great earthquake: 'worst ever'
		Jerusalem divided into 3 parts
		Cities of the nations fell
	{Babylon is fallen (Rev. 14:8); cp. Isaiah 21:9}	Babylon destroyed, God's wrath (Rev Chaps 17,18)
Sun became black (cp. Is. 13:10; Joel 3:15)		
Moon like blood (cp. Is. 13:10; Joel 3:15)		
Stars of heaven fell to earth (cp. Joel 3:15)		
Sky receded as a scroll (cp. Is. 34:4)		
Mountains moved		And the mountains not found
Islands moved		Then, every island fled away
	Great hail	Great hail (talent: 50-100 lbs):
'Hide us.' Men recognize God's wrath		Men blasphemed God

When we view, side by side, these three passages out of the Book of Revelation the harmony between these recurrent themes becomes increasingly self-evident. By understanding and incorporating the basic structure of a literary triptych (three separate but complimentary accounts of the end time events as I have outlined in this book), the reader now has at his or her disposal the tools to make 'logical sense' of the entire scope of the Seven Seals, and additionally, a consistent chronological framework for interpreting all the vital markers of this revealed vision of the end times of this present age.

Let's examine one possible chronological synthesis of these three accounts, keeping in mind that Revelation Chap 16 actually provides us with the most complete listing of events.

\* \* \*

*Lightnings, Noises (voices), Thunders:* These three events may, in fact, be occurring in

heaven, as a sombre prelude to the events shortly to unfold on earth.

Then, a *great earthquake*, dividing Jerusalem and leveling cities will strike the earth: Here is the wake-up call for the entire planet, as extraordinary cosmic electromagnetic forces begin to disrupt the earth's fragile crust from its connection to the underlying molten mantle.

Next, Babylon is utterly destroyed at the hand of its hostile neighbors as an act of God's divine wrath, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were.

Then, great signs will appear in *the sun, moon, and stars*, heralding dramatic events in the heavenlies, and portending the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal plagues; *and the sky receded as a scroll*: Here is a possible indication of the timing of rapture.

Alarmingly, as these catastrophic geological disturbances rapidly intensify on earth's surface, *mountains will be moved, and islands displaced*, and finally, when devastating hail storms erupt, men will hide themselves in caves and begin to curse God, which is the perfect moment for God to pour out his wrath as embodied within the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal plagues.

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There remains two main tasks ahead of us: First, a discussion of the enigmatic topic of 'Babylon the Great,' and second, a look at the culminating moment of human history – the return of Jesus, the Christ, to vanquish the forces of evil and claim the eternal throne of his kingdom. Blessed be God, forever and ever.