THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER 16

Rev 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.

1 The song of Moses was sung in chapter 15. It was a testimony against Israel. It proclaimed that the Lord would bring his vengeance upon whoring Israel (Deu 31:16; 32:35, 41, 43; Luke 21:22). That latter day generation (Deu 31:29; 32:29; Mat 23:36; 24:34) had arrived. It had rejected and killed the Son of man. The seven angels were set to be sent with the seven last plagues. Thus, a great voice came 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.

As every other time in the Revelation, earth is ge (Greek) meaning “soil or region.” The angels are not being sent to the planet named earth. They are being sent to the region of Philistia. As we will see, this was the only place the song of Moses could be sung with meaning. The seven angels were to pour out the vials of the wrath of God. Pouring out the wrath of God upon Israel was not novel. We find another allusion quotation. John was referring to Jeremiah 7 concerning specifically the people of Israel (Jer 7:17-29).

Jer 7:17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jer 7:20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

Jer 7:29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. (emphasis added)

We do not want to limit this allusion to one passage. The pouring out of the wrath of God upon Israel is mentioned again and again (Jer 18:11-22; Eze 7:2-12; 14:13-21; 20:5-31). That day had been prophesied again and again since Moses. That termination generation had come. That generation filled up the wrath of God.

Rev 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.

2 The mark of the beast had been given by the beast of the land (ge. 13:11). That beast had attributes “like a lamb.” We have noted this mark was the false religion of Judaism. False religion marked the thinking (head) and doing (hand) of those following its beastly teachings. Those marked with this teaching were selected to receive a noisome and grievous sore. The NIV translation says, “...ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.” The Living Bibles says, “...horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the Creature and was worshipping his statue.” John’ purpose was to take thinking to the plagues of Egypt. His thought was specifically the plague of the grievous boils (Exo 9:8-12). That plague was exactly what the Lord God said would come upon the termination generation (Deu 28:27, 35). Not only did the Lord promise he would send plagues upon Judah. He promised he would send them seven times more (Lev 26:21). John extracted the allusion from the scriptures. Isaiah specifically prophesied against Israel and Jerusalem. He specifically alluded that Israel was another Sodom and another Gomorrah (Isa 1:3-10).

Rev 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.

3 Josephus told of the taking of the city of Taricheae by the lake Gennesareth. Many fled to the water. We are told that not one of them escaped. Josephus writes, “...while others of them ran down to the lake, and met the enemy in the teeth, and some were slain as they were getting up into ships, but others of them, as they attempted to overtake those that were already gone aboard ...but for those that had fled to the lake, upon seeing the city taken, they sailed as far as they possibly could from the enemy, but now when the vessels were gotten ready, Vespasian put upon ship-board as many of his forces as he thought sufficient to be too hard for those that were upon the lake, and set sail after them ....when they ventured to come near the Romans, they became sufferers themselves before they could do any harm to the other, and were drowned, they and their ships together. As for those that endeavored to come to an actual fight, the Romans ran many of them through with their long poles. Sometimes the Romans leaped into their ships, with swords in their hands, and slew them ...if, in the desperate case they were in, they attempted to swim to their enemies, the Romans cut off either
their heads or their hands.....one might then see the lake all bloody, and full of dead bodies, for not one of them escaped. And a terrible stink, and a very sad sight there was on the following days over that country; for as for the shores, they were full of shipwrecks, and of dead bodies all swelled; and as the dead bodies were inflamed by the sun, and putrefied, they corrupted the air, insomuch that the misery was not only the object of commiseration to the Jews, but to those that hated them, and had been the authors of that misery.¹

There was no escape for the doomed Jews who had received the mark. Many of the cities by the seas were doomed. Jesus had warned those cities with a “woe” because of their rejection of him (Mat 11:20-24).

- **Rev 16:4** And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.
- **Rev 16:5** 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.
- **Rev 16:6** For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

4-6 Again John referred to the plagues of Egypt. The drinking water was turned to blood (Exo 7:19). The drinking water of the land became polluted. Dead bodies decayed in the waters. Dead bodies decayed on the land. When the rains came the rotting flesh was washed into the rivers and fountains of waters. Not only was the death causing polluted waters. Many of the trees had been cut down causing erosion of the land. The drinking waters were muddied. The polluted waters caused fish and water life to die adding to the pollution. As the Lord once said to Pharaoh, he said to Israel, “The rivers shall be full of thee” (Eze 32:6).

It is interesting that there is the angel of the waters. We can move this to a strictly spiritual meaning. The fountains of living waters (Jer 2:13) had become the fountain of death. As we have noted, the angels speak of the prophetic messengers of God. Water in the scriptures are associated with the Word of God (Num 20:24; Eph 5:26). There are ministries (angels) of the waters. The waters meant for life can be polluted and will bring forth death. Israel had forsaken the fountain of living waters (Jer 17:13).

The angel sent from the temple says, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. He is the Lord which art, wast, and shalt be. He always has, always will, and does today judge. He executes vengeance upon his enemies and upon those who offend his little ones (Mat 18:6). Incorporated into the praise of the angel of the waters was the praise for the Lord’s vengeance. The angel said, For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. Those judged were worthy. We think of being worthy of worthiness of blessings. However, those were worthy to drink blood.

Judaism killed the Lord. It killed the apostles. It killed the saints. It was worthy to drink blood. Revelation 17 tells of the “the judgment of the great whore.” That great whore was Jerusalem (Judaism). A verse about that great whore drinking blood is found in Revelation 17:6.

- **Rev 16:7** And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

In Revelation six we were told of the souls of them that were slain for the word of God. Those souls were under the altar. Those souls cried for vengeance (Rev 6:9-10). In Revelation sixteen, from the altar is heard true and righteous are thy judgments. Vengeance was executed (Mat 23:35-36).

- **Rev 16:8** And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.
- **Rev 16:9** 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.

8, 9 A look into the scriptures reveals many interesting imageries and portraits concerning the sun. The primary portrait found is its meaning of the removal of the presence of the Lord’s protection. The Lord allowed the sun’s heat to beat down when his presence was removed. Natural heat is not always what was meant. It can mean judgment done openly. This was the judgment of the Son of man. He came openly to

¹ Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, X, 5 - 9, pages 520, 521
judge. The judgment of Israel was not in private. It was done in the open view in the sight of the sun. This is a Biblical imagery assuring that the judgment is from God. For example, the Lord told King David that he sinned in secret, but the Lord would judge it before the sun (2Sa 12:11-12).

The fourth angel poured out his vial. The sun scorched men with great heat. This was in contrast to the Shekina cloud. The Shekina was the presence of God. That cloud protected the nation from the great heat in the wilderness. In Revelation, the imagery is no shadow or shade. There was no secret place from plagues and noisome pestilence (Psa 91:1-10). The protective presence of the Lord God had been totally removed. The sun scorched (Isa 49:10).

Another vital part of the imagery that John drew here was that the Lord is a sun (Psa 84:11). The New Testament brought this same imagery into its writings. It shows the Lord Jesus shined as the sun (Mat 17:2; Act 26:13). John begins the Revelation with the imagery of the Son of man being that of the brightness of the sun (Rev 1:16). Jesus told the Pharisees and the high priest they would see him coming in great glory as the Son of man (Mat 23:39; Mat 26:64). Jesus is the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings (Mal 4:2). He came in the brightness of his shining upon natural Israel who pierced him (1:7).

The scorching heat and burning of the sun, as already noted, is a sign of God’s removal of his presence and judgment upon his enemies. Nothing more vividly projected that than the Lord’s instruction to Moses to hang the heads of the rebellious Israelites in the sun (Num 25:4, 5).

Another imagery of the sun was that of a false god. This too will play into the thought John was giving. The nation of Judah offered sacrifices for Caesar daily. It rejected the Messiah and killed him continuing to listen to the Pharisees and be marked by their doctrine (mark of the beast). The people had no root in themselves. Because of this they were scorched by the sun and withered away (Deu 17:3; 2Ki 23:5; Eze 8:16; Mat 13:6).

Jesus clearly stated that “signs” would come from the sun during the great tribulation. Jesus spoke of the “de-creation” of the nation, which certainly happened to natural Israel (Luk 21:24, 25). From A.D. 70 until 1948 there was no nation called Israel. The nation that exists today is not the same society as then, i.e. temple worship. It was de-created.

As the fourth angel went forth with the vile of wrath the imagery of the sun was released. It was the opposite of the righteous shining forth as the sun. The imagery was the sun scorched those upon whom the wrath of God was poured. As seen in chapter fifteen, the song of Moses was the witness against natural Israel. The Lord God had removed Himself totally from being their protection. He no longer was their shield and protection. The Son of man came in judgment. His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (1:16)! He came to judge them that pierced him (1:1) exactly as he said he would. Natural Israel was “hung out to dry” in the wrath of the scorching sun. They have worshipped false gods and attached themselves to the heathen as did Israel of old attaching to Baalpeor (Num 25:3).

...and as the dead bodies were inflamed by the sun, and putrefied, they corrupted the air, insomuch that the misery was not only the object of commiseration to the Jews, but to those that hated them, and had been the authors of that misery.72

That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world. Finally, they brought the Hebrew nation into contempt... 73

Though the people were in great distress John said they blasphemed the name of God. It was God which hath power over these plagues, John said. This puzzled John because they repented not to give him glory. Over and over the historian and eye witness Josephus said the Jews would not repent. Their calamity had no hope yet they did not repent. Josephus wrote,

"But these men, and these only, were incapable of repenting of the wickedness they had been guilty of."74

"While the seditions, who saw it also, did not repent, but suffered the same distress to come upon themselves; for they were blinded by that fate, which was already coming upon the city, and upon themselves also."75

"The seditious had carried off all their effects, and were retired into the upper city; for they did not yet at all repent of the mischiefs they had done."76

2 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, X, page 521
3 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, X, 5, page 565
4 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, XII, 4, page 568
5 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, XII, 6, page 570
6 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, VI, 2, page 58
The Stone Cometh

Rev 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.

Rev 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

10, 11 Judgment must begin in the house of the Lord, but it does not end there (1Pe 4:17). As history proclaims the Roman empire was at that time experiencing tremendous judgment. Nero, who began as a good emperor, turned into a beast of a man.

"Nero, the last emperor in the Julio-Claudian dynasty, assumed the throne in 54. He governed well in his early years when he was under the influence of Lucius Annaeus Seneca and Sextius Afranius Burrus (d. 62), chief of the Praetorian guard. Gradually, however, the influence of his mother and of his second wife, Poppea Sabina (d. 65), triumphed, and Nero's reign turned bloodthirsty. He poisoned Britannicus, his mother, and Burrus, and legend says that he kicked Poppea to death. Nero was accused of burning Rome in 64; he in turn blamed a new sect, the Christians, for the fire and began the first Roman persecution of them; Saint Peter and Saint Paul were among its victims. Nero committed suicide in 68 when he saw that a revolution against him was succeeding. He was followed by Galba and, in 69 (the year of the four emperors), by Otho (32-69), Vitellius (15-69), and Vespasian." 7

The all powerful Roman empire began to experience turmoil. The revolution against Nero was successful. However a honorable general named Galba marched to Rome and established order. Galba became the new Caesar, but his reign was short (68-69 A.D.).

Otho, an evil man, reigned for less time than did Galba. He was overthrown by Vitellius who in the same year himself was overthrown. In the year 69 A.D., Rome had three emperors. All this was happening as Vespasian was marching through the land of Palestine. Darkness (confusion) was poured out upon the Rome beast.

Vespasian received instructions to proceed the war from Otho. Vespasian went on overthrowing all the places around Jerusalem. Then the word of Otho's death came.

Vespasian abandoned the war with the Jews and went to Rome. He felt that Rome needed his attention more than did the war with the Jews. Vespasian left the major part of his army in the land of Judah to maintain the victories and keep the Jews beaten down. His desire was to remove Vitellius from the reign of Rome. Before Vespasian could reach Rome, Vitellius was killed in the street. 8 Darkness and confusion was poured out on the beast.

It is important that we see the vial was poured upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness. Darkness scripturally is the inability to see. The Roman empire had no direction. The seat was totally confused. They gnawed their tongues for pain.

Vespasian, not yet arrived at Rome, was elected emperor. The government was handed over to him. 9 Within one year (A.D. 68-69) the empire of the beast had experienced five emperors - Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. Titus was commander of the Roman army in Philistia. Titus and his army was the army that laid desolate Jerusalem. St. John said the beast blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. Though in tremendous turmoil Rome continued its persecution of Christians. As we have noted, the Romans mocked the God of Israel. It boasted of its gods. At that time they repented not of their deeds.

Rev 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.

12 Israel’s history shows all destroying armies came from the Euphrates lying to the north and east. It was to that fact St. John referred.

The Roman army came across the Euphrates. Titus was the Roman general that desolated Jerusalem. His father, Vespasian, had destroyed the land. Vespasian was the Emperor. Every army from Rome crossed the Euphrates.

Titus marched on Jerusalem from Cesarea. Josephus wrote,

"...for Titus, when he had gotten together part of his forces about him, and had ordered the rest to meet him at Jerusalem, marched out of Cesarea...There followed him also three thousand drawn from those that guarded the river Euphrates...."

The Euphrates is a part of the historical Roman destruction of Jerusalem. The river has most ancient references. It was one of the four rivers that flowed from the garden of Eden (Gen 2:4). It

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7 1997 Grolier Interactive Multimedia Encyclopedia
8 1997 Grolier Interactive Multimedia Encyclopedia Bibliography:
9 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book IV, IX, 2, page 540, 541
10 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book IV, X, 2, page 543
11 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book IV, XI, 4, page 546
12 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book IV, XII, 5, page 546
13 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, vi, 6
was the northern most boundary (Gen 15:18) of the nation. Moses verified that indeed the Euphrates was to be the northern boundary (Deu 1:7; 11:24). Joshua led the people to possess the land which the Euphrates touched (Jos 1:4). David recovered the land to the Euphrates (2Sa 8:3). The land between the Euphrates and the river of Egypt became Philistia. It became the possession of the existing world powers (2Ki 23:29; 24:7; 1Ch 5:9; 2Ch 35:20).

The river begins at the Kara Su. It flows south, then southeast through Syria. This information is vital for our study. It is from Syria and Euphrates that the Roman army came.

John said 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 Roman kings came upon Jerusalem from the Euphrates. Vespasian crossed the Hellespont on his way to Antioch. Hellespont is a four mile strait between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara. Vespasian taking this route most assuredly had to cross the Euphrates with his army that came with him. They then accumulated more forces before passing though Syria and into the land of the Jews. Titus sailed from Achaia to Alexandria. There he took the forces he was to bring and came to Ptolemais, Syria. This was where Titus met with his father Vespasian. Here they combined their forces with other kings.

The kings of the lands from the east (Antiochus, Agrippa in the country east of Galilee, Sohemus, and Malchus from Arabia) came. They brought their armies to assist in Jerusalem's destruction. The kings of the east came prepared (see War of A.D. 70). When the war was over Titus commanded the tenth legion to stay and guard Jerusalem which came from beyond the Euphrates.

There was not doubt what the dried Euphrates meant. The Jews understood totally what was meant by the drying of the Euphrates. They knew the kings of the east would come. Historically, to them, it meant the end of the northern kingdom of Israel and the desolation of the southern kingdom of Judah. The song of Moses had been sung (15:3).

Rev 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.

Rev 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.

13, 14 Out of the mouth of the three came unclean spirits like frogs. Once again John transported the readers to the Egyptian plagues. This allusion alluded to the plague of frogs (Exo 8:2-13). The dragon is the devil (Rev 12:9). The beast was Rome (Rev 17:9, 10). The false prophet was Judaism (13:11, 16). The purpose of the unclean spirits was to 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.

The word translated earth is ge (Strong’s #1093) meaning “soil and region.” The Greek word translated world is oikoumene (Strong’s #3625) meaning “land.” It is not earth as in the planet earth. It is not world as in planet earth. This meant that from the entire area the kings were brought together to battle. It was the great day of God Almighty. It is an allusion to the day of the Lord (see discussion 1:10; 6:12-14). The day of the Lord was not Sunday. The day of the Lord was a time about which the prophets of both Old and New Testaments prophesied. The day is explained in two dimensions. It was the end of the age (world, Mat 24:3) for Judaism (Joe 1:13-15; 2:1-3; Zep 1:4-7, 14, 15; Zec 14:1, 2). It is also the smashing of nations that will not bow to the King. It is the great day of God Almighty. The unclean spirits were sent forth to gather the kings for this day.

The Lord God said that the nation should not desire the day of the Lord. It is a day of darkness. It is not a good day for the nation. It is against the nation (Amo 1:41).

The great day of God Almighty was not to save natural Jerusalem. It was to destroy natural Jerusalem. The unclean spirits gathered the kings for battle. The kings of the lands from the east (Antiochus, Agrippa in the country east of Galilee,
Sohemus, and Malchus from Arabia) brought their armies. They came to march upon the land and to desolate Jerusalem. History proves this happened.  

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.

Rev 16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

15, 16 The unclean spirits gathered the kings for the great day of God Almighty. In verse sixteen there is another gathering. The unclean spirits were not gathering in this verse. The one who actually gathered them together into a place called Armageddon was the Lord. The Lord never went to war on the terms of others. He would never have allowed the dragon, beast, or false prophet to decide the place and time for war (Gen 15:13-18). This was exactly what the Lord meant by the statement Behold, I come as a thief. No dragon will command the Lord as to when he comes. Paul made this very point also (1Th 5:1-3). The Lord determines his coming. The dragon cannot determine the Lord’s coming. This was made clear in the Olivet Discourse. The Lord answered the questions of his disciples concerning the coming upon Jerusalem. He said, But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Mat 24:36). He emphasized this thought again at his Ascension. He said, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (Act 1:7). The scriptures teach us that the times are in the hand of the Lord. He always has (Gen 15:13-18) and always will adjust times and seasons to his purposes (Dan 2:21). It was not the dragon that gathered the whole world to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It was the Lord who gathered to the battle.

As we have said, there is no geographical location called Armageddon.17 Most believe it is related to the valley of Megiddo somehow. There is a relevant historical truth we need to discuss.

The valley of Megiddo is bordered on the northwest by Ptolemais. On the southwest, the valley of Megiddo is bordered by Cesarea. Scythopolis is southeast of the valley. The importance of this is this area – the valley of Megiddo – became the gathering place of the Roman armies. Again and again the armies gathered in this area.

“Hereupon Cestius thought fit no longer to lie still, while the Jews were everywhere up in arms; so he took out of Antioch the twelfth legion entire, and out of each of the rest he selected two thousand, with six cohorts of footmen, and four troops of horsemen, besides those auxiliaries which were sent by the kings; of which Antiochus sent two thousand horsemen, and three thousand footmen, with as many archers; and Agrippa sent the same number of footmen, and one thousand horsemen; Sohemus also followed with four thousand, a third part whereof were horsemen, but most part were archers, and thus did he march to Ptolemais. There were also great numbers of auxiliaries gathered.”18

Ptolemais is where the armies gathered. This is located at the valley of Megiddo.

“After this he overran all the country, and seized upon whatsoever came in his way, and set fire to the villages that were round about them, and then returned to Ptolemais.”19

“And now Cestius himself marched from Ptolemais, and came to Cesarea; but he sent part of his army before him to Joppa....”20

“And now Vespasian took along with him his army from Antioch.... where he found king Agrippa, with all his forces, waiting for his coming, and marched to Ptolemais.”21

“But as to Titus, he sailed over from Achaia to Alexandria.... so he took with him those forces he was sent for, and marching with great expedition, he came suddenly to Ptolemais, and there finding his father, together with the two legions....”22

“And now Vespasian, with his son Titus, had tarried some time at Ptolemais, and had put his army in order.”23

“But as Vespasian had a great mind to fall upon Galilee, he marched out of Ptolemais, having put his army into that order wherein the Romans used to march.”24

“NOW Vespasian returned to Ptolemais on the fourth day of the month Panemus, [Tamus] and from thence he came to Cesarea....”25

Cesarea also was at Megiddo. Cesarea eventually became the primary gathering place for Vespasian. In like manner, Cestius sent also a considerable body of horsemen to the toparchy of Narbatene, that adjoined to Cesarea, who destroyed the country, and slew a great multitude of its

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17 Robert W. Wall, New International Biblical Commentary Revelation, page 20

18 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book II, XVIII, 9
19 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book II, XVIII, 9
20 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book II, XVIII, 10
21 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, II, 4
22 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, IV, 2
23 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, VI, 1
24 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, VI, 2
25 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, IX, 1
people; they also plundered what they had, and burnt their villages."  

AND now Gallus, seeing nothing more that looked towards an innovation in Galilee, returned with his army to Cesarea..."  

"...eighteen cohorts followed these legions; there came also five cohorts from Cesarea, with one troop of horsemen...."  

"Two of the legions also he placed at Cesarea, that they might there take their winter-quarters, as perceiving the city very fit for such a purpose; but he placed the tenth and the fifth at Scythopolis, that he might not distress Cesarea with the entire army."  

"So he sent away his son Titus to [the other] Cesarea, that he might bring the army that lay there to Sefytophus..."  

"Vespasian sent against them Titus, with a thousand horsemen, but withdrew the tenth legion to Scythopolis, while he returned to Cesarea with the two other legions, that he might allow them to refresh themselves after their long and hard campaign...."  

"for Titus went from Gischala to Cesates, and Vespasian from Cesarea to Jamnia and Azotus, and took them both...."  

"And now Vespasian sent Placidus against those that had fled from Gadara, with five hundred horsemen, and three thousand footmen, while he returned himself to Cesarea, with the rest of the army."  

"but at the beginning of the spring he took the greatest part of his army, and led it from Cesarea to Antipatris...."  

"Now as Vespasian was returned to Cesarea, and was getting ready with all his army to march directly to Jerusalem, he was informed that Nero was dead..."  

"Titus, by a Divine impulse, sailed back from Greece to Syria, and came in great haste to Cesarea, to his father."  

"But in the mean time Vespasian removed from Cesarea, on the fifth day of the month Deasius, [Sivan,] and marched against those places of Judea which were not yet overthrown."  

"Vespasian then removed from Cesarea to Berytus, where many embassages came to him from Syria, and many from other provinces, bringing with them from every city crowns, and the congratulations of the people."  

"So Titus marched... and from Joppa to Cesarea, having taken a resolution to gather all his other forces together at that place."  

"WHEN therefore Titus had marched over that desert which lies between Egypt and Syria, in the manner forementioned, he came to Cesarea, having resolved to set his forces in order at that place, before he began the war."  

The point in all the previous quotes was to show the use of Megiddo in the A.D.70 war. The area of Megiddo, specifically Cesarea, Ptolemais, and Scythopolis was the gathering place for the Roman armies. Over and over the troops gathered at Megiddo. Finally, it was from there that Titus came upon Jerusalem. Obviously Megiddo was Armageddon.  

The dragon (that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world), the sea beast (world power of Rome), and the false prophet (land beast which was the Jews) were all brought together for that great day of God Almighty.  

Rev 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.  

The words of Jesus upon the cross come to mind as we read It is done. The literal words “it is” are neither in John 19:30 or here (Rev 16:17). Jesus simply said “Finished!” The great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne simply said Done! The angel poured out the seventh vial. Now all seven vials had been poured out which “filled up the wrath of God” (15:1). Done! This is not something we are awaiting. This was something that was done.  

Rev 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.  

Rev 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.

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

Rev 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.

18-21 John was in the glory cloud (15:2). A primary theme of the book is the declaration of the first chapter -- the Lord will come with clouds (Rev 1:7). As discussed in 1:7 this was the glory cloud. This was the cloud spoken of in the gospels by Jesus. Jesus spoke of this cloud again and again (Mat 17:5; 24:30; 26:64; Mark 9:7; 13:26; 14:62; Luk 3 9:34, 35; 21:27; Acts 1:9).

The thunders and lightnings and great hail associated the presence of the cloud. To say “It is done” without mentioning the presence and effects of the cloud would somehow be wrong. The cloud with its thunders and lightnings was a signature. It is prophetic language signifying God’s presence. This cloud presence protects one and destroys their and their enemies from the cloud. He will bless his people (19:6). Thunders are the signature of the presence of the Lord in his cloud. He said 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. Isaiah wrote a woe to David’s city, Jerusalem. It is here we find the allusion John refers to (Isa 29:1-15).

 Isa 29:6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

 Isa 29:7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. (emphasis added)

What happened to Jerusalem was a nightmare. David’s city, Jerusalem, was visited of the Lord of hosts with thunders and with earthquake. It was like an earthquake that divided the city into three parts. Josephus said the city itself was divided into three factions within the walls. The people were like “wild beast grown mad.” Josephus continued describing the three seditions.

“And now there were three treacherous factions in the city, the one parted from the other. Eleazar and his party, that kept the sacred firstfruits, came against John in their cups. Those that were with John plundered the populace, and went out with zeal against Simon.”

“And now, the city was engaged in a war on all sides, from these treacherous crowds of wicked men, the people of the city, between them, were like a great body torn in pieces. The aged men and women were in such distress by their internal calamities, that they wished for the Romans, and earnestly hoped for an external war, in order to their delivery from their domestic miseries.”

John said 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. John made clear allusion to Sodom and Gomorrah as he said Babylon came in remembrance before God (Gen 18:20, 21). The Lord God poured judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. He poured judgment upon spiritual Babylon to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. This fierceness of his wrath was spoken in the prophetic language of de-creation (see discussion 6:12-14). The Revelator said every island fled away, and the

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42 Josephus, Wars Of The Jews, V, I, 1, page 547
43 Josephus, Wars Of The Jews, V, I, 4, page 548
44 Josephus, Wars Of The Jews, V, I, 5, page 548
mounds were not found. This is not literal language. It is prophetic language (Isa 13:9, 10; 34:1-6; 32:7, 8; Joel 2:10, 11; 28-31; Zec 14:1-7; Mat 24:29-30). It was used to describe the termination of nations. Jesus used this language to prophesy the termination of the nation of Israel in Matthew 24. This came upon that generation. This was the sign that the Son of man was seated in heaven (Mat 24:29, 30, 34).

Rev 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.

21 Once again John reached into the scriptures and draws out an allusion concerning Israel's desolation. Here he used the unmistakable sign of the hail stone (Eze 13:8-13).

Eze 13:10 Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered morter:

Eze 13:11 Say unto them which daub it with untempered morter, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.

One of Rome’s primary weapons were the huge “stone throwers” called engines. They were extremely effective in taking Jerusalem and every other walled city in the nation. Jotapata was one such city. It was at Jotapata that Josephus commanded a Jewish army before he was captured by the Romans. He wrote from a personal experience with the stone throwers.

“...for the force with which these engines threw stones and darts made them hurt several at a time ...for as one of those that stood round about Josephus was near the wall, his head was carried away by such a stone, and his skull was flung as far as three furlongs. In the day-time also, a woman with child had her belly so violently struck, as she was just come out of her house, that the infant was carried to the distance of half a furlong...while the whole space of ground whereon they fought ran with blood, and the wall might have been ascended over by the bodies of the dead carcasses...However the morning watch was come they wall yielded to the machines employed against it ...on the forty-seventh day [of the siege] on this day the Romans slew all the multitude ...taking of the city. So Vespasian gave order that the city should be entirely demolished, and all the fortifications burnt down. And thus was Jotapata taken, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Nero”45

John recorded the huge size of the hail stones as he says every stone about the weight of a talent.

A talent would be the weight of 125 pounds.46 Strangely enough Josephus wrote about the stone throwing engines that threw stones with that exact weight.47

One cannot read about this stone and not think of the stone cut our of the mountain of Daniel 2:34, 35, 45. The stone is Jesus Christ as he refers to Himself in Matthew 21. He is the stone the builders rejected and the chief corner stone. Surely to fall upon him is better than he falling upon Israel (Mat 21:44). However, the nation would not fall upon Jesus the Stone. The Stone fell upon them. This chapter ends saying the men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. It truly was!

Contemporary Theological View(s)

Naturally the contemporaries interpret these vials literally. As we read through them we saw they cannot be literal. For example, vial number four caused the sun to scorch. That would mean the sun was brighter and hotter than ever. Vial number five was darkness. That would mean the sun was not shining at all. Was it bright and hot, or was it out and cold?

The contemporaries interpret with extremely strong imagination. We will see this immediately.

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.

Gary Cohen says,

“Perhaps the mark of the Beast will involve something very similar to the modern tattoo which , after its initial drawing, becomes a sore, forms a scab, and requires a few days to heal. If this be so, God in some way may allow these tattoos to become infected en masse across the earth. Maybe the ink formula will irritate the human blood system? Perhaps God will on a strictly supernatural basis cause the infections? Perhaps God will cause some earthly gas to become suddenly abundant and the gas will cause the wild inflammations on these Beast marks? In any case, the ulcerating of these marks is true justice at the hands of the rejected Great Physician!”48

45 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, VII, 3-36, page 507
46 The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Edition, 3531, page 142
47 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, VI, 3, page 557
48 Dr. Gary G. Cohen, Revelation Visualized, page 240
2. 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.

Tim LaHaye says,
“It does not take much imagination to see that when all living creatures in the seas die, they will float to the top, their decaying bodies discharging an unbearable stench and inaugurating potential disease. This judgment could well interfere with commercial shipping and send whole populations into confusion as man gropes for an adequate supply of water.”

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

Leon Morris writes,
“Here they [waters] all turn to blood, It is not said that the people died, but that presumably is only because other judgments followed so swiftly. Without water to drink there is no future for the human race.”

4. 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.

Wycliffe commentary says,
“The fourth vial, involving the sun, in some way increases the intensity of heat derived on earth from the sun; and men are scorched with it, as a result of which they blaspheme God.”

Dake says,
“...here, under the fourth vial, the heat of the sun will be increased to such an extent that men will actually be scorched by it, until, in misery and torment, they will blaspheme God whom they recognize as the cause of the heat. This plague is called ‘great heat.’ Men fret and groan under heat from the sun when it is 90 to 110 degrees but what will they do under such intense scorching heat at this future time?”

5. 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

Swaggart says,
“Under the fourth vial there will be scorching heat from a sun much brighter than normal. Then the world will be plunged into darkness, bringing extreme cold. The nightmare cannot be imagined.”

6. 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.

Van Impe writes,
“A total of two hundred million troops (9:16) appear in the Middle East from the Orient. This has to be the largest assemblage of military men in the annals of history! In the text before us (16:12, we witness a miraculous drying up of the Euphrates River in order that the kings of the east might cross over unhindered. The word kings pictures the leaders of troops. They cross the Euphrates in order to participate in the greatest Mid-East confrontation ever -- the Battle of Armageddon!”

We must say that the scriptures never say anything about the Battle of Armageddon. It does say that the armies were gathered at Armageddon.

7. 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.

Dake says,
“This passage is by no means all that is pictured under the seventh vial, for what happens under it is continued in Rev. 18:1-24 after the parenthetical section, Rev. 17, on ‘Mystical Babylon.’ However we shall limit our remarks on the seventh vial to this passage until we first consider the parenthetical passage. After that we shall resume our study of the destruction of the Babylon that is scheduled to be destroyed under the seventh vial as fully elaborated upon in Rev. 18. Under the seventh vial the wrath of God will be completed, and therefore, must also, for this reason, include the coming of Christ to earth. It will be fulfilled at that time, thus ending the Seventieth Week of Daniel and beginning ‘the day of the Lord.’”

The dispensationalists avoid the “it is done” really meaning “it is done” by inserting a parenthesis. Their “it is done” must include the coming of Christ. They can’t find one until chapter 19. This “it is done,” as we can read, has nothing to do with the last Advent. It has everything to do with the termination of the Old Covenant. This “it is done” was associated with the singing of the song of Moses. The Old Covenant was done.