

CONCERNING THE WAY

August 18, 2009

LESSON 70: THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST



Chapter 16 – The Bowls of God’s Wrath

In the last chapter we saw the preparation for the pouring out of God’s final judgments. The angels have been given the bowls of wrath, and God has shut Himself in the temple to be alone and undisturbed during the pouring out of the bowls. Each bowl brings a specific plague on the earth-dwellers. Since the wrath of God is completed with the pouring out of the seven bowls, these judgments cover the rest of the Tribulation period up until its end, when Christ returns and overthrows His enemies. These plagues are different than all the other judgments that have come before. The seal and trumpet judgments were meant to cause repentance in people on the earth, but these bowl judgments are purely for punishment. There will be no more repentance or redemption because everyone has already made their final choice, either to accept the Antichrist as their god by taking the mark of the Beast, or to refuse the mark and worship the one true God.

So this chapter covers the rest of the Tribulation, but in the next three chapters (17-19) John gives us more details about some of these judgments. As with other events in Revelation, some have trouble taking these plagues literally:

“These seven Vials and their effects we take to be literal; . . . They belong to no figures of speech. The language is clear and precise. There is nothing beyond our faith, though there may be beyond our reason. True, they are supernatural, but not unnatural. In the plagues of Egypt, which all take to be literal, we have many judgments exactly similar. Indeed, six out of the seven Vials are just the same as the plagues of Egypt, and God has again and again declared that their final judgments should be like, yea, should be worse than those (Ex. 34:10). . . . In the face of this, is it not strange that these Vials should ever be taken to mean: The first, the French Revolution; and the “sores” its infidelity, etc. The second, the naval wars of the French Revolution; The third, Napoleon’s campaign in Italy; The fourth, Napoleon’s military tyranny, etc., etc.? It is a waste of precious time and space even to chronicle such interpretations.” E. W. Bullinger

The plagues come one after another, but some of the effects linger on, like the sores and the burns from the scorching heat.

Revelation 16:1-2 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple declaring to the seven angels: "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God's wrath." (2) So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Then ugly and painful sores appeared on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

God speaks from inside the temple directing the angels to pour out their bowls. Notice that the plague only affects those who have taken the mark and worship the Beast. It does not harm the surviving believers.

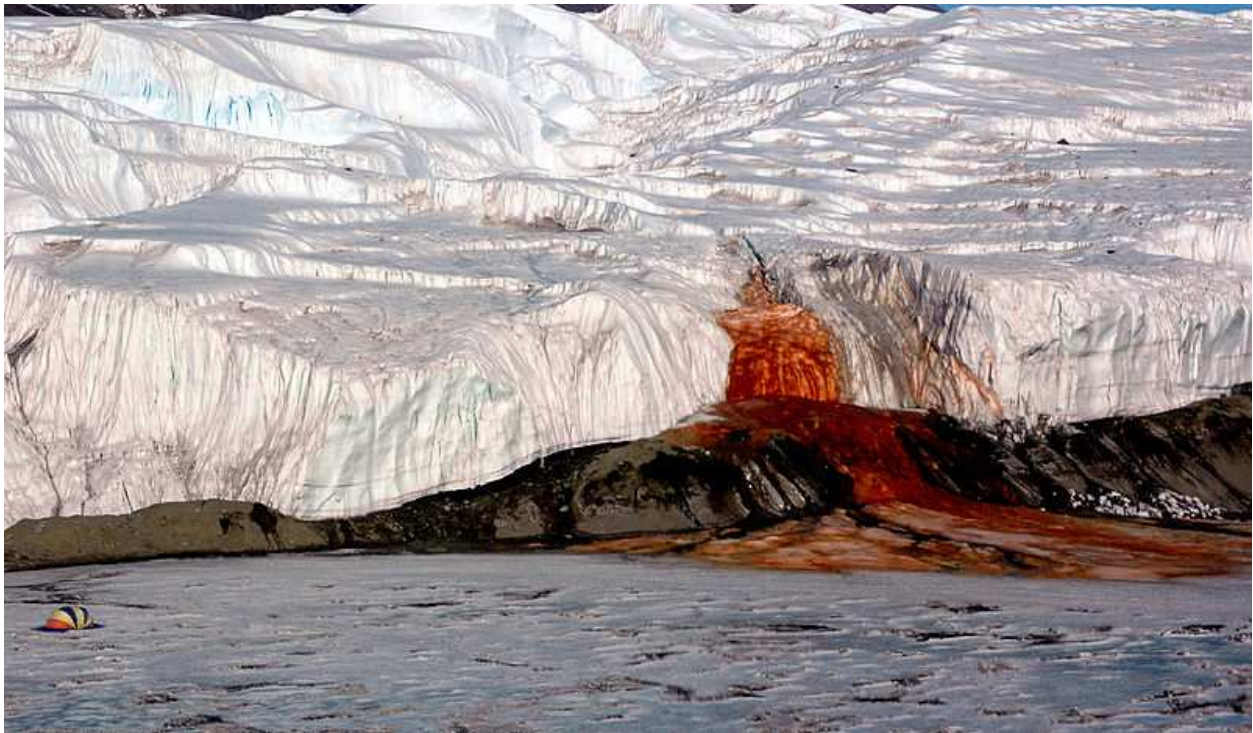
“ugly and painful sores” in the original Greek is *painful and virulent wound-like ulcers or abscesses*. This is like the boils that Satan struck Job with in Job 2:7, and is similar to one of the plagues that came upon Egypt in Exodus 9:8-11. It is also one of the plagues that God promised to send upon the Israelites if they disobeyed Him in Deuteronomy 28:27,35. The sores will not only be painful, but will most likely be very irritating because they will itch, smell foul, and will not heal.

And neither the Antichrist nor the False Prophet will be able to heal the sores, showing the world that maybe he is not so godlike after all.

Revelation 16:3 Next, the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it turned into blood, like that of a corpse, and every living creature that was in the sea died.

Like the first bowl, this plague was also sent on Egypt when Moses went to free the Israelites from slavery (Exodus 7:18,21). It has also come upon the world in a lesser way in the Tribulation, with the 2nd trumpet judgment, but only a third of the sea became like blood and only a third of life was killed. In this one, ALL sea life dies. And this is not normal blood, life-giving blood, but it is lifeless blood (“like that of a corpse”).

Some translations say “like blood”, so this may not be real blood, it could be just some kind of poisonous chemical that pollutes all the waters and turns them blood red, so it kills everything in the sea. Scientists have found evidence that an island in the Mediterranean blew up at about the time of Moses in Egypt, which may have caused some of the plagues, like the water turning to blood, the frogs, darkness, etc. You can see a real world example in the picture below. This is Blood Falls on the Taylor Glacier in Antarctica. It looks like falls of blood, doesn't it? Wikipedia says: “*The phenomenon is due to leaks from a reservoir of ancient saltwater buried under the glacier. Ferrous ions dissolved in the water oxidize on contact with the atmosphere, and precipitate as insoluble reddish ferric salts.*” So God could use natural means for this judgment. This in no way lessens the miraculous nature of these plagues, because God often chooses to use natural or indirect means to accomplish His will. But it will be poisonous to all life.



Imagine how horrible this will be, with rotting marine life washing up on blood-soaked shores. The loss of the sea as a food source will be devastating. And it will be an insult to the environmentalists who are so concerned with the health of the oceans but reject the God who created it and everything in it.

Revelation 16:4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood.

Again, this is very similar to one of the plagues on Egypt in Exodus 7:20. And it is also similar to the 3rd trumpet judgment, which turned the rivers and springs to blood. This causes some to say that they are the same judgments just described again in this chapter. But they are NOT THE SAME! The trumpet judgments clearly affected only one third of the water supply. These judgments affect the whole world. Also, the 3rd

trumpet made a third of the rivers and springs poisonous, it doesn't mention blood (Revelation 8:10-11).

"That, then, which has always been the symbol of salvation in the midst of life, becomes the symbol of condemnation in the midst of death. But now, the seas are turned to blood; the fish die; the winds of God blow death over all the earth. They had refused the salvation that would have come to them from the blood of the One who is Life; they now receive condemnation from the blood that symbolizes death." Donald Barnhouse

"The destruction of what is left of the earth's fresh water will cause unthinkable hardship and suffering. There will be no water to drink; no clean water to wash the oozing sores caused by the first bowl judgment; no water to bring cooling relief from the scorching heat that the fourth bowl judgment will shortly bring. The scene is so unimaginably horrible that people will wonder how a God of compassion, mercy, and grace could send such a judgment. And so there is a brief interlude in the pouring out of the judgments while an angel speaks in God's defense." John MacArthur

Revelation 16:5-7 Now I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are just — the one who is and who was, the Holy One — because you have passed these judgments, (6) because they poured out the blood of your saints and prophets, so you have given them blood to drink. They got what they deserved!" (7) Then I heard the altar reply, "Yes, Lord God, the All-Powerful, your judgments are true and just!"

The angel who poured out the third bowl declares that God is just because He has judged the world, to avenge the blood of the saints. It is a fitting judgment, because the earth-dwellers have spilled the blood of those who belong to God, so He has given them blood to drink. God is the only one qualified to judge the earth. He created it, and His nature is a perfect balance of grace and justice. And because of His nature, He must judge sin. There is a fitting passage in Hebrews 10:26-31 about this, a vivid description of God's deserved judgment upon sin.

Hebrews 10:26-31 For if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for us, (27) but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume God's enemies. (28) Someone who rejected the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (29) How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace? (30) For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." (31) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This is a perfect description of what will happen to the earth dwellers during these judgments. They have clearly heard the gospel preached to them by natural and supernatural means, but they keep on sinning. And you know what? Sorry to upset your overdeveloped self-image that most of us have been raised with, but we all deserve the wrath of God – all of us. Not one of us deserves to go to heaven, none of us are as good a person as we think we are. The only thing that can keep us from the wrath of God is the atonement for sins made for us by Jesus Christ.

Revelation 16:8-9 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was permitted to scorch people with fire. (9) Thus people were scorched by the terrible heat, yet they blasphemed the name of God, who has ruling authority over these plagues, and they would not repent and give him glory.

Again this judgment is a little bit similar, but not nearly the same as one of the trumpet judgments. The 4th

trumpet struck a third of the sun, moon, and the stars. Instead of a lessening of the sun's heat, this plague literally turns up the heat. THIS will be real global warming, not the normal fluctuation that's being made so much of today. All the things being warned about happening will truly happen then – rampant diseases, rising sea levels, significant changes in weather patterns, etc.

We don't know how this will be accomplished. Maybe God will remove the ozone layer, or there will be a giant sun flare. Sun flares have a tremendous effect on the earth when they go through periods of higher intensity. Homes, vegetation, and livestock will spontaneously catch fire because of the intense heat. People will seek relief from the heat by swimming or taking cold showers, but fresh water may not be available because of the bloody/poisoned waters.

And the earth dwellers are so set against God that they still refuse to repent. God knows they will not turn, so these judgments are meant to prove the righteousness of destroying these people. Like Pharaoh in Egypt, the intent is not to change their minds, but to harden their hearts. Every time they respond this way, blaspheming God, they just prove the justice of His judgments. Isaiah was given a glimpse of this time upon the earth:

Isaiah 24:1-13 Look, the LORD is ready to devastate the earth and leave it in ruins; he will mar its surface and scatter its inhabitants. (2) Everyone will suffer — the priest as well as the people, the master as well as the servant, the elegant lady as well as the female attendant, the seller as well as the buyer, the borrower as well as the lender, the creditor as well as the debtor. (3) The earth will be completely devastated and thoroughly ransacked. For the LORD has decreed this judgment. (4) The earth dries up and withers, the world shrivels up and withers; the prominent people of the earth fade away. (5) The earth is defiled by its inhabitants, for they have violated laws, disregarded the regulation, and broken the permanent treaty. (6) So a treaty curse devours the earth; its inhabitants pay for their guilt. This is why the inhabitants of the earth disappear, and are reduced to just a handful of people. (7) The new wine dries up, the vines shrivel up, all those who like to celebrate groan. (8) The happy sound of the tambourines stops, the revelry of those who celebrate comes to a halt, the happy sound of the harp ceases. (9) They no longer sing and drink wine; the beer tastes bitter to those who drink it. (10) The ruined town is shattered; all of the houses are shut up tight. (11) They howl in the streets because of what happened to the wine; all joy turns to sorrow; celebrations disappear from the earth. (12) The city is left in ruins; the gate is reduced to rubble. (13) This is what will happen throughout the earth, among the nations. It will be like when they beat an olive tree, and just a few olives are left at the end of the harvest.

“Another serious consequence of the sun's intense heat will be the melting of the polar ice caps. The resulting rise in the oceans' water level will inundate coastal regions, flooding areas miles inland with the noxious waters of the dead oceans. Widespread damage and loss of life will accompany that flooding, adding further to the unspeakable misery of the devastated planet. Transportation by sea will become impossible.” MacArthur

Revelation 16:10-11 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast so that darkness covered his kingdom, and people began to bite their tongues because of their pain. (11) They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their sufferings and because of their sores, but nevertheless they still refused to repent of their deeds.

What a contrast between the 4th and 5th plagues! They go from scorching, blinding light and heat to

complete darkness. It looks like it mainly affects the headquarters of the Antichrist. Some have suggested that it will only blind those who have taken the mark, and not affect believers at all. But it looks like it's more than just normal darkness, because it says the people will be in pain. This could be just from the sores of the first bowl which have not healed, but there's no doubt that days of complete unrelieved darkness may cause psychological pain – depression, severe anxiety and fear, hallucinations. They will be tormented and some may even go insane.

This plague is also reminiscent of one of the Egyptian plagues, and tells us what this might be like:

Exodus 10:21-23 The LORD said to Moses, "Extend your hand toward heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness so thick it can be felt." (22) So Moses extended his hand toward heaven, and there was absolute darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. (23) No one could see another person, and no one could rise from his place for three days. But the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

Here we get a hint of what it may be like in this 5th bowl judgment. It will be darkness so thick it can be felt, so bad that no one will be able to move from where he was when it first went dark.

Revelation 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and dried up its water to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

Like some of the other bowl judgments, this one is similar to the 6th trumpet judgment, which causes some to say this is the same judgment just mentioned again. Let's read back in chapter 9 and compare:

Revelation 9:13-16 Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a single voice coming from the horns on the golden altar that is before God, (14) saying to the sixth angel, the one holding the trumpet, "Set free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!" (15) Then the four angels who had been prepared for this hour, day, month, and year were set free to kill a third of humanity. (16) The number of soldiers on horseback was two hundred million; I heard their number.

Both judgments have to do with the river Euphrates, but that's about it. The trumpet judgment was about a vast army, possibly demonic, led by four fallen angels, which are set free to kill a third of all the people on the earth. This bowl judgment is a drying up of the river itself to prepare the way for the kings of the east to come to the battle of Armageddon, which we'll read more about later.

Now we have to remember that this was written in ancient times, when crossing a river with an army would have been a difficult task. The Euphrates River, which in some places is up to two thirds of a mile wide, would not stop a modern army. So we must look at the Euphrates River here as a boundary that is being lifted here, so that the armies of the Antichrist are allowed to come into Israel and gather for the great battle of Armageddon.

The Euphrates is one of the oldest rivers of history, going all the way back to being one of the four rivers which was fed from the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:10 (assuming today's Euphrates River is the same one). It was one of the boundaries of the Promised Land that God gave to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 1:7, Joshua 1:4). Babylon, one of the oldest cities, was built on the banks of the Euphrates, which gives credence to the interpretation of a literal rebuilt city being involved in the Tribulation.

"Its flood plain was the site of the first human city (Babel) after the great Flood and it was the site of

Nebuchadnezzar's magnificent capital city Babylon in the days of Daniel the prophet. On its shores will apparently be erected the even more magnificent New Babylon to serve as the capital of the beast in his brief but unprecedented worldwide reign in the great tribulation." Henry Morris

The parting of the Red Sea in the Exodus allowed Israel to escape from destruction. Now, at the end of the Tribulation, the waters of the Euphrates will be dried up so that God's enemies can gather to be destroyed. There are many different speculations on who the "kings of the east" are. Traditionally they are considered to be from China, but that is not necessarily true. When we think of "from the east", we tend to think of the far eastern countries. But when you see directions in prophetic scripture, remember that they always from the perspective of Israel.

"The "two hundred million" [Rev. 9:16] are in a Trumpet Judgment, whereas the kings of the east are in a Bowl judgment. Furthermore, . . . it was shown that the two hundred million are demons and not men. . . . Everywhere else in the Scriptures, the east always refers to Mesopotamia (Assyria and Babylonia). Consistency demands that this, too, would be a reference to Mesopotamia and not to China (e.g., Mtt. 2:1)." Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

It is likely that this is a confederacy of nations, possibly from what is now Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and India. All we can be sure of is that these are kings representing nations east of the Euphrates River. The movement of the kings west across the river could be part of the "news from the east and the north" which disturbs the Antichrist in Daniel 11:44.

Revelation 16:13-14 **Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked 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. (14) For they are the spirits of the demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the earth to bring them together for the battle that will take place on the great day of God, the All-Powerful.**

Frogs were considered unclean animals, and uncleanness is definitely being spoken of here. And these unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the satanic trinity, and go to gather the kings of the earth for the final battle of Armageddon. The deception of these spirits will be so powerful that the kings from nations around the world will think they are coming of their own volition, but they are being dragged by demons. Towards the end of the seven year Tribulation, anti-Semitism will get worse and worse and the Jews will again be blamed for the problems of the world. Like in Germany in World War II, the Jews will become a scapegoat. Armies from around the world will come to Israel to put an end to her once and for all. But ultimately, who is drawing them together for this final battle? God is bringing all His enemies together to one place where they will be destroyed.

Revelation 16:15 **(Look! I will come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays alert and does not lose his clothes so that he will not have to walk around naked and his shameful condition be seen.)**

This is a parenthesis in the narrative where Jesus interjects a message to...whom? There are a few different interpretations. Some say Jesus is warning surviving believers of that day that He is about to come like a thief. Maybe He is warning them to not give in to the Antichrist, because the pressure will be so great to do so at that time.

Others believe that Jesus is stopping the narrative here and warning readers in all times during the Church Age before the Tribulation that He is coming soon. This warning is relevant to all of us who live between the time Christ left the earth and when He comes again for His Church. Falling asleep is a constant danger for

believers in this age, because most of us are not persecuted and it's very easy to think Jesus won't return for some time (2 Peter 3:4).

"Does not lose his clothes" refers to avoiding sinful behavior and continuing in the faith, confessing sin when it occurs (1 John 1:9). It also speaks of our duty to be watchful. In John's day the clothes of a guard who was caught sleeping on duty were taken from him, leaving him naked and disgraced.

This phrase recalls what Jesus said to the church in Sardis back in chapter 3:

Revelation 3:4-5 **But you have a few individuals in Sardis who have not stained their clothes, and they will walk with me dressed in white, because they are worthy. (5) The one who conquers will be dressed like them in white clothing, and I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will declare his name before my Father and before his angels.**

And Jesus also speaks of nakedness in his letter to Laodicea in Revelation 3:18. Jesus will only come like a thief to those who are not watching for Him (Revelation 3:3, Matthew 24:42-44, Mark 13:33-37, Luke 12:35-40). He also talked about this idea of watchfulness in Luke 21:

Luke 21:34-36 **"But be on your guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day close down upon you suddenly like a trap. (35) For it will overtake all who live on the face of the whole earth. (36) But stay alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that must happen, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

"That day" is the Day of the Lord, the Tribulation. So the idea of coming like a thief can also apply to His coming in judgment. Those who are not looking for Him will be caught as in a trap. Professing but unbelieving "Christians," who miss the Rapture, will have to go through the Tribulation along with all other non-believers. For them, the beginning of the end comes as a surprise since they are not expecting it. It comes as a thief:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-9 **Now on the topic of times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. (2) For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night. (3) Now when they are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape. (4) But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief would. (5) For you all are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. (6) So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay alert and sober. (7) For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night. (8) But since we are of the day, we must stay sober by putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet our hope for salvation. (9) For God did not destine us for wrath but for gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

So, this warning could be to both believers and unbelievers alike. Now let's continue on in Revelation chapter 16:

Revelation 16:16 **Now the spirits gathered the kings and their armies to the place that is called Armageddon in Hebrew.**

These are the unclean spirits that the Satanic trinity sent out in verses 13-14. This is the only place in the

Bible the word “Armageddon” is used. “Harmagedōn” is a Hebrew place-name meaning Mount or Hill of Megiddo and is identified as the fortress overlooking a pass through the Carmel Range into Galilee. The valley of Megiddo was said by Napoleon to be the most ideal battlefield in the world.

“Since there is no specific mountain by that name, and Har can refer to hill country, it is probably a reference to the hill country surrounding the Plain of Megiddo, some sixty miles north of Jerusalem. More than two hundred battles have been fought in that region.” John MacArthur

Megiddo From the South



Some try to argue that this place is not literal, that it is either some other place or some spiritual concept. But the fact that we’re told that a literal river Euphrates is dried up so that these kings can come west into this area argues that this is a literal place.

Revelation 16:17 Finally the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying: "It is done!"

This bowl is poured out into the air, not on the earth. In Ephesians 2:2 Satan is called the “prince of the power of the air”, and Paul says in Ephesians 6:12 that **“our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens”**. So this looks to be when the realm of Satan is finally judged. It is the end of his reign on earth.

Most believe this verse corresponds with when Satan is bound and thrown into the abyss in Revelation 20:1-3, and possibly when the demons are imprisoned in the area that used to be Babylon in 18:2, which we'll talk about more when we get there.

With the pouring out of this bowl, the wrath of God is complete. The judgments are finished, and God's enemies have been fully repaid. However, the full effects of the judgment won't be finished until we get to Revelation 20:4.

Revelation 16:18 Then there were flashes of lightning, roaring, and crashes of thunder, and there was a tremendous earthquake — an earthquake unequalled since humanity has been on the earth, so tremendous was that earthquake.

There are many earthquakes associated with the time of the end:

1. Jesus taught that earthquakes were an indicator of “the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8).
2. A tremendous earthquake results from the opening of the sixth seal, along with cosmic signs (Revelation 6:12).
3. There was an earthquake after the seventh seal, but before the first trumpet, when the angel of the altar took the censer, filled it with fire, and threw it to the earth (Revelation 8:7-10).
4. At the ascension of the two witnesses a great earthquake leveled one tenth of Jerusalem, which caused many survivors to turn to Christ (Revelation 11:13).

The prophet Haggai talked of a great earthquake that would occur just before Christ returns:

Haggai 2:6-7 Moreover, the LORD who rules over all says: 'In just a little while I will once again shake the sky and the earth, the sea and the dry ground. (7) I will also shake up all the nations, and they will offer their treasures; then I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD who rules over all.

This earthquake is the most powerful of all, the greatest in human history.

Revelation 16:19 The great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations collapsed. So Babylon the great was remembered before God, and was given the cup filled with the wine made of God's furious wrath.

Some believe the “great city” here is Jerusalem, as opposed to the all the Gentile “cities of the nations”, which would mean Jerusalem will not be destroyed, just split into three parts. It is interesting to note that today Jerusalem is basically split into three parts – Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. The other cities of the world will fall, including Babylon.

The other interpretation is that the “great city” is Babylon. It survives the quakes, and then God “remembers” it and destroys it. I think the Jerusalem interpretation makes the most sense.

“Jerusalem alone, of all the great cities of the earth, is thus to be spared destruction by the earthquake at the end of the tribulation. It is the one eternal city, and will survive as long as the earth endures in its present form, finally being replaced as the new Jerusalem, in the new earth.” Henry Morris

“Man has a proverb that God made the country and man made the town. Truly these great cities of the earth are heartless and cruel, and those who have lived close enough to their hearts to hear their

poisonous beats, know how much evil is hid behind the great lights of the world's great agglomerations. They are all to fall. . . . We believe, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that this prophecy covers Peking and Philadelphia, Moscow and Melbourne, Berlin and Buenos Aires, Cairo and the Cape, Bombay and Boston, Istanbul and Chicago, Naples and New York. In short, all the cities shall be destroyed. It cannot be otherwise." Barnhouse

Jerusalem will be restored (Isaiah 62) in the Millennium to be the seat of Christ's Kingdom. Babylon is to be completely destroyed, permanently uninhabitable, and become a prison for unclean spirits (Isaiah 13:21-22; Revelation 18:2). We'll read the details about Babylon in the next chapter. We don't know if any of the other cities of the earth will be restored.

Revelation 16:20 Every island fled away and no mountains could be found.

Unlike the earthquake that came with the opening of the sixth seal in which "every mountain and island was moved out of its place" (Revelation 6:12-14), now every island flees away and the mountains are no longer found. Now that tells you just how powerful this earthquake will be. The surface of the whole earth will be drastically changed. Many people will die in this earthquake, which I believe Jeremiah speaks about:

Jeremiah 4:23-28 "I looked at the land and saw that it was an empty wasteland. I looked up at the sky, and its light had vanished. (24) I looked at the mountains and saw that they were shaking. All the hills were swaying back and forth! (25) I looked and saw that there were no more people, and that all the birds in the sky had flown away. (26) I looked and saw that the fruitful land had become a desert and that all of the cities had been laid in ruins. The LORD had brought this all about because of his blazing anger. (27) All this will happen because the LORD said, "The whole land will be desolate; however, I will not completely destroy it. (28) Because of this the land will mourn and the sky above will grow black. For I have made my purpose known and I will not relent or turn back from carrying it out."

Isaiah also spoke of this in Isaiah 24:1-6 which we have already read, and the following verses:

Isaiah 24:17-23 Terror, pit, and snare are ready to overtake you inhabitants of the earth! (18) The one who runs away from the sound of the terror will fall into the pit; the one who climbs out of the pit, will be trapped by the snare. For the floodgates of the heavens are opened up and the foundations of the earth shake. (19) The earth is broken in pieces, the earth is ripped to shreds, the earth shakes violently. (20) The earth will stagger around like a drunk; it will sway back and forth like a hut in a windstorm. Its sin will weigh it down, and it will fall and never get up again. (21) At that time the LORD will punish the heavenly forces in the heavens and the earthly kings on the earth. (22) They will be imprisoned in a pit, locked up in a prison, and after staying there for a long time, they will be punished. (23) The full moon will be covered up, the bright sun will be darkened; for the LORD who commands armies will rule on Mount Zion in Jerusalem in the presence of his assembly, in majestic splendor.

It's hard to believe but the 2004 Sumatra earthquake and tsunami that killed more than 280,000 people actually moved islands and caused the earth to tilt on its axis. That's just a tiny hint of the devastation that will occur with this 7th bowl earthquake.

Saints that are still living in this time will understand Psalm 46 in a more real way than anyone ever has:

Psalms 46:1-2,6 God is our strong refuge; he is truly our helper in times of trouble. (2) For this reason we do not fear when the earth shakes, and the mountains tumble into the depths of the sea, (6) Nations are in uproar, kingdoms are overthrown. God gives a shout, the earth dissolves.

By the time Jesus returns, the earth will basically be in ruins. All of man's environmental efforts with their pagan foundations will be for nothing. In a similar way to how He will create a new heavens and new earth at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, God will regenerate the earth before the Kingdom begins.

Isaiah saw a "new heavens and a new earth," but one that is followed by childbirth, sin, and death (Isaiah 65:17, 20, 23). We also know this because Jerusalem will be lifted up above the surrounding lands (Zechariah 14:10) to form the mountain of the Lord's house from which will flow the river of life during the Millennium (Isaiah 2:2; 27:13; 30:29; 56:7; Ezekiel 17:24; 20:40; 40:2; Micah 4:1).

Then Isaiah's prophecy will become a literal reality:

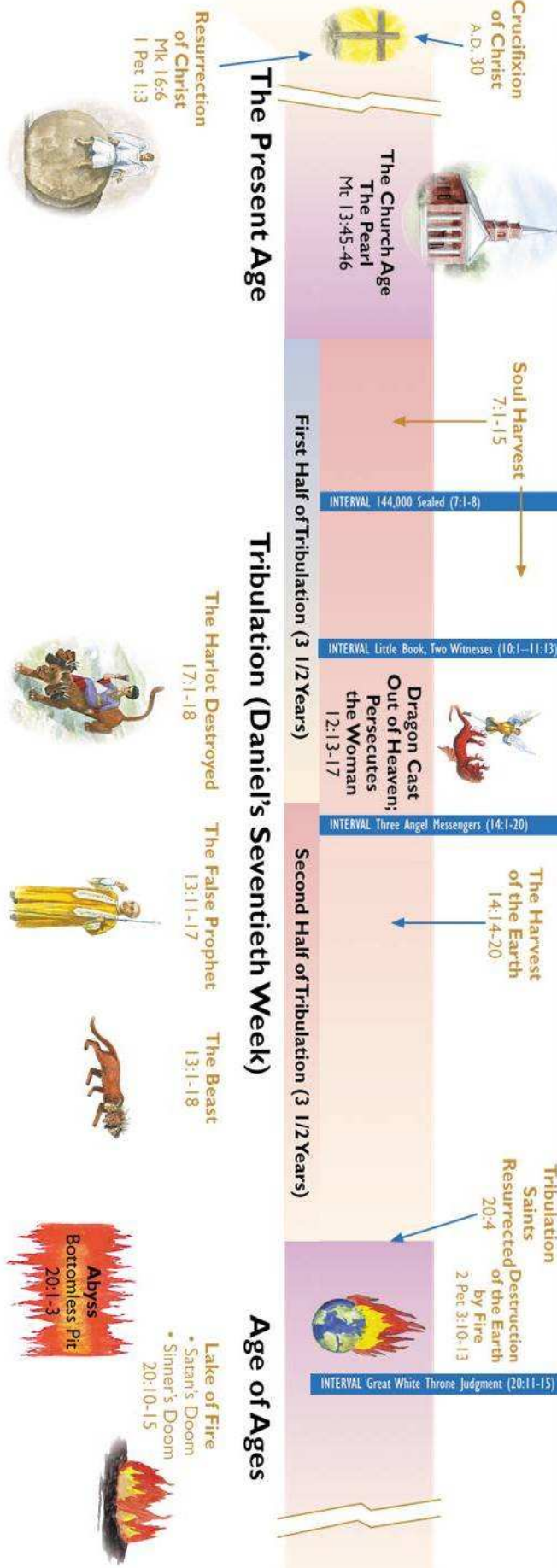
Isaiah 40:3-5 A voice cries out, "In the wilderness clear a way for the LORD; construct in the desert a road for our God. (4) Every valley must be elevated, and every mountain and hill leveled. The rough terrain will become a level plain, the rugged landscape a wide valley. (5) The splendor of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it at the same time. For the LORD has decreed it."

Now back to the final verse of Revelation chapter 16:

Revelation 16:21 And gigantic hailstones, weighing about a hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people, but they blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, since it was so horrendous.

Here is the final effects of the seventh bowl judgment. These are not your normal everyday hailstones! One hundred pound hailstone falling from the sky would easily kill you. A hundred pound hailstone would be about the size of a basketball made of solid ice. Hail of that size is hard to believe, isn't it? Well, the fact is, there has been hail like this before. God has used large hailstones before to carry out judgment in the past (Exodus 9:18-26, Joshua 10:11). And some of the first tests of atomic bombs it was discovered that when a bomb went off under water, the water was thrown so high into the atmosphere, that it came down as hundred-pound hailstones, damaging ships in a wide area. The earth-dwellers are stoned because of their rebellion and blasphemy against God, which is the prescribed punishment given in Leviticus 24:14-16. But those who survive continue their cursing of God.

Next lesson we'll cover chapters 17 and 18, which focus on Babylon.



Book of Revelation

Title Salvation
1:1-8
The Vision 1:9-20
Christ Jesus

The Things Which Are
The Seven Churches 2:1-3:22

What Thou Hast Seen
1:1-8

The Heavenly Vision
4:1-5:14

RAPTURE
1 Ths 4:16-17

Seven-sealed Book

The Seven Seals
6:1-8:5

The Seven Trumpets
8:7-11:19

The Seven Key Figures
12:1-13:18

The Seven Bows
15:1-16:21

Seven Dooms on Babylon
17:1-18:24

Return of Christ
19:1-21

The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter

Millennial Kingdom
20:1-10

Seven New Things
21:1-22:5

Farewell Testimony
22:6-21

Satan Bound
The Thousand Years
Israel Rules the Nations

Satan Loosed
ONE New Heaven
TWO New Earth
THREE New Jerusalem
FOUR New Universal Order
FIVE New Temple
SIX New Light
SEVEN New Paradise

ONE White Horse—Conquering Power
TWO Red Horse—War and Bloodshed
THREE Black Horse—Famine
FOUR Pale Horse—Pestilence and Death
FIVE Souls under the Altar—Martyrs
SIX Great Earthquake
SEVEN Silence, Golden Censer

ONE Hail, Fire, Blood
TWO Burning Mountain
THREE Star Wormwood
FOUR Sun Diminished
FIVE Plague of Locusts First Woe
SIX Plague of Horsemen Second Woe
SEVEN Christ Rules

ONE Woman—Israel
TWO Dragon—Satan Third Woe
THREE Male Child—Christ
FOUR Michael—The Archangel
FIVE Remnant—Saved Israel
SIX Antichrist—Beast out of the Sea
SEVEN False Prophet—Beast out of the Earth

ONE Boils
TWO Sea to Blood
THREE Rivers to Blood
FOUR Great Heat
FIVE Darkness
SIX Euphrates Dried Up
SEVEN Hail

ONE Devoid of Human Life
TWO Burned with Fire
THREE Destroyed in One Hour
FOUR People Afraid to Enter
FIVE Riches Brought to Nought
SIX Violently Overthrow
SEVEN All Activity Ceases

Battle of Armageddon
Marriage of the Lamb
Return of Christ with the Church and His Angels
Antichrist and False Prophet Cast into the Lake of Fire

