

Revelation 16

II. The pouring out of the seven vial judgments

A. The first vial: Grievous sores on man

1. Revelation 16:1-2 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. [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.

a. John hears a loud voice from the temple directing the angels to execute their judgments (v.1)

1. Since no one was allowed to enter the temple until the vials were finished, the voice must be God himself

b. The first angel poured out his vial and those who worshipped the antichrist and those who had the mark of the beast were struck with terrible (noisome) sores on their bodies (v.2)

1. These are literal sores (Gr. Helkos; an ulcer - sore) and resemble the plague of boils upon the Egyptians before the exodus

a. Exodus 9:10-11 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. [11] And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

1. Boil - Heb. Shechiyn; from an unused root probably meaning to burn; inflammation, i.e. an ulcer - boil, botch

2. Blains - Heb. 'Aba'bu'ah; from an unused root (meaning to belch forth); an inflammatory pustule (as eruption) - blains

B. The second vial: The sea turned to blood

1. Revelation 16:3 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.

a. The second angel poured out his vial and the sea became blood and all life in the sea died

1. Some believe that every sea on earth is affected by this; however, this probably refers to the Mediterranean Sea, consistent with the purpose of the plague, which deals with the territory ruled by the antichrist (see map of extent of antichrist's reign)

a. Regardless, it does not ignore the fact that its impact and effect will likely be felt globally

2. This plague is also literal and resembles the plague on Egypt before the exodus when the Nile River was turned to blood

a. Exodus 7:20-21 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and

all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. [21] And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

C. The third vial: The rivers turned to blood

1. Revelation 16:4-7 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 voice out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

a. The third angel poured out his vial and the rivers and fountains became blood (v.4)

1. Fountains - Gr. Pega; a fountain, i.e. source or supply - fountain, well

a. Thus, this vial is especially powerful, because in the second vial the sea became blood, and during the third trumpet, a third of the water supply became wormwood (bitter), but now all water becomes blood

1. Leaving no uncontaminated water supply on earth

2. This plague is literal and also resembles the plague on Egypt, when the Nile River was turned to blood (Exodus 7:20-21)

b. Notice: John heard the angel declare God's justice in executing His wrath (v.5-6), echoed by a voice from the altar (v.7)

1. They deserve to drink blood because they shed the blood of saints and prophets

D. The fourth vial: Scorching heat

1. Revelation 16:8-9 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.

a. The fourth angel poured out his vial and the sun heated up so intensely that people died from the temperatures (v.8)

1. The word scorched is literal and it means to burn, thus they either die from heat exhaustion or they are actually burned by the rays

b. This is quite a contrast with the plague of the fourth trumpet, when one-third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened

1. This ability to control the heavens proves both the judgment and mercy of God, giving men space to repent

- a. However, instead of repentance, they only curse and blaspheme God more (v.9)
- 1. Apparently they are aware of God, because they blame Him for their troubles

E. The fifth vial: Darkness and painful sores

1. Revelation 16:10-11 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, [11] And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

a. The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the antichrist, and his kingdom was darkened and his subjects suffered from painful sores (v.10)

1. Fear and confusion will prevail as darkness covers the land and their sores will not heal

a. This will surely mark the antichrist's kingdom as they are the only ones afflicted

1. Another sign to the earth to repent and reject the antichrist's dominion; however, they refuse to repent (v.11)

2. This resembles the ninth plague of Egypt, when thick darkness covered Egypt, except for the Israelites in Goshen

a. Exodus 10:21-23 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. [22] And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: [23] They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

F. The sixth vial: The Euphrates River dries up

1. Revelation 16:12 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

a. The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the Euphrates River and it dried up

1. The Euphrates River serves as a boundary separating the Israel from the nations of the orient who will one day march on her

a. "It is by far the largest and most important of all the rivers of Western Asia. From its source in the Armenian mountains to the Persian Gulf, into which it empties itself, it has a course of about 1,700 miles." (Easton's Bible Dictionary)

b. "The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers are two of the greatest rivers of Western Asia. They originate in the Armenian mountains and unite about ninety miles from the Persian Gulf to form what is now called the Shatt-al-Arab which flows into the gulf." (Holman Bible Dictionary)

2. The sixth vial prepares the way for the battle of Armageddon

a. With the drying of the Euphrates, the kings of the east and their armies will march toward Israel during the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21)

2. Notice: Three unclean spirits proceed from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet

a. Revelation 16:13-16 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.

1. At this time, the antichrist will be ruling and advancing his kingdom from Jerusalem

a. These demonic spirits will go forth into the world to entice the kings of the earth to march upon the antichrist and to fight

1. This battle takes place in Revelation 19, as they gather at Armageddon (Greek transliteration of the Hebrew har Megiddo or mount of Megiddo), located approximately 60 miles north of Jerusalem

b. Question: How could these spirits have the cooperation of the dragon (Satan) to march against the antichrist (his ruler)?

1. "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 (Zechariah 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 at the second coming of Christ." (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

c. While the armies of the earth are gathering at Megiddo, the clouds will open and the Lord will return

1. Thus, the armies of the earth, along with the armies of the antichrist, will unite against Christ and the saints, but they will be destroyed by Christ

a. Revelation 19:19-21 And I saw

' the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. [20] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. [21] And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

1. They are defeated and Christ will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Revelation 20:4)

G. The seventh vial: Great earthquakes and hailstones

1. Revelation 16:17-21 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. [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.

a. The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air and a great voice comes from the throne of God declaring this the final judgment (v.17)

l. It is done declares that the judgment of the seventh vial completes the wrath of God

b. Notice three points regarding the earthquake of the seventh vial (v.18-20):

1. Voices, thunders, and lightnings, and finally a great earthquake which will divided the great city into three parts

a. There are differing opinions about the identity of the great city, including:

1. The city of Rome, as the Roman Empire was in power at the time of the revelation

2. It is most likely Jerusalem, which was previously called the great city by John

a. Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

2. The cities of the nations fell

a. The earthquake is so great that the major gentile cities are destroyed

3. Great Babylon came in remembrance before God

a. Babylon has often been used to describe spiritual and political corruption and wickedness

1. In this case, it refers to the apostate religious system during the tribulation

a. Babylon experiences the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath

1. As we shall discuss in Revelation 17-18, God will deal with both the apostate religious system and the political system of the antichrist during the tribulation and before the return of Christ in Revelation 19

c. Great hailstones fell upon men (v.21)

1. The weight of a talent is approximately 100-120 pounds

a. Notice: Even after multiple opportunities to acknowledge the deity of God and recognize His judgment and mercy, they hardened their hearts and continued to blaspheme God