

## The Book of Revelation Lesson 19 - Revelation 16

1. Key Verse is **Revelation 17:14** - **“These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they [also shall overcome] that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.”**
2. The purpose of Revelation is to comfort Christians in trials and persecution by assuring them that the enemies of righteousness will be conquered and destroyed. Christ will ultimately triumph over Satan and death, and his church will gain the final victory over all the forces of evil.
  - 2.1. Our consolation is God Himself, who dictated this book, through Christ, by an angel, to John the apostle, who wrote it down, and sent the completed book to the seven churches of Asia (**Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8**).
  - 2.2. John was told to write of **“things which must shortly come to pass”** (**Rev. 1:1**), **“which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter”** (**Rev. 1:19**). There is an amazing parallel between the visions of the book and the course of church history. Much of Revelation evidently refers to the end of the world, the judgment, and to the new heaven and the new earth.
  - 2.3. **Rev. 15** and **Rev. 16** are a summary of the events symbolized by the seven seals and the seven trumpets. In **Rev. 15**, the shortest section in the book, the seven angels introduce the seven plagues of **Rev. 16**. The seven vials, or bowls, of God's wrath are poured out upon the earth (**Rev. 16:1**). **“In them is filled up the wrath of God”** (**Rev. 15:1**), **“till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished”** (**Rev. 15:8**).
  - 2.4. God's punishment of the impenitent is seen, according to Paul's warning, **“after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of the judgment of God”** (**Rom. 2:5**).
  - 2.5. One sees a similarity between these symbols of God's wrath and the plagues visited upon Egypt. Here the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the throne of the beast, the great river Euphrates, and the air. The total physical environment is pictured. This symbolizes man's spiritual environment -- the completeness of God's judgment upon all evil, especially in the time of the final and ultimate hardening of the human race, when they repented not and “men blasphemed God” (**Rev. 16:9, 11, 21**).
  - 2.6. The sources of evil are the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. The dragon is Satan (**Rev. 12:9**); the beast represents anti-Christian government, whether Rome, Russia, or any other; and the second beast, or false prophet, symbolizes anti-Christian religion and thought.
  - 2.7. Revelation 16
    - 2.7.1. Coffman's Commentary on Revelation is remarkable regarding messages of this book and how it relates to us today. He quotes Carpenter: “The wrath of God is simply the operation of God's righteous law against sin ... That law is adverse to evil, and will eventually root out evil.”

- 2.7.2. Coffman states, "The dramatic scenes of **Rev. 16** are designed to symbolize the execution of God's wrath in the outpouring from the hands of these is directed against all evil."
3. **Rev.16:1 - And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.**
- 3.1. The great voice out of heaven is not identified; however, since no one was allowed in the temple where God dwells until after the bowls are poured out, it must be the voice of God himself. The voice commands the angels to pour out the seven bowls of wrath of God upon the earth. They are not commanded individually, but he utters one command and each in order pours out his bowl.
4. **Rev.16:2**
- 4.1. **Rev.16:2 - And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image.**
- 4.1.1. The first angel poured out his bowl of the wrath of God. It was upon the wicked, those who had the mark of the beast and that worshipped his image.
- 4.1.1.1. It was a noisome and grievous sore meaning a loathsome and malignant ulcer or abscess. It is similar to the sixth plague of Egypt when the people were afflicted with boils (**Exodus 9:9-11**).
- 4.1.1.2. The meaning is that some evils afflict the wicked that do not befall the righteous.
- 4.2. **Rev.16:3 - And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, [even] the things that were in the sea.**
- 4.2.1. The second bowl affected the sea and it turned to blood and killed everything in the sea. This is similar to the second trumpet, except it affected a third of the sea. This bowl of wrath affected all of the sea. It is similar to the first plague of Egypt (**Exodus 7:20-21**). The sea becomes like the blood of a dead man, coagulated and rotting.
- 4.2.2. In **Revelation 8:8** and **13:1** the sea represents all of wicked mankind. This may refer to a society that is dead in sin, which is rotting and destroying itself.
- 4.3. **Rev.16:4 - And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood.**
- 4.3.1. The third angel poured out his bowl of wrath into the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood. This is similar to the third trumpet, but there only one third of the waters were affected. In the plague in Egypt, they could dig and find pure water, but here even the fountains (the underground water) turned to blood. Without water, man will die.
- 4.3.2. Those who worship at the feet of Satan, via the beasts, are his representatives to do his bidding.

4.3.3. They do this in part by advancing the teachings of the devil, with the result that all kinds of `stinking ulcers' shall spring up all over the world," as evidenced by the prevalence of evolution, humanism, communism, socialism, a new morality, atheism and a host of other lies in addition to pornography, liquor, prostitution, and perversion, which seemingly cannot be stopped.

4.3.4. Therefore, the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth, not a part of it, but upon all of it.

## 5. **Rev. 16:5-7**

5.1. **Rev.16:5 - And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge:**

5.1.1. The angel of the water refers to the angel who just poured out the bowl of wrath on the water. He declares that God is righteous and just in sending these plagues on wicked men. Who art and who wast, thou Holy One refers to the Almighty God.

5.1.2. God's judgments are not impulsive, but rather they are deserved. The word of God teaches that God hates sin, that sin must be punished and that a man reaps what he sows (**Galatians 6:7**). These bowls of wrath are deserved as the next verse shows.

5.2. **Rev.16:6 - for they poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy.**

5.2.1. The punishment will fit the sin. The wicked had shed the blood of Christians.

5.2.2. Saints is the most common name used for Christians in the New Testament. The term "saint" is used sixty-three times in the New Testament. It means one set apart to Christ.

5.2.3. Prophets were the New Testament prophets. They were men who had the ability to preach and teach God's word as guided by the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:11**).

5.2.4. The wicked are getting what they deserve.

5.3. **Rev.16:7 - And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.**

5.3.1. This is the first time that the altar speaks in Revelation. Previously a voice is heard from the horns of the altar (**9:13**). The altar affirms that the judgments (the plagues or bowls of wrath) are true and righteous.

5.3.2. It is right for God to punish the wicked. He would be acting inconsistently if he did not. The voices of the martyred saints cried out in chapter 6:10 from beneath the altar asking, **How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?** Their cry has been answered.

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## 6. **Rev.16:8-9**

**6.1. Rev.16:8 - And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire.**

6.1.1. The fourth bowl is similar to the fourth trumpet in that they both included the sun. However, the fourth trumpet caused a partial eclipse; here the sun was given to scorch men with fire. It should be noticed that the sun was given this power; God is in control of the entire process.

**6.2. Rev.16:9 - And men were scorched men with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.**

6.2.1. The wicked that were scorched with a great heat realized these plagues came from God. They were intended to bring man to repentance since God's goodness had not brought them to repentance (**Romans 2:4-11**). Instead of repenting and giving glory to God, they had become like the beast, blasphemed the name of God, and blamed their problems on him.

6.2.2. Man is responsible for the sins he commits, not God. They were like Pharaoh who hardened his heart when God brought the plagues upon Egypt. This is not the final judgment, for then there will be no opportunity to repent.

6.2.2.1. Adam and Eve

6.2.2.1.1. Eve blamed the serpent

6.2.2.1.2. Adam blamed Eve and then God for giving him Eve.

**7. Rev.16:10-11**

**7.1. Rev.16:10 - And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,**

7.1.1. The fifth bowl was poured out upon the throne of the beast. The beast out of the sea represented governments as they oppressed the church.

7.1.1.1. In the first century, it was Rome, but it should not be limited to Rome as it includes any government that oppresses Christians in any age. His kingdom was darkened.

7.1.1.2. Reminds one of Psalm 69:23 and Isaiah 9:19.

7.1.2. Darkness is opposed to light, and Satan's kingdom is called the kingdom of darkness, but it is this all the time. So darkness here must mean lack of understanding and wisdom, perhaps similar to 1 Corinthians 1:19. It is similar to the ninth plague of Egypt. The pain was great, but it does not tell us what caused the pain.

**7.2. Rev.16:11 - and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.**

7.2.1. They did not learn and repent. There was no godly sorrow for the lives they were leading. They recognized that the plagues came from God, but they refused to repent. Instead they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their sores and pain.

**8. Rev.16:12-17**

**8.1. Rev.16:12 - And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the [river] Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that [come] from the sunrising.**

8.1.1. The sixth bowl is poured out upon the great river Euphrates, drying it up so that the kings of the east (from the sunrising) may pass over.

8.1.1.1. It is similar to the sixth trumpet which had the four angels bound at the river Euphrates. They were loosed and led a large army of horsemen who killed a third part of man. Here the details about the kings are not described. The river is opened for the kings of the east to cross.

8.1.1.1.1. This reminds one of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21), the Jordan River (Joshua 3:16; Isaiah 11:15; Jeremiah 51:36; Zechariah 10:11).

8.1.1.1.2. The Euphrates was the eastern border of the Roman Empire and also the eastern border of the land promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7-8; Joshua 1:3-4). On the other side of the Euphrates in the first century were the dreaded Parthian horsemen, to whom this alludes.

8.1.2. The battle of Armageddon is now introduced.

**8.2. Rev.16:13 - 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, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs:**

8.2.1. Verses 13-16 are an expansion of verse 12.

8.2.2. John sees three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the three enemies of righteous men:

8.2.2.1. The dragon-Satan (**Revelation 12:9**).

8.2.2.2. The beast refers to the beast out of the sea of **Revelation 13:1-10**, which represents governmental powers that oppose the church.

8.2.2.3. The false prophets refer to the beast out of the land (**Revelation 13:11-17**).

8.2.3. Frogs were considered unclean in the Old Testament (**Leviticus 11:9**). Frogs are slimy, ugly and do no positive good. Their croaking is incessant, but meaningless. They represent lying spirits such as **1 Kings 22:21**.

**8.3. Rev.16:14 - for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.**

8.3.1. They were demonical spirits. They were to entice the kings of the world into battle against God. This was to be the great day of God, the Almighty. It will be the day when God is victorious over all of his enemies. The battle is not described here. The battle is never really described, but the results of the battle are given in **Revelation 19:17-18**.

**8.4. Rev.16:15 - (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.)**

- 8.4.1. This great battle that is brewing will take place at the end of time when Jesus comes. No one knows when that will be (**Matthew 24:36**). It will be unexpectedly like the thief in the night (**1 Thessalonians 5:2; Matthew 24:42-44**).
- 8.4.2. The Christian must be alert and be prepared. He must keep his garments, his character, pure so that he will be ready when Jesus comes, and then it will be a day of joy, not of shame.
- 8.4.3. This is the third of the seven beatitudes of the book of Revelation.
- 8.5. **Rev.16:16 - And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-magedon.**
- 8.5.1. This is not a literal battle, but a spiritual one. **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).**
- 8.5.2. This great battle that is brewing will take place at the end of time when Jesus comes. No one knows when that will be (**Matthew 24:36**). It will be unexpectedly like the thief in the night (**1 Thessalonians 5:2; Matthew 24:42-44**).
- 8.5.3. The Christian must be alert and be prepared (**v. 15**). He must keep his garments, his character, pure so that he will be ready when Jesus comes, and then it will be a day of joy, not of shame.
- 8.5.4. This Hebrew term is not found anywhere else. Har-Magedon literally means the mountain of Megiddo.
- 8.5.5. Armageddon as used in the King James Version means the city of Megiddo.
- 8.5.5.1. There is a city of Megiddo. There is no mountain of Megiddo.
- 8.5.5.2. Megiddo guarded the northern entrance to Israel at the valley of Esdraelon. This was the place where famous and decisive battles took place. Here Gideon and his three hundred defeated the Midianites (**Judges 7**). Here Barak and Deborah overthrew the hosts of the Canaanite king, Jabin (**Judges 4 and 5**). At this place, the Philistines defeated King Saul (**1 Samuel 31:1-6**). Here Ahaziah died of Jehu's arrows (**2 Kings 9:27**). Here Pharaoh-Necho overthrew Josiah (**II Kings 23:29**).
- 8.5.5.3. This place burned in the minds of the Hebrews as a place of decisive battles.
- 8.5.6. John thus uses this symbolically to describe the place for the last and decisive battle between Christ and Satan.
- 8.5.6.1. Har-Magedon is symbolic of the final overthrow of all the forces of Satan by the power of almighty God.
- 8.5.6.2. The battle will be discussed when we review **Revelation 19:11-16**.
- 8.5.7. This is the place where Satan and his forces meet their final and decisive defeat. Armageddon (or Har-Magedon) means the Waterloo of

Satan. (Waterloo was the site of Napoleon's final defeat in Belgium in 1815).

8.5.7.1. To say one met his Waterloo means he is decisively defeated. This is what the battle of Armageddon means.

8.5.8. The premillennialists teach that it refers to a literal battle that will take place when Christ's forces come from the sky to defeat the forces of evil, and Christ sets up his literal throne on earth and begins his thousand-year reign. It does not mean this.

## 9. **Rev. 16:17-21**

9.1. **Rev.16:17 - And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done:**

9.1.1. The seventh angel pours out his bowl of wrath. It is poured out upon the air which is one of the realms from which Satan operates (Ephesians 2:2). The voice out of the temple is not identified, but the voice must be that of either God or Christ. It says, **It is done**, meaning it has been accomplished.

9.2. **Rev.16:18 - and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty.**

9.2.1. The power of God is demonstrated, similar to the seventh trumpet. The earthquake is larger and worse than any earthquake known. This emphasizes the great power of God.

9.3. **Rev.16:19 - And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.**

9.3.1. The great city was divided into three parts, indicating the total and complete destruction. The cities of the nations were also divided this way. Babylon the great was remembered of God and she was punished, as she deserved.

9.3.2. God's long-suffering has run out, men no longer have the opportunity to repent, they must be punished. The idea is that God will completely triumph and defeat Satan and punish him and his followers.

9.3.3. Babylon refers first to Rome and then to all those cities and nations which oppose God and right things.

9.4. **Rev.16:20 - And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.**

9.4.1. The earthquake was so great that every island disappeared and the mountains were leveled. This is similar to the sixth seal. There is no place left to hide. God's wrath will destroy them all.

9.5. **Rev.16:21 - And great hail, [every stone] about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.**

- 9.5.1. Great hailstones weighing about one hundred pounds fell upon men. These would kill a man when they struck him. Yet, men did not repent. They blasphemed against God. God will defeat and punish the wicked, those who would not and did not repent.
- 9.5.2. It is finished. The righteous wrath of God has rained down and completely destroyed all the forces of Satan.
- 9.5.3. There are no more opportunities to hear the word, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, confess His name, repent of your sins and have them washed away in the waters of baptism.
- 9.5.4. The righteous and holy Father must punish the unbelieving and impenitent with complete destruction.
10. There is a limit to God's longsuffering with evil-doers. We may not see the wicked punished now. They may suffer in ways of which we are unaware. We may say with the psalmist, **"I was envious ... when I saw the prosperity of the wicked ... Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end"** (Ps. 73:3, 17).
- 10.1. Those without the ability to see past their time here on earth must truly suffer for lack of hope, joy and purpose.
11. Faithful Christians are comforted by the assurance of the hope that is laid up in heaven for those who fall asleep in Jesus (**Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:14**). John heard a voice from heaven, saying, **"Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them"** (Rev. 14:13).
12. We sing a song that states, "There's a great day coming ... when the saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left ...; There's a sad day coming ... when the sinner shall hear his doom, 'Depart, I know ye not,' Are you ready for that day to come?"
- 12.1. Are you ready?