

## **Revelation 16 – The Seven Last Plagues**

Revelation 16:1 “*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.*”

***I heard a great voice out of the temple*** - Since the seven plague bearing angels had already left the temple (Revelation 15:6) and “no man was able to enter into the temple” (verse 8), this is most likely the voice of God Himself.

***Go your ways*** - Although John does not specify the moment for giving this fearful command, the context makes evident that it will be issued soon after the close of probation but prior to the coming of Christ. (cf. Revelation 15:8) Obviously the series of calamities foretold here is still future. (see below on “pour out the vials”)

Because the first plague is poured out upon men who have received the [mark of the beast](#) and who worship its image, (verse 2) this places the plagues after the image of the beast has been established and the mark enforced, (Revelation 13:14-17) and also after the proclamation of the third angel, which warns against the beast and its mark. (Revelation 14:9-11) And since the seven last plagues constitute the fullness of God's divine wrath, (Revelation 14:10; 15:1; 16:1) this clearly implies that the probation of those upon whom they fall has closed. (Revelation 22:11) Since at the time of the fifth plague men are still suffering from the sores of the first plague, (verse 11) then this implies that the plagues are poured out successively and in a comparatively short period of time. (verse 2) It also appears that the judgment of mystical Babylon, which takes place under the seventh plague, (verse 19) precedes the kings of the earth at the appearance of Christ. (Revelation 17:16; 18:11, 20; 19:2, 11-19; cf. Revelation 6:15-17; 14:14)

***Pour out the vials*** - To afflict the earth with the calamities figuratively represented by the seven bowls. (Revelation 15:7) In some respects the seven last plagues are similar to the ten plagues upon Egypt. (Exodus 5:1-12:30) Both testify to the authority and power of God. Both result in the defeat of men who chose to defy God, and thus in the deliverance of His people from a situation that would otherwise be without remedy. Both demonstrate the justice of God and bring glory and honor to His name.

The ten plagues upon Egypt were literally painful and each was designed to demonstrate how false the claims were, and how futile the reliance was upon false religion. (Exodus 7:17; Exodus 12:12) In a similar way the seven last plagues will be literal, yet each will strike a blow at some aspect of apostate religion and have symbolic overtones. For instance, it is obvious that the first angel did not pour a literal chemical from a literal bowl upon men who had received a literal mark inflicted by a literal beast. But the angel himself is probably literal and the men upon whom his vial falls are certainly literal men, and their sufferings equally literal. The symbolic significance of the third plague is clearly pointed out in Revelation 16:5-6.

**Wrath of God** - See 2 Kings 13:3 and Revelation 14:10. It may be asked why God would torment men in the fearful manner described in Revelation chapter 16 after the close of human probation when there will be no opportunity for repentance. Why doesn't Christ come and end the reign of sin immediately? In Old Testament times various calamities, such as invasion, famine, pestilence, earthquake and other natural disasters were often permitted by God as remedial, disciplinary agencies to bring men to repentance. (see Isaiah 1:5-9; 9:13; 10:5-6; 26:9; Jeremiah 2:30; 5:3; Hosea 7:10; Joel 1:4; 2:12-14; Amos 4:6-11; Haggai 1:5-11; 1 Samuel 16:14; 2 Chronicles 18:18) Obviously the seven last plagues can serve no such purpose. (see above on “go your ways”) However, there can be no doubt that the plagues do serve a necessary function in the outworking of the plan of Heaven.

It may be noted that the first four or five plagues are in a sense a preliminary nature and lead men to realize that they have been fighting against God. But instead of repenting they curse Him more bitterly than ever and become even more resolute in their opposition. (Revelation 16:9, 11, 21) So the plagues serve to reveal the spirit of rebellion which controls their hearts. The tares as it were are proved to be tares, (cf. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) and God's justice in destroying them is made evident. Conversely, the trials of the great time of trouble attending the plagues perfects the characters of the saints and leads them to trust more confidently in God. Compare on Revelation 7:4.

Being prepared to die for another is the ultimate act of love. (John 15:13) And so the intent to take another's life marks the ultimate degree of hatred. During the last two plagues a situation develops that makes this distinction apparent. The justice of God in ending human history is made evident to men as well as angels. (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10; Revelation 16:13-14, 16-17) It will be demonstrated before the universe that the remnant people would rather die than disobey God, and that those who have chosen the service of Satan would if possible slay all who stand in the way of their purpose to control the earth. Caught in the very act of attempting to execute the death decree, they will stand without excuse before God. verse 17.

So the line is clearly drawn between those who serve God and those who don't, and through the unconverted Satan is permitted to demonstrate what the universe would be like if he was allowed to control it. Compare on Revelation 7:1.

Revelation 16:2 *“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 first went out** - The numerical assignment of each angel demonstrates that the plagues are successive. (verses 1, 11)

**Noisome and grievous sore** - Meaning “painful and severe” or “troublesome and annoying” sore or “ulcer.” In the LXX, the Greek word for “sore” here is used of the boils that came upon the Egyptians, (Exodus 9:9-10) a “botch” that could not be healed,

(Deuteronomy 28:27) and of the boils that came upon Job. (Job 2:7) Against this “sore” the boasted miracle working power of the spirits now working with apostate Christianity (Revelation 13:13-14; 18:2; 19:20) prove useless. (verse 14) The false claims that men have based on miracle working power is demonstrated in a way that they cannot deny. (cf. Exodus 8:19)

**Upon the men** - This first installment of “the wrath of God” (verse 1) falls upon those who have failed to heed either the third angel's message, which warned them against worshipping “the beast and his image,” (Revelation 14:9) or God's final call to come out of mystical Babylon. (Revelation 18:1-4)

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.”*

**The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea** - Under the third plague the “rivers and fountains of waters” are affected in a similar fashion. (verse 4) The sea is primarily for international commerce and travel. It has been suggested that by the obstruction of international travel and trade, (Revelation 13:13-17; 16:13, 14; 17:3, 12) this plague demonstrates God's displeasure with respect to Satan's plan to bind the nations of earth together under his control. Compare Balaam's experience. (Numbers 22:21-35)

**Became as the blood of a dead man** - In consistency, odor and color but not necessarily in composition. Nothing more offensive can be imagined than the coagulated blood of a dead man.

**Every living soul died in the sea** - Or “every living thing” RSV. The word for “soul” (*psuche*) is used for animal life as well as human life. (Matthew 10:28; cf. Psalms 16:10) In Revelation 8:9 *psuche* is translated creatures, obviously referring to marine life. In Genesis 8:1 the Hebrew equivalent (*nephesh*, “living thing”) is used similarly for animals. (cf. Job 12:10)

Revelation 16:4 *“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.”*

**Rivers and fountains of waters** - In Bible times “rivers and fountains of waters” were primarily useful for such everyday requirements such as drinking, bathing and irrigation. Where the second plague would no doubt result in a great inconvenience and perhaps interruption of travel, (verse 3) the effects of the third would be immediate and serious. Compare the first plague on Egypt. (Exodus 7:17, 19)

Revelation 16:5 *“And I heard the angel of the waters say, You are righteous, O Lord, which are, and were, and shall be, because you have judged thus.”*

**I heard the Angel of the waters** - One having jurisdiction over the waters. Compare the angels of Revelation 7:1 and 14:18, which have power over the “winds” and “fire”

respectively. The reference here may be to the angel assigned to pour out the third plague upon the “rivers and fountains of waters.”

**Thou art righteous** - The terrible nature of the third plague calls for a statement in defense of God for authorizing it. He is just in this demonstration of His “wrath.” (Revelation 15:3-4; 16:1). **You have judged thus** - The first three plagues and possibly those yet to fall.

Revelation 16:6 “*For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.*”

**They have shed the blood of saints and prophets** - Have poured out literally. This no doubt includes the unshed blood of the living saints who have been marked for martyrdom. (Revelation 17:6; 18:20) By condemning the people of God to death, the wicked have incurred the guilt for their blood as if it had already been shed. (cf. Matthew 23:35)

**Thou hast given them blood to drink** - The plague is stated to be a direct act on the part of God. (verse 1)

**They are worthy** - The punishment is appropriate for the crime. The wicked deserve the punishment now given to them. It is in no sense an arbitrary act on the part of God. (verse 1)

Revelation 16:7 “*And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments.*”

**Another** - Textual evidence suggests the omission of this word. The preferred literal reading is, I heard the altar say. Probably meaning not the altar but an angel who had been serving at it or standing by it. (cf. Revelation 14:18) The altar is obviously not personified.

**The altar** - The altar of incense. There is no mention of an altar of burnt offering in heaven. (cf. Revelation 8:3; 9:13; 14:18; Exodus 30:1, 6)

**True and righteous** - Or true and just. (Revelation 1:5; 3:7; 6:10; 15:3) In visiting these terrible judgments upon those who have rejected divine mercy. God is *true* in the sense that He is true to His word. He is carrying out what He had promised to do. (Revelation 14:9-11 etc) He is *righteous* or *just* in the sense that justice demands punishment to those who have defied Heaven. **Your judgments** - The acts of judgment as in the plagues.

Revelation 16:8 *“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.”*

**Upon the sun** - According to the Greek the first three plagues are poured out (eis) into the earth, the sea, and the fountains and rivers of waters respectively. The next three are poured out (epi) upon the sun, the beast's throne and the river Euphrates respectively.

**Scorch men with fire** - Or burn men with fire. Normally the sun warms and cheers men and controls plant growth, climate and many other processes necessary to maintain life. Now it sends forth an excess of warmth and energy that torments men and destroys life. Though men suffer directly from this intense heat, its worst results are no doubt severe drought and famine. But the literal plague is accompanied by a famine for God's Word. (cf. Amos 8:11-12) Throughout the land there is a vain quest for easing the suffering from the first four plagues and averting further calamities. But it is not motivated by godly sorrow, but by sorrow of the world. (2 Corinthians 7:9-11) The objective is to escape the misery of the plagues and not to enter into a genuine state of reconciliation with God. And so Satan convinces the inhabitants of the earth that they are not sinners and that they have made a mistake in tolerating God's chosen people. (verse 14)

Revelation 16:9 *“And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which has power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.”*

**Blasphemed the name of God** - Greek *blasphemeo*. (Revelation 13:1) Here it means to speak to God in a derogatory fashion. Under the fourth plague men begin to blame God for their misery and realize that they are fighting against Him. (verse 1) The Name of God being God Himself. The name stands for the person who bears it. (Matthew 6:9; Acts 3:16)

**They repented not** - Instead of acknowledging their guilt they proceed to lay the blame for their misery on those who have remained loyal to God. They refuse to yield to His will and show themselves to be what they really are; devoted servants to Satan. The refusal to repent proves them to be unalterably opposed to God.

**To give him glory** - To acknowledge Him to be true and righteous. (verse 7) Those suffering from the plagues refuse to admit themselves wrong and God right even in the face of these severe judgments that would lead honest contrite men to amend their ways. (cf. Isaiah 26:9-10) Their hearts prove to be hardened and unsusceptible to either divine mercy. (Exodus 4:21; Ephesians 4:30; Revelation 16:1)

Revelation 16:10 *“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,”*

**Seat of the beast** - Greek *thronos* - throne. (Revelation 13:2) The seat of the beast is most likely his headquarters. The beast here primarily represents the Papacy in its

revived state and not so much its religious aspect in its assumed role of a world power dominant over world powers. (Revelation 13:1-2, 10; 17:3, 8-9, 11)

**His kingdom** - Or its kingdom. Except for the small remnant that still resists his supremacy, Satan numbers the world as his subjects and it is through the revived Papacy in particular that he seeks control over the entire human race. (Revelation 16:13-14; 17:8, 12; cf. Revelation 19:19) It would therefore appear that for the duration of this plague that the entire world is enveloped in darkness. So while men grope unrepentantly for light in a spiritually dark world, (Revelation 16:8-9) God sends literal darkness on them symbolic of the deeper spiritual night that is yet to enshroud the earth. (verses 13-14)

**Was full of darkness** - The entire clause reads literally, his kingdom became darkened. The Greek implying that it remained so for a period of time. This is literal darkness that would bring cold and misery. The absence of light and heat would be all the more difficult to bare after the intense heat experienced under the fourth plague.

**They gnawed their tongues for pain** - Or “kept biting their tongues out of pain.” Intense cold probably accompanied the prolonged darkness.

Revelation 16:11 *“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”*

**Blasphemed the God of Heaven** - They confirm their hatred of God as under the fourth plague. (verse 9)

**Their pains and their sores** - The pains from the effects of the plagues, (verse 10) and their sores from the effects of the first plague. (verse 2) Apparently the sores of the first plague are not immediately fatal. Since the plagues fall successively than their effects persist. (verse 2)

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.”*

**The sixth angel** - The Euphrates represents the people over whom mystical Babylon holds influence. (Revelation 17:15 *The waters which you sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*) So the drying up of its waters is the withdrawal of their support from Babylon, the kings of the east and Christ and those accompanying Him. And so Armageddon is the last battle of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon is seen as the removal of the last barrier to her ultimate defeat and punishment.

[The great battle of Armageddon](#) begins when the united religious and political powers of earth open their final attack on God's remnant people. The following are generally agreed on points of Armageddon:

- 1. It is the last great battle of earth's history and that it is still future.*
- 2. It is the battle of that great day of God. (verse 14)*
- 3. That “the great river Euphrates” is symbolic of human beings.*
- 4. That the three “unclean spirits” (verse 13) represent the Papacy, apostate Protestantism and spiritism or paganism.*
- 5. These three spirits constitute the agencies that will summon the nations to battle.*
- 6. The gathering agencies (three unclean spirits) are religious in nature and that the forces gathered are political and military.*
- 7. Preparations for the battle take place under the sixth plague, but that the battle itself is fought under the seventh plague.*
- 8. In one phase it will be a real battle between real people employing real weapons.*
- 9. There will be bloodshed on an unprecedented scale.*
- 10. All the nations of earth will be involved.*
- 11. Eventually Christ and the armies of heaven intervene and bring the battle to a close.*
- 12. The living saints witness the battle but not as participants.*

**Great river Euphrates** - Revelation 9:14. John does not refer to the literal river as a river here or to the drying up of its literal waters. There is general agreement that the waters of the river Euphrates here represent human beings. (cf. Revelation 17:15)

The significance of the term Euphrates is to be ascertained from the context which reveals that the term Babylon is used exclusively as a symbol of apostate Christianity. (Revelation 14:8; 17:5) Historically and geographically the literal river Euphrates was the river literal Babylon sat on. (Jeremiah 51:12-13, 63-64) As the river of mystical Babylon, that great city, (Revelation 17:18) the Euphrates here is totally dissociated from the literal geographical significance and is to be understood in terms of its companion symbol being mystical Babylon. The waters of the Euphrates is thus the “many waters” of Revelation 17:1-3, 15 on which mystical Babylon sits being the “inhabitants of the earth” whom she makes “drunk with the wine of her fornication.” (Revelation 17:2; cf. Revelation 13:3, 4, 7-8, 14-16)

**Dried up** - The form of the verb in the Greek denotes as an accomplished fact the act of drying up. The drying up of the waters of the Euphrates refers to the withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon in connection with the sixth plague. (see above on “great river Euphrates” and notes on Revelation 16:14, 16-17, 19; cf. Isaiah 44:26 to 45:2) The drying up is described symbolically in Revelation 16:18-19; 17:15-18.

**The way** - Greek *hodos* - Meaning “road,” “highway.” In the setting of verses 12-16 this is the way by which the kings and their armies pass through the Euphrates to join battle with their opponents. Way is figurative of the “way” by which the situation on

earth is prepared for Christ and the armies of heaven to triumph over Babylon (verse 19) and “the kings of the earth.” (verse 14)

**Kings of the east** - Literally kings from the [sun] rising. (Revelation 7:2) In harmony with the geographical significance that they attribute to “the great river Euphrates.”

“the kings of the east” represent Christ and those accompanying Him. This view bases the term “kings of the east” like the other symbolic expressions of verse 12 on the historical incident of Cyrus, the king from the east, conquering Babylon and releasing God's people to return to their native land.

**Might be prepared** - The *way* will be *prepared* by the withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon. (verses 1, 12, 14, 17)

Revelation 16:13 “*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.*”

**Three unclean spirits** - The “dragon,” “beast” and false prophet as modern spiritism or paganism, the Papacy, and apostate Protestantism. (cf. Revelation 13:4, 14-15; 19:20; 20:10) The three unclean spirits apparently either symbolize or represent this evil trio of religious powers, which together constitute latter day “great Babylon.” (Revelation 16:13-14, 18-19; Revelation 16:19; 17:5)

**Like frogs** - Perhaps no significance should be attached to this comparison, which is probably only intended to highlight the repulsiveness of the three unclean spirits in the sight of God.

**Out of the mouth** - The mouth is the instrument of speech. Coming from the mouth of the “dragon,” the “beast” and of the false prophet, these three unclean spirits represent the policy that this religious union proclaims to the world, which is spoken of in Revelation 17:2 as the wine of Babylon. (Revelation 16:14; 17:2, 6)

**Of the Dragon** - Revelation 12:3; 13:1. The first member of this threefold religious union is generally identified either as spiritism or as paganism. Many pagans worship spirits and practice various forms of spiritism more or less resembling modern spiritism as practiced in Christian lands.

**The False prophet** - Identified with the second beast of Revelation 13:11-17, (verse 11) which sponsors the first beast of Revelation 13:1-10. And by the miracles he has power to do in presence of the beast, (verses 12-14) he deceives men into making an “image” to it. Compare Revelation 19:20; 20:10.

Revelation 16:14 *“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.”*

**They are the spirits of devils** - Literally “spirits of demons” or “demonic spirits.” In the Gospels the term “unclean spirit” is used interchangeably with “devil.” (Mark 1:27, 34; 3:11, 15; 6:7; etc) See Revelation 18:2.

**Working miracles** - Or “performing signs [semeia],” Miracles from the viewpoint of authenticating the claims of power and authority of the person performing them. These miracles are also referred to in Revelation 13:13-14; 19:20. Supernatural manifestations of various kinds constitute the means by which Satan working through human agencies succeeds in uniting the world behind his purpose to destroy those who constitute the barrier to his dominion over mankind.

**Kings of the earth** - Textual evidence omits of the words “of the earth and.” The “kings” are the political powers of earth in contrast with the threefold religious union of verse 13, which summon the nations of earth to unite and destroy God's people. This universal religio-political combine (Revelation 17:3) to rule the world. The expression “kings of the earth and of the whole world” include the nations of both East and West. (verse 12) For more on the identity of the “kings of the earth” and the temporary success of this plot see Revelation 17:2, 12, 14.

**To gather** - This refers to efforts put forth by the threefold religious union to secure united action on the part of the political powers of earth for the purpose of waging war on the remnant of God's people.

**The battle** - Different aspects of the same battle are described in Revelation 14:14-20; 16:12-19; 17:14-17; 19:11-21. This battle is one in which the nations unite to destroy the people of God and is therefore primarily a religious conflict.

**That great day** - The day of God's wrath. (verse 1) Important textual evidence may be cited for the reading “the great day.” (Isaiah 2:12)

Revelation 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.”*

**I come as a thief** - To the ungodly who are not expecting Him. (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4; 2 Peter 3:10; cf. Matthew 24:43; Luke 21:35)

**Blessed is he that watcheth** - See Matthew 24:42. The saints are to be alert and vigilant or they could be deceived. (see above on “I come as a thief”)

**Keepeth his garments** - Remains steadfast in faith and character and loyal to God.

**Lest he walk naked** - Lose his garment of character as a result of yielding his faith. Compare Revelation 17:16.

**See his shame** - See that he has surrendered his faith. Even though destiny has been fixed at the close of probation, (Revelation 22:11) God's people must not relax their vigilance. Rather they must become increasingly alert as Satan intensifies his deceptions.

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

**He gathered** - Or “they gathered.” The Greek may be translated either way. The pronoun “they” would refer to the three unclean spirits of verses 13-14, and “he” to the angel of verse 12. The context favors the translation “they.” For the gathering process. verse 14.

The gathering takes place under the sixth plague but the battle itself is fought under the seventh. (Revelation 16:12, 17). **Them** - The kings of the earth as per verse 14.

**Together** - The kings of the earth are united in mind and purpose. (Revelation 17:13, 17) Compare Psalms 83:4-5.

**Into a place** - Greek *topos* - Meaning “place,” which is used variously of a geographical location. A “place” in a book, status or figuratively “condition” or “situation” as in Acts 25:16 (licence) and Hebrews 12:17. Here it stresses the figurative meaning of the various expressions of verses 12-16. (verse 12) This would be the “condition” or frame of mind into which the kings of the earth are gathered. The compact to annihilate the people of God. (Revelation 16:14; 17:13)

**In the Hebrew tongue** - Perhaps by this John intended to direct the readers to a study of Armageddon as a “Hebrew” term and to a review of Hebrew history that the cryptic name might be understood.

**Armageddon** - Greek *Harmageddon*. A transliteration from the Hebrew as John explains. Textual evidence favors the reading Harmageddon but may also be cited for the readings Armegeidon, Armagedo, Mageddon and others. Since there is no geographical location that ever had this name as far as we know, the significance of the term is not readily apparent. There are different opinions as to what Hebrew word or words the Greek transliteration represents. The reading Harmageddon is from two Hebrew words. The first of which may have been ar, “city,” though more probably har, “mountain.” However, some ancient manuscripts omit the first syllable ar- or har- altogether.

For the second part of the name *-mageddon*, two different derivations have been suggested: (1) That *-mageddon* is from the Hebrew megiddo or megiddon, (1 Kings 9:15; Zechariah 12:11) the ancient city of Megiddo, which gave its name to the important pass through the mountains to the southwest, to the valley of Jezreel to the north and

northeast, (2 Chronicles 35:22) and to the Kishon, (Judges 4:7, 13; 5:19, 21) which flows through the valley. (2) That *-mageddon* is from *mo'ed*, the Hebrew word commonly used throughout the Old Testament for “congregation,” (Exodus 27:21; 28:43; 29:4, 10-11, 30, 32; etc) for an appointed “feast,” (Leviticus 23:2), and for an “assembly” and the “places of the assembly.” (Lamentations 1:15; 2:6) The first derivation links the composite name Armageddon with the geographical and historical environment of ancient Megiddo, while the second suggests a possible connection with the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

In Isaiah 14:13 where *har-mo'ed* is translated “mount of the congregation” or “mount of assembly” and designates the mountain on which Solomon's Temple stood to the north of ancient Jerusalem. Lucifer is represented as aspiring to replace God as Israel's ruler. Compare “Tabernacle of the congregation” (Exodus 33:7; etc)

The first derivation is taken figuratively in terms of the historical events of Old Testament history associated with the vicinity of ancient Megiddo, (see Judges 4:4 to 5:31 and especially Revelation 5:31; Revelation 6:33 to 7:25; 1 Kings 18:36-40; Psalms 83; cf. 2 Chronicles 35:20-24) but without attributing geographical significance to the term Armageddon in verse 16. (verse 12) The second derivation *har-mo'ed* is understood figuratively also on the basis of its use in Isaiah 14:13 in terms of the great contest between Christ and Satan. (see Revelation 12:7-9, 17; 17:14; 19:11-21)

Revelation 16:17 “*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.*”

**Seventh angel** - Revelation 1:11 for the significance of the number “seven” in the Revelation.

**A great voice** - The voice of God. Compare Revelation 1:10.

**Temple of heaven** - Textual evidence may be cited for simply “temple” or “heaven.”

**From the throne** - The statement constitutes an official proclamation from the God of the universe.

**It is done** - The same words are to be uttered a second time at the recreation of the new earth. (Revelation 21:6) Similar words “It is finished” were spoken by our Lord upon the cross (John 19:30) as He brought His ministry of sacrifice to a close on the success of the plan of redemption. In the context of verse 17 the dramatic announcement marks the moment when the revelation of the mystery of iniquity is complete, when the true character of the universal religio-political union of verses 13-14, 19 is unmasked.

God permits the forces of evil to advance to the point of apparent success in their sinister design to eradicate the people of God. As the moment for the appointed death decree arrives, (verse 14) and the wicked rush forward with shouts of triumph to annihilate the saints, the voice of God is heard declaring, “It is done.” This declaration

ends the time of Jacob's trouble, (cf. verse 15) delivers the saints and ushers in the seventh plague.

Revelation 16:18 *“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.”*

**There were voices** - Or “sounds,” “noises.” Compare Revelation 4:5; 8:5; 11:19. What the “voices” utter may be similar to the declaration of Revelation 11:15.

**A great earthquake** - A literal earthquake as the remainder of verse 18 implies, (Revelation 16:1; cf. Revelation 16:20-21) but accompanied by a figurative earthquake, which shatters mystical Babylon. (verse 19) As a literal earthquake leaves a literal city in ruins, so a figurative earthquake brings ruin and desolation to “great Babylon.” (Revelation 17:16; 18:6-8, 21) The threefold union of verses 13-14 collapses. (cf. Isaiah 28:14-22)

Revelation 16:19 *“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.”*

**The great city** - Mystical Babylon. (Revelation 17:5, 18; 18:10)

**Divided into three parts** - Mystical Babylon of the last days is composed of the Papacy, apostate Protestantism and modern spiritism. (verses 13-14) At the voice of God (Revelation 16:17; 17:17) this threefold union of apostate religious organizations loses its unity and power to act. Compare Habakkuk 3:3-16.

**Cities of the nations** - Continuing the figure of an earthquake shattering a literal city, John now refers to the political organizations of earth represented in verses 13-14 as “the kings of the earth” by a similar figure. The appropriateness of a “city” to represent the apostate religious organizations of earth, and “cities” their political allies. Revelation 11:8; 17:18.

**Fell** - The political forces of earth also lose the state of unity to which they were gathered under the sixth plague. (Revelation 16:14, 16; Revelation 17:13, 17) There is a terrible awakening among them as God's voice delivers His waiting people from their foes. Now the former components of the universal religio-political combine (Revelation 16:13-14) and begin to fight among themselves, and the “ten kings” of Revelation 17:12-16 take revenge upon mystical Babylon. (Revelation 17:17) Filled with fury the hosts of earth turn upon their leaders and one another, the weapons with which they had purposed to slay the saints. There is strife and bloodshed everywhere. (Revelation 14:20)

When Christ appears the clash of arms and the tumult of earthly battle are stilled as the armies of heaven descend. “In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the inhabitants of the earth, priests,

rulers and people, rich and poor, high and low.” For more on this battle see the notes on Revelation 17:14; 19:11-21. Compare the very similar descriptions in Joshua 10:7-14; Judges 7:19-23; 1 Samuel 14:19-20; 2 Chronicles 20:22-24; Isaiah 19:2; 34:8-10; 51:21-23; 63:1-6; Jeremiah 25:12-15, 29-38; Ezekiel 38:14-23; Haggai 2:22; Zechariah 14:13.

***Came in remembrance before God*** - Revelation 18:5. This is a common Biblical expression denoting the hour when divine judgment is to be meted out. (Psalms 109:14; Ezekiel 21:23, 24; cf. Jeremiah 31:34)

***To give unto her*** - Compare the words of the prophets concerning the literal city of Babylon. (Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15-16)

***The cup*** - A common Biblical expression denoting suffering and judgments meted out. (Psalms 11:6; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17, 22, 23; Jeremiah 25:15-17, 28; 49:12; Matthew 26:39) For the nature of the cup given to mystical Babylon to drink, Revelation 17:16; 18:5-8; cf. Revelation 14:10.

***The wine*** - Revelation 14:10; cf. Revelation 17:2.

***Fierceness of his wrath*** - Revelation 14:10; 16:1.

Revelation 16:20 “*And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*”

***Every island fled away*** - The convulsions of the earth described here result from the earthquake of verse 18. Compare Revelation 6:14.

Revelation 16:21 “*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.*”

***There fell upon men Great hail*** - Or “great hailstones.” For the plague of hail on the land of Egypt see Exodus 9:18-32. For hail as a weapon of divine retribution see Joshua 10:11; Ezekiel 13:11, 13. And as a divine judgment in the last great day of God’s wrath, see Isaiah 28:17-18; 30:30; Ezekiel 38:22; Revelation 11:19.

***The weight of a talent*** - Various estimated as weighing from 58 to 80 lbs. (128 to 176 kg)

***And men blasphemed God*** - For the third time those whom the plagues fall curse God revealing their utter contempt for Him even in the midst of His most grievous judgments. (verses 1, 9, 11)