



The Book Of Revelation

Chapter 16

Introduction: Divine Outline Revelation 1:19

In chapters 15-16 we see the fullness of God's wrath poured out on earth. Previously, in the seals and the trumpets, we saw devastating judgment, however, these judgments were measured, not representing the fullness of God's wrath. Here we will see the wrath of God without measure. When carried out, judgment will be complete on the enemies of God and all that remains, aside from a brief satanic rebellion and the Great White Throne judgment, **(Revelation 20:7-15)** is the blessing of the Millennium and eventually eternity with God.

In Chapter 16 we will see the reoccurring use of the word great, (Megas) sometimes translated as loud. This word used 10 times in Chapter 16 gives us insight into the intensity of God's voice and anger as He pours out the bowls of wrath on an unrepentant and wicked world. We also see the use of this word in Jesus' description of the final 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. **(Matthew 24:21)** This planet has never experienced anything approaching the intensity of judgment released in Revelation 16.

Isaiah prophesied God's word that He would, "punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity." **(Isaiah 13:11)** This punishment would come in the "wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger." **(Isaiah 13:13)** The prophecy spoken 700 years before the birth of Christ will find its culmination in Revelation 16. With the pouring of these bowls, God's wrath will be complete **(Revelation 15:1)** and Christ's Kingdom will finally be established on earth.

In the seals and trumpets we saw judgment as a call to repentance. In the bowls there does not appear to be any further opportunity for repentance. Those who dwell on earth have made their decision and all that remains is judgment. It is important to be reminded, however, that God's judgment is never unfair or unreasonable. Scripture reveals that God takes no pleasure in judgment, and that it only occurs after He has repeatedly revealed both Himself and the approaching consequence of rejecting Him. **(Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, Isaiah 1:16-20, 65:2, Ezekiel 33:23-33, Amos 4:6-12, Matthew 23:37-39, Romans 10:21)**

As for the timing of the seven bowls, we seem to be at the beginning of the second half of the tribulation. These events are connected to Satan's expulsion from heaven, along with the full release of his anger on the Jews as well as any who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. **(Revelation 12:17)** The timing is also connected to the desecration of the temple by the Beast. **(Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)**

Finally, we will see two different affects from the bowl judgments. The first four bowls affect nature. (Land, Sea, Water, Sun) The final three are more political and affect the Kingdom of the Beast and the kingdoms of the world.

Revelation 16:1 (NKJV)

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."

The "loud" voice from the temple marks the first use of the word "megas." As noted in the introduction, this word is used 10 times in chapter 16. **(Vs 1,9,12,14,18, 19 2X, 21 2X)** and speaks to the enormity and intensity of the events taking place. These judgments will be of a greater magnitude and ferocity than any preceding from the seals and trumpets.

The voice coming from temple must be God. We were told in chapter 15 that during this time the temple is inaccessible to anyone other than God. **(Revelation 15:8)** Although the bowls were presented by one of the living creatures **(Revelation 15:7)** and initiated by the seven angels **(Verse 1)** we see that they originate from the throne of God. It is God's wrath poured out on sinful man.

There are those who believe the emptying of the seven bowls are concurrent with the seal and trumpet judgments. They argue the similarities point to them happening at the same time. However, this is not the case. Although there are some similarities, we also see significant differences. One of which is the severity. The seals and trumpets were measured. The bowls are not.

We see in the Book of Revelation a chronology showing us that the trumpets flow from the seventh seal **(Revelation 8:1-6)** and the bowls flow from the seventh trumpet. **(Revelation 11:15-19, 15:1)**

Thus, the entire Book of Revelation from Chapter 5 forward is what flows from the seven-sealed scroll in the hand of Jesus. **(Revelation 5:7)**

Revelation 16:2 (NKJV)

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.

As the first angel pours the bowl, we see devastating soars begin to appear on those who have taken the mark of the Beast.

Once again, we are reminded of the Egyptian plagues in the Book of Exodus. God told Moses and Aaron to take ashes from a furnace and to go to Pharaoh. In the sight of Pharaoh Moses was to "scatter the ashes to the heavens." When He did the ashes became fine dust which spread and caused boils to break out on "man and beast throughout the land of Egypt." **(Exodus 9:8-11)**

Later we see that God spoke to the Israelites saying the curse of "severe boils" **(Deuteronomy 28:15)** would come upon those who would not obey His voice and keep His commandments. **(Deuteronomy 28:35)**

As we see in our day, it may be possible these soars will appear in a few and then begin to spread until everyone with the mark will be afflicted.

Foul

Kakos (Strong's G2556)

troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful

Loathsome

Ponēros (Strong's G4190)

bad, of a bad nature or condition

A. in a physical sense: diseased or blind

Based on the definition of Ponēros, these sores could be the result of some kind of infectious and spreading disease. In Revelation 6 we saw the release of the pale horse rider who killed with sword, hunger and with "death." **(Revelation 6:7-8)** It is interesting to note that the word "death" is translated from the Septuagint. In the Hebrew translation, the word for death is "deber" which means pestilence or plague. The judgment of the pale horse rider brought death to ¼ of the earth. A measured judgment. This plague affects all who have worshipped the Beast.

Revelation 16:3 (NKJV)

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.

With the release of the second bowl, we see an affect on the sea.

We read this to be literal blood. Some believe what John witnessed is not literal, but that something happens, possibly a "red tide" that affects the waters and kills the sea life. Although this is possible, it is easiest to understand that John proclaims this to blood, and we should see it as such.

The water becomes like "blood as of a dead man." This phrase paints a gruesome picture of seas that are filled with coagulated, jelly-like clots of blood. This understandably renders any life in the sea to be impossible. To imagine the devastation of this plague seems impossible considering that 71% of the earth is covered in water.

This plague is like the first plague on Egypt. **(Exodus 7:17-21)**

We also see in the second trumpet that one third of the seas turned to blood. This killed one third of the sea life and destroyed one third of the ships. **(Revelation 8:8-9)** The two witnesses also had power to turn the waters to blood. **(Revelation 11:6)**

Revelation 16:4 (NKJV)

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

Once again, we have seen similar judgment, although measured. **(Revelation 8:10-11)**

With the third bowl not only are the seas affected, but now the rivers and spring turn to blood. It would appear at this point every source of drinking water has been destroyed. Estimates say the typical human can only go without water for about a week and in many cases not more than three or four days. Compound this loss of drinking water with the following judgment (**Vs 8-9**) and it is easy to see that many tens of thousands are likely to die within just a few days.

Revelation 16:5–6 (NKJV)

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."

Considering the brutality of what we have seen so far, we are reminded that God is righteous in His judgments. (**See notes on 15:3-4**) There is nothing arbitrary or unfair about what is happening. The Beast and his wicked followers have been blood-thirsty in their treatment of the saints and prophets and so they will be given blood to drink.

Revelation 16:7 (NKJV)

7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

In Greek the words "another from" are omitted. The altar, then, seems to be personified, speaking to the truth and righteousness of God's judgments. This is the only place where the altar is seen speaking.

Previously we read that a voice came from the four-horns of the altar. However, it seems that voice may have been the angel of chapter 8. (**Revelation 8:3-5**) Some also believe that this may be the voice of one of the martyrs under the altar. (**Revelation 6:9-11**)

Even so

Nai (Strong's G3483)

I. yea, verily, truly, assuredly, even so

Nai is a word closely connected with the word amen. (**2 Corinthians 1:20**) The altar proclaims its agreement with the words spoken in verses 5-6.

The altar then directs its words at God Himself. He is recognized as God Almighty.

Almighty

Pantokratōr (Strong's G3841)

I. he who holds sway over all things

II. the ruler of all

III. almighty: God

In light of the events taking place, it is apparent that God is in control of all things. His wrath is being released. However, there is also the continued recognition that God is not just reacting in unchecked power, but that His judgments and actions are righteous.

Revelation 16:8 (NKJV)

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

When God struck the Egyptians with the ninth plague, He caused darkness to be over the land. This seems to be a supernatural affect on the sun causing darkness for the Egyptians but light for the children of Israel. (**Exodus 10:21-23**)

We have seen a supernatural affect on the sun previously in the Book of Revelation.

The sixth seal caused the sun to become "black as sackcloth." The moon, stars, sky, and earth were also affected at the same time. (**Revelation 6:12-14**)

With the fourth trumpet one third of the sun, the moon and the stars were darkened. This probably decreased temperatures on the earth. (**Revelation 8:12-13**) In contrast, the fourth bowl initiates a

great intensity of heat and fire from the sun. This reminds us that the tribulation will be a time of extreme fluctuation and change in the environment.

And power was given

We are reminded the angel does not have power or authority of his own to release these judgments. It is a delegated authority from God Almighty, the one who rules over all things.

Revelation 16:9 (NKJV)

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.

The Greek word for scorched means to be "tortured with intense heat." This judgment is not just a typical heat wave that brings discomfort. This is a burning and searing of flesh bringing intense agony.

Not only is this heat causing this kind of torture but be reminded there is no longer water to drink or to soothe. **(16:3-4)** This is a truly hopeless situation for the followers of the Beast.

Even though, it is apparent God is causing all of this, the deceived and reprobate Beast followers still refuse to repent. This refusal is noted throughout Revelation. **(Revelation 2:21, 6:15-17, 9:20-21)** Instead they blaspheme the name of God and refuse to recognize and give glory to Him. Eventually, even those who refuse repentance will recognize and give glory to God. **(Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:9-11)**

Revelation 16:10 (NKJV)

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.

There is a shift with the fifth bowl from the supernatural effect on nature to the effect on the political kingdom of the Beast and the kings of the earth.

The ninth plague in Egypt also caused darkness across the land for the enemies of God. **(Exodus 10:21-22)**

We also see similarities to the fifth trumpet **(Revelation 9:1-2)** where the land became darkened. Although in this trumpet the darkness was caused by the smoke of the pit and the invasion of demonic locust. Also interesting is the darkness of the fifth trumpet was followed by the demonic army coming from the Euphrates. The darkness of the fifth bowl will be followed by armies coming across the Euphrates from the East to gather at Armageddon. **(16:12-15)**

Gnawed their tongues because of the pain

It is uncertain whether the pain is somehow caused by the darkness or whether the pain of the previous plagues is simply intensified by the suffering taking place in the darkness. Verse 11 seems to give indication that it is the torment of the previous plagues magnified. Either way, it seems the followers of the beast are getting their first taste of what eternity in Hell will be like. **(Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30)**

Revelation 16:11 (NKJV)

11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Once again, instead of turning to God, they blaspheme God.

The pain of verse 10 seems to be explained here. The pain and sores from the previous bowls now compounded with the darkness and hopelessness of their situation will be unbearable.

Revelation 16:12 (NKJV)

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.

In the Old Testament God would often dry up the water as a sign and show of His power:

1. The Red Sea (**Exodus 14:21**)
2. The Jordan River (**Joshua 3:17**)
3. Prophecies of Isaiah (**Isaiah 11:15-16**)
4. Prophecies of Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 51:36**)
5. Prophecies of Zechariah (**Zechariah 10:11**)

Although the drying up of the Euphrates is most likely a supernatural action of God, it is possible God could use human means to accomplish His purpose. The Atakurk dam in southeastern Turkey has the ability to stop the flow of the Euphrates River and it has been threatened before for political means.

This bowl is a continuation of activity that began with the sixth trumpet. (**Revelation 9:13-19**)

The affect of this bowl is to dry up the Euphrates River, but the purpose is to make way for the "kings of the east." Much speculation is available regarding the identity of these kings. However, the phrase itself seems to identify who they are.

East

Anatolē (Strong's G395)

I. a rising (of the sun and stars)

II. the east (the direction of the sun's rising)

This phrase literally rendered is the kings of the rising sun. A phrase that has historically been used of countries such as Japan and China. China, in particular, has long had a population able to field the army of 200 million revealed in chapter 9. (**Revelation 9:13-19**) It is also possible that there could be a coalition of nations east of Israel who join to enter what will be the battle of Armageddon.

Revelation 16:13 (NKJV)

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.

Some see a connection to the second plague in Egypt. (**Exodus 8:1-15**) Although those of this plague are demonic and not natural.

The reason these demons are represented as frogs may be debated but the more important consideration is their purpose. These demons are lying spirits in the mouths of or coming from Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet. Their purpose is to deceive the armies of the kings of the earth to come to God's battle at Armageddon. (**See 1 Kings 22:19-23 for lying spirit**)

Revelation 16:14 (NKJV)

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.

Many view this verse as a gathering of armies to fight against Israel and this is true. (**Zechariah 12:1-3**) However, Daniel reveals to us that many of the armies are gathering, not just against Israel, but to fight the Beast. (**Daniel 11:36-45**) In the rebellion of the nations against the Beast Kingdom, Jerusalem becomes a centerpiece. This seems to be a paradox. Why would Satan cause demons to influence armies to fight against His own kingdom?

Bible Knowledge Commentary: John F Walvoord

The answer seems to be in the events which follow. Satan, knowing that the second coming of Christ is near, will gather all the military might of the world into the Holy Land to resist the coming of the Son of Man who will return to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4). Though the nations may be deceived in entering into the war in hope of gaining world political power, the satanic purpose is to combat the armies from heaven (introduced in chap. 19) at the second coming of Christ.

Eventually the nations will be led to join the Beast as they turn their attention to the failed effort to fight Christ as He returns. (**Psalms 2, Zechariah 12:1-9, 14:1-15, Revelation 19:11-21**)

This war will be raging until Christ's return. (**Zechariah 14:1-3**) Although it appears that this is the war of the Beast and the nations, it is actually the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 16:15 (NKJV)

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."

As with the seals (**Revelation 7**) and the trumpets (**Revelation 10-11:14**) There is a parenthesis. Although short, Jesus Himself interjects into the narrative of the bowls and declares that He is coming and that all should be ready for His return.

Jesus' return has often been compared to the swiftness of a thief in the night. (**Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3**)

For Christians in the church age, we look for the swift return of Christ in the rapture. (**1 Corinthians 15:51-55, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**) For those who may still be holding fast during the tribulation, when they see these events taking place, they should remain faithful and watchful knowing Christ's return is at hand.

Jesus warned of the need for believers to remain watchful no matter what day they are living in. (**Matthew 24:42-44, 25:13, Mark 13:32-37, Luke 12:39-40, Revelation 3:2**) Paul also spoke of the need to remain watchful. (**1 Thessalonians 5:4-6**) For those who do remain watchful special blessing is promised. (**Matthew 24:45-47, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12**)

and keeps his garments

To keep your garments means to continue in the righteousness that comes from Christ. Garments are often used in scripture to describe the spiritual state of an individual or group. (**Isaiah 64:6, Zechariah 3:3-5, Matthew 22:11-13, Revelation 3:17-19**)

lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

Word Studies In The New Testament: Marvin R. Vincent

"During the night the captain of the Temple made his rounds. On his approach the guards had to rise and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep when on duty was beaten, or his garments were set on fire. The confession of one of the Rabbins is on record that, on a certain occasion, his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captain of the Temple"

The one who had been beaten and his clothes burned would be found walking home naked. It would be known that he had failed to keep his post and he would be shamed for that failure as well as his state of nakedness.

Whether a Christian waiting for the rapture or a believer holding on in the final days of tribulation, those who are not ready will stand before God naked and ashamed that they were not prepared for His coming. (**Isaiah 47:1-3, 1 John 2:28, Revelation 3:18**)

Revelation 16:16 (NKJV)

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

They refer to the demonic frogs of verse 13-14.

Armageddon comes from two words. Har which means hill or mountain and Megiddo which means the place of troops or the place of slaughter. The actual location for Armageddon is in the plain of Esdraelon. It's a place approximately 14 miles wide and 20 miles long. In 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte fought a battle near this place and was quoted as saying this was "the most natural battlefield on earth." It is also identified with the Valley of Jezreel.

This location was the sight of several significant events in the History of Israel. It was the place where Deborah defeated Sisera and was celebrated in her song. (**Judges 5:19-21**) King Ahaziah died in Megiddo after having been shot by Jehu. (**2 Kings 9:27**) It was also the place where King Josiah died in his battle against Egypt and Pharaoh Necho. (**2 Kings 23:29-30, Zechariah 12:11**)

Joel called this place the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which means "God has judged." (**Joel 3:2, 12**) Joel relates that God will draw the Gentile nations together and punish them for the way they have treated His people, Israel. (**Joel 3:1-2, See also Zechariah 12:1-9, 14:1-15**)

Revelation 16:17 (NKJV)

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!"

In Chapter 15 we were told that when these bowls were poured out the wrath of God would be complete. **(Revelation 15)** Now with the pouring of the seventh bowl, the voice of God roars from the throne room that judgment has been made complete. The Kingdom of Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet is crumbling down and it will never return. Chapters 17, 18 and 19 give us a deeper look into what this destruction will look like as the false religious system is destroyed, the political and economic system of the Beast is destroyed "in one hour" **(Revelation 18:10)** and the military forces of the Beast and the nations are destroyed by "the sword which proceeds out of the mouth of Him who sat on the horse." Jesus has returned and He shall reign forever and ever. **(Revelation 11:15)**

Revelation 16:18 (NKJV)

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.

Coinciding with the voice from the throne of God are noises, thunderings and a great earthquake. We saw similar activity coming at the end of the seal judgments **(Revelation 6:12-17)** and preceding the seventh trumpet as the two witnesses ascended into heaven. **(Revelation 11:13)** Now as the Bowl judgments are coming to their conclusion; we see what is described as the biggest earthquake that has ever occurred.

Some commentators believe this earthquake may be caused as the result of a nuclear exchange of some kind that takes place leading up to or during the Battle of Armageddon. This is a possibility, but speculation.

The March 11, 2011, earthquake in Japan was measuring 9.0 was calculated to have shortened the earth day by 1.8 microseconds and to have shifted the axis of the earth by about 6.5 inches. This would cause the earth to "wobble" in a slightly different way. It is incredible to comprehend the magnitude of power released on that day. However, the earthquake that takes place at the emptying of the seventh bowl will make this earthquake look like a slight tremor. Zechariah prophesied that when Jesus returns and stands on the Mount of Olives, the mountain will be split in two. **(Zechariah 14:4)**

Revelation 16:19 (NKJV)

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.

It is important to first answer the question, where is the great city? Some wish to identify it as somewhere other than the obvious answer, Babylon. In Revelation 11 we saw Jerusalem identified as the "great city." We knew this because of its identification as the place where "our Lord was crucified."

The great city in view here is Babylon. We know this first because it is identified as such in this verse. "Great Babylon was remembered before God." We also see as the description of this destruction is expanded upon in chapter 18, the "great" and "mighty" city is identified as Babylon.

There are those who believe Babylon to be Rome or some other city, but scripturally, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, it is clear that Babylon will literally be rebuilt and will be the center of the Beast's Kingdom. **(Isaiah 47, Jeremiah 50, 51, Revelation 14:8, Revelation 17, 18)**

And great Babylon was remembered before God,

Babylon will be remembered for the sins she has committed. Especially against God's chosen, Israel. **(Joel 3:1-2, Zechariah 12:1-9)**

and the cities of the nations fell

These are the cities of the gentile nations who have joined in the fight against Israel and against Christ. Such is the power of this earthquake that it destroys cities all over the earth.

Revelation 16:20 (NKJV)

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

This earthquake seems to have such impact that every mountain disappears, and every island falls into the sea. Zechariah revealed that during this time the land surrounding Jerusalem will be turned to a plain. **(Zechariah 14:10)** This seems to set the stage for the topography of the Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 16:21 (NKJV)

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.

There is some discrepancy among commentators about how much a talent weighs. The general view is that it is somewhere between 75 and 100 lbs. Hailstones this large falling will surely destroy anything that is left from the destruction of the earthquake of verse 21.

Hail has often been a means by which God brings judgment on the wicked. **(Joshua 10:11, Isaiah 30:30, Ezekiel 13:11, Revelation 8:7, 11:19)**

The picture of Revelation 16 is of the complete wrath and judgment of God which brings complete and utter destruction to the earth and those who are left on it. However, even in this obvious activity of God, men will still not repent. Once again, God's judgments are justified. The wicked will remain wicked, and the only recourse God has is destruction and eternal punishment.