

Prophecy 13

The Seven Bowls

Revelation 15:7-16-21

Beginning Point in Time: 1,265th Day of the Great Tribulation

Ending Point in Time: Second Coming

Summary: The book of Revelation indicates there will be two distinct phases of God's wrath during the Great Tribulation. The first phase will be redemptive in nature. The second phase will be totally destructive. The first phase is called the seven trumpets and Jesus extends salvation to everyone who will worship Him. The second phase is called the seven *last* plagues or the seven bowls (or seven vials – KJV). Everyone who receives the mark of the beast will die during the seven bowls. The seven last plagues are represented as seven bowls (or vials) because every wicked person will be forced to drink (that is, experience) God's wrath, a bitter mixture that contains no mercy.

Introduction: According to my calculations, the seven bowls will occur over a period of seventy days. If true, each plague could last ten days.¹ The seven bowls are not discussed very often because most Bible students do not think they are particularly relevant. It is true that they will occur in the future, but they reveal additional information about God's love and character that is helpful right now! Before we examine the seven bowls in detail, please notice they can be divided into two groups:

Plagues on Individuals

1. Ugly and painful sores
2. Oceans turn to blood
3. Rivers and springs turn to blood
4. Scorching heat

Plagues on Corporate Entities

5. Painful blindness on Lucifer's officials
6. Kings of the Earth gathered for Armageddon
7. Hailstones weighing 100 pounds each and a sword that comes out of Jesus' mouth

The seven bowls are listed in two columns because the first four bowls serve a different purpose than the last three. All who receive the mark of the beast will be affected by the first four bowls. These judgments will extract restitution from those who preyed on God's saints. The last three bowls are directed at the defiant leaders of the world and those who work for them. Jesus intends to destroy kings and soldiers alike. The fifth bowl will strike down Lucifer's theocracy (his officials and employees). The sixth bowl will unite the kings of the Earth and their armies to make war on Jesus as He appears and the seventh bowl will totally destroy the wicked and make Earth desolate. Jesus will destroy the kings and their armies by casting them into a lake of fire at the Second Coming and the rest of the wicked will drop dead when He commands them to die. (This command is represented as a sword that comes out of Jesus' mouth.) By the end of the seventh bowl, all wicked people will be dead.² As the saints meet the Lord in the air, Earth will be left desolate.

The seven last plagues are puzzling to some people. They ask, "Why would a God of love torture people? Isn't torture the invention of the devil?" These questions are reasonable because the Bible says that God is love.³ However, the phrase, "God is love," means more than many people realize. It means that all of God's actions are consistent with principles of love. Because God's actions are often misunderstood, the principles of love are often misunderstood. I prefer to define God's love as a perfect balance between justice and mercy. According to infinite wisdom and changeless consistency, God knows when mercy is appropriate and when the demands of justice are required. This balance is always perfect because God is love personified! *God's actions demonstrate what love is and what love is not.* Given this eternal truth, the seven bowls have to be understood as an expression of love because God will send them. As incredible as it seems, God's love will be expressed through vengeance, exposure, and discovery. A few words about each element might be helpful.

1. Vengeance

There is an important distinction between vengeance and revenge. Vengeance is a righteous process that lawfully achieves justice. When a *disinterested* party, who has no relationship with either a perpetrator of a crime (predator) or a victim of that crime, imposes a sentence on the predator on behalf of the victim, the disinter-

ested party exercises vengeance. Revenge, on the other hand, is another word for retaliation. When an *interested* party, who has a relationship with the victim of a crime, imposes a sentence on a predator which the party deems appropriate, the interested party exacts revenge. The problem with revenge is that justice is often ignored to satisfy passion. In other words, the person exercising revenge will often go beyond the demands of justice and also become a predator.

When God implements justice, He seeks two objectives. The first objective is the restoration of the victim; the second objective is the punishment of the predator. For example, if a thief is caught, the predator must restore more than he stole. **“If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep. . . . A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft. If the stolen animal is found alive in his possession – whether ox or donkey or sheep – he must pay back double.”**⁴ God’s second objective in justice is punishment. When a person sins against his neighbor, he also sins against God. Therefore, after making restitution, a predator must also offer a sin offering to the Lord before his guilt can be removed.⁵

When the crimes of predators become so great that restitution is not possible, the Lord rises up and punishes the predators without mercy. **“With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.’”**⁶ The Bible speaks clearly. God will surely punish those who violate the golden rule and harm others. He sent a flood in Noah’s day and destroyed the whole world because a majority of the antediluvians had become predators. God’s love for victims of crime requires the exercise of justice. Therefore, God seeks the restitution and punishment of predators.

The seven last plagues must be understood within the context of restitution. The seven bowls contain God’s vengeance. Jesus will lawfully extract restitution from the wicked during the seven last plagues because there will be no justice for God’s people during the Great Tribulation. The wicked will treat God’s saints with contempt and hatred. God’s people will have their possessions taken from them, and ultimately, many will die because of their loyalty

to Jesus and their determination to obey the eternal gospel. Demons will keep the wicked enraged at God's saints. The wicked will impose an unimaginable level of cruelty and hardship on God's people and there will be no justice for God's despised people. Of course, the watchful eye of Jesus will not miss a single predatory act. Recording angels will capture every thought, word, and deed because Jesus will see that justice is served at the appointed time. At the end of the day, a God of love will repay the wicked with *a double measure* of the suffering they imposed on His saints.⁸ The apostle Paul was well acquainted with persecution and He wrote, **“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”**⁹ We should never forget these words: **“I will repay, says the Lord.”**¹⁰

We have examined the difference between vengeance and revenge because the seven bowls contain God's vengeance. During the Great Tribulation, desperate circumstances will separate the people of Earth into two groups. The sheep will embrace the testimony of the 144,000, worship the Creator and love one another. The goats will rebel against God's authority and submit to Babylon's authority out of cowardice. The contest between God's authority and Babylon's authority will be sharp and distinct. At first, the wicked will do whatever it takes to save themselves from suffering, but they will eventually discover that the path of least resistance leads to slavery. Their master will be the devil. There will be no justice for God's saints during the Great Tribulation, so Jesus Himself will execute vengeance on the wicked during the final seventy days of the Great Tribulation. Jesus will repay the wicked for their predatory behavior.

2. Exposure

Another purpose for the seven bowls is exposure. Jesus will expose the devil's masquerade during the fifth bowl. About one year *before* the fifth bowl occurs, the fifth trumpet will occur. Jesus will permit Lucifer to leave the spirit realm and physically appear before mankind. He will lead the wicked into total rebellion against God's authority. The devil will masquerade as Almighty God and he will perform many magnificent miracles, even calling fire down from Heaven! Many people will embrace the devil thinking he is “God.” When the sixth trumpet sounds, the devil will suddenly change character and demand that everyone on Earth worship

as he dictates or be killed. The devil will rule over Earth as king of kings and lord of lords. This pompous and totally corrupt despot will rule over the whole world for about nine months, but during the fifth bowl, Jesus will strip away the devil's masquerade. Jesus will expose the great liar (the false prophet). Every wicked person will discover that he has been worshiping the devil!

Jesus will pour out the fifth bowl on a specific group of people. He will strike down those individuals who have served as officials and employees in Lucifer's government (theocracy). They will be totally debilitated with excruciating pain and blindness. Lucifer's officials and employees will become totally dysfunctional and Lucifer's control of Earth will suddenly end. There is a specific irony in the fifth plague. People who refused to see any light in the gospel of Jesus Christ will no longer be able to see the god of darkness they chose to serve. When the world observes the painful blindness and the administrative devastation imposed on the devil's officials and employees, and that Lucifer cannot undo or cancel the impact of this destructive plague upon his own government, the wicked will have to admit that "a higher power" has punished the one who claimed to be "Almighty God." Thus, the devil will be exposed for who he really is. Then, great fear will overwhelm the kings of Earth and those wearing the mark of the beast causing extreme distress. They will hate the devil and loathe themselves. They will remember the testimony of the 144,000, but it will be too late. The wicked will realize that their destruction is inescapable.

3. Discovery

When the wicked discover that the glorious being who masquerades as Almighty God is the devil, they will also discover that they have no Savior and no refuge from the wrath of the true Almighty God. They will have no one to worship, no spiritual assurance, no divine being in whom to trust, and no hope for the future. The fifth bowl will force the wicked to see their true condition before the Creator of the Universe. When the sixth bowl is poured out, the wicked will realize that their rebellion and efforts to save themselves from God's wrath are nearly over. Lucifer will send three of his most powerful demons to the kings of Earth. These demons will perform amazing miracles before the kings of Earth and then, they will present Lucifer's proposal. They will inform the ten kings that Jesus will soon arrive and destroy the whole world. Therefore, Lucifer invites them to join forces with his angels to

make war on Jesus when He appears. The demons will say, "This is your only hope for survival."

Two interesting facts will emerge during the sixth bowl. First, the Bible predicts the ten kings of the Earth will join forces with Lucifer's demons knowing that Lucifer is the devil and that his angels are demons. Consider the ramifications of this union for a moment. To save themselves from death, the ten kings will knowingly and willfully unite with the devil and his demons in an attempt to destroy the Creator of the Universe. Second, the actions of the ten kings prove that sin has the same effect on human beings as angels. All sinners will become predators given enough time and power. Under the right circumstances, all sinners would attempt to destroy a God of love if possible. A sinner's love for self is so unlike the love of a sinless being. Sinless beings exalt righteousness, truth, and the two laws of love, whereas those ruled by the carnal nature exalt wickedness, lies, and selfishness.

The Cross of Calvary proves that the Creator of the Universe, Jesus Christ, was willing to cease to exist so sinners might be saved. This is infinite love in action! Contrast this with the war against Jesus at the Second Coming. *The sixth bowl demonstrates why sin and sinners cannot be tolerated in God's universe ever again.* If given the time, power, and opportunity, every sinner will become a predator. The seven bowls provide a vivid illustration of how the predatory nature of sin works.

During the Great Tribulation, the inhabitants of Earth will be put into a spiral of increasing distress. As circumstances become more desperate, a sharper distinction between sheep and goats will appear. One group will choose the way of divine love. They will worship the Creator and love one another. The other group will grasp at every straw to save themselves from suffering, hardship, and death, only to incur God's wrath, extended suffering and finally death.

Love for God will take the sheep in one direction and love for self will take the goats in a different direction. As the Great Tribulation escalates, the wicked will prey on the saints to survive. The wicked will take the saint's possessions and treat them with shameful contempt. God's saints will be tortured, imprisoned, and killed for rebelling against Babylon's laws. When each person

has chosen his spiritual destination, that is, *sealed* as a sheep or *marked* as a goat, God's offer of salvation will end. Then, Jesus will execute vengeance for His helpless saints. He will lawfully punish the wicked with seven last plagues and holy angels will declare that God is righteous in His actions! Justice will be served. Unrepentant predators will suffer according to the suffering they have caused. **“For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”**¹¹

The Sequence

{7} While the wicked on Earth were celebrating the death of the Two Witnesses,¹² one of the four living creatures gave a golden bowl filled with God's wrath to each of the seven angels that stand before God. All Heaven watched with solemn interest, for the angels know that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.¹³

During the Great Tribulation, the blood of God's saints will cry out for justice in the same way that Abel's blood cried out to the Lord¹⁴ and the seven last plagues will be the Lord's response.

{8} After the seven angels received the seven bowls, Heaven's temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power. Everyone had to leave the temple for His wrath is a consuming fire.¹⁵ No one could enter the temple until the seven plagues were finished. The empty temple means there is no further intercession or salvation for individuals. God's offer of redemption was finished.

When the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation arrives, Jesus will resurrect the 144,000 and take them to Heaven. On that morning, the sky will become violent and threatening. Great sheets of lightning will slice through the darkness and peals of intimidating thunder will boom throughout the Earth. Voices will be heard rumbling deep from within the Earth. People who have the mark of the beast will be paralyzed with terror. When the saints observe these manifestations of divine power, they will know that the time for the seven bowls has come and there is nothing further they can do. They will flee to the wilderness or the mountains to wait for Jesus to appear.

Rev. 15:7

And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

Rev. 15:8

And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

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.

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.

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.

Rev. 16:4-7

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel

{16:1} Then I heard a loud voice in Heaven say to the seven angels, “Go now and make the wicked drink from the cup of God’s wrath.”

Jesus said to the first angel, “Lucifer controls the world. He will not permit my people to buy or sell because they will not wear his mark. He intends to starve my people to death. Do to the wicked as they have done to my people. Go and poison their food. Let those who are wearing the mark of the beast eat their cursed food and suffer from the horrible boils that will follow.”

“The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.”¹⁶

{2} The first angel poured out his bowl of poison on *the land*, and ugly and painful sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast, but the saints were not affected. When the wicked realized that their food supplies from the land were the source of their boils, they rushed to the ocean to find food.

Then Jesus said, “Neither shall the sea provide food for the wicked. Poison the oceans of the world!”

{3} The second angel poured out his bowl upon the oceans and the water turned into a thick blood-like fluid, like the blood of a dead man. *Every* living creature in the sea died. The remains of the sea creatures floated to the surface and washed onto the shores. Nothing from the sea could be eaten, but the saints were not affected. God provided food for them.

Jesus said to the third angel, “Many of the wicked participated in the slaughter of my servants, the 144,000. Since they are bloodthirsty, take away their water and give them blood to drink.”

{4} The third angel poured his bowl of poison on the rivers and springs of water, and the springs of water became like blood, just like the ocean. The drinking water became poisonous for everyone who had participated in the murder of God’s people. The agony suffered by the murderers was intense. They were hungry, thirsty and the agony they suffered was unbearable. {5} The angel with the third bowl spoke to Jesus: “Eternal God, you are just and fair in these judgments, for you have judged righteously. {6} For these devil worshipers have shed the innocent blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink.” {7} Then, the mighty angel who stood at the Altar of Incense also responded:

“Yes, Lord God Almighty, your vengeance is righteous and your actions are justifiable.”

After the third bowl is poured out, the wicked will be in great anguish all over the world. The devil, who pompously masquerades as Almighty God, cannot prevent or cancel the effects of the first three bowls. To keep his deception intact, the devil will stall for time by promising to improve food supplies and provide fresh water, but his promises will not be fulfilled. To further divert the attention of the wicked from his failure to save them from these plagues, Lucifer will direct the wicked to utterly destroy the remaining saints because he will claim they are aligned with “the devil.” Lucifer will lead the wicked into thinking that the saints have managed to bring a great curse upon the Earth and if they are eliminated, the curse will end. Immediately, the wicked will agree to kill the saints beginning on a specific day (the 1,290th day of the Great Tribulation). Great rewards will be promised to everyone who captures and kills God’s saints, but Jesus will protect His saints. None of His people will perish. Jesus will say to the fourth angel having the fourth bowl, “The wicked intended to kill my people, now let them feel the heat of my wrath.”

{8} The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the Sun. The Sun became so hot that it scorched Earth with unbearable heat. The stench rising from dead sea creatures was unbearable. No one could go outside and it was worse indoors. There was no water. There was no electricity. {9} Objects became so hot that people were badly burned by merely touching them. Millions of wicked people, exhausted from their efforts to survive, died from hunger, thirst, and heat exhaustion. Even the devil’s highest ranking officials had very little food and water and there was no protection from the searing heat. Nevertheless, the wicked refused to repent of their wickedness and worship the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the only true God. They cursed the saints and their God who had control of these plagues and refused to glorify Him.

The wicked will call out to Lucifer, “If you are Almighty God as you claim, stop these curses. Ever since you became king of kings and lord of lords (during the sixth trumpet), our condition has become worse and worse. Use your miracle working powers to end our suffering! Show us that you are Almighty God!” These requests will put the devil in a great predicament. He cannot undo the effects caused by the first four bowls.

of the waters say, 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. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Rev. 16:8-9

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire 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.

Rev. 16:10-11

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

{10} A few days later, the fifth bowl was poured out. Suddenly, a painful plague afflicted everyone who worked for the devil. His officials and employees became dysfunctional because of blindness. These people had willingly closed their eyes to the light of God's truth (presented by the 144,000), therefore Jesus removed their eyesight. Because Lucifer's officials and employees could not function, his theocracy came to a sudden end. The pain was so great that the only thing the devil's officials and employees could do was gnaw their tongues in agony. {11} They cursed the God of Heaven (Jesus) because of the pain, but they refused to repent for what they had done.

The fifth plague will stun the wicked who are not officials and employees of Lucifer's government. Suddenly, they will begin to question the identity of the glorious being who claims to be Almighty God. Why would He send a curse of painful blindness upon his own officials and employees? Why would he destroy his entire work force and kingdom with painful blindness? Why would he treat his loyal followers with such horrifying contempt unless he *really was* an imposter? Could he actually be the devil?

The fifth bowl will force the wicked to admit that the 144,000, who they ridiculed and murdered as "false prophets," are true prophets of Almighty God. The fifth plague will force the wicked to admit that the glorious being masquerading as Almighty God is the devil, the dreaded Antichrist. The wicked will discover that he is *the* "false prophet," just as the 144,000 claimed. The wicked will be crushed by unspeakable disappointment and tormented with fear when they realize, too late, that they were duped. They were duped by a very clever show of power and lies because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.¹⁷ Instead of putting their faith in Jesus and submitting to the authority of a God of love, the wicked temporarily avoided persecution. They placed their loyalty and trust in the father of lies,¹⁸ a cunning devil who told them all kinds of lies and performed endless miracles to win their confidence and loyalty.

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} The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates so that the water in the river dried up. This event prepared the way for the kings from the East to appear.

A few words of explanation about the drying up of the great river Euphrates are necessary. There is an important connection between the sixth trumpet (day 1,039) and the sixth bowl

(day 1,315). When the sixth trumpet sounds in Heaven on day 1,039, God will release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates to kill a third of mankind.¹⁹ In Bible times, the great river Euphrates was a natural barrier for the northern boundary of Israel. The river was deep and it flowed fast enough in the spring that invading armies *from the north* could not cross the river. Because divine destruction is represented in the Bible as coming out of the north,²⁰ the language used in the sixth trumpet (the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates) indicates that Jesus allows the devil to kill people. The devil's four angels will be released at an appointed hour, day, month, and year to kill one-third of mankind.

Jesus permits the devil to kill one-third of mankind at the appointed time (beginning with day 1,039) for the following four reasons: First, food and water rations will last longer if fewer people are living on Earth. Jesus wishes to sustain the wicked long enough to fully demonstrate the predatory nature of sin. Second, the devil will find and eliminate almost everyone who stands in opposition to his theocracy. God allows the devil to do this so that everyone can see what a "carnal nature" government looks like. Third, the wicked, knowing that the mark of the beast is evil, nevertheless will commit the unpardonable sin and receive the mark of the beast in an effort to save themselves. This demonstrates how sin deadens a person's conscience and shuts out God's voice to the point that the carnal nature honors self-preservation above principle. Finally, Jesus will permit many of His saints to perish during the sixth trumpet so they can sleep through the rest of the tribulation until the Second Coming.

Now that we have considered the sixth trumpet, let us jump forward to the sixth bowl (about nine months later). When the sixth bowl is poured out, Jesus will *dry up* the great river Euphrates. This analogous language describes the elimination of the natural barrier that protected the northern boundary of Israel. In other words, at the sixth bowl, Jesus will remove all protection from the wicked. Divine destruction will descend out of the north and nothing can prevent the wicked from being totally destroyed. Notice the wording in this NIV text: "**Out of the north He comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty.**"²¹ When Jesus arrives, He will kill every wicked person by casting them into a lake of fire or by the sword that comes out of His mouth.²² The phrase, "the kings from the East," is plural. It refers to the fact that the Father and the

Rev. 16:12

Son will come together at the Second Coming.²³ Any object approaching this planet appears in the east because of our planet's rotation. (For example, the Sun appears to come up in the east because of rotation.) Therefore, the Second Coming is said to come from the north (the arrival of divine destruction) and from the east (the physical appearing of two kings, Jesus and the Father). The Holy Spirit will already be on Earth, sealed within each saint.

Remember, when the fifth bowl is poured out, Lucifer's employees and officials will be unable to function because of blindness. The devil will be unmasked and his theocracy will collapse. The wicked will be forced to admit that Lucifer is the devil and they will loathe him and his failed government.²⁴ In a desperate and final attempt to lead the world into total destruction, Satan will employ demonic sophistry one last time and the kings of the Earth will actually believe his last lie!

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.

{13} I saw three demons that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouth of the great red dragon, out of the mouth of the lamblike beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Three times in the book of Revelation, Lucifer is caricatured. He is the great red dragon that attempted to murder baby Jesus and failing to do so, He persecuted the saints of God for 1,260 years (a period of time also called "The Dark Ages"). As the lamblike beast, he is the Antichrist that leads the world astray and kills a third of mankind. Masquerading as Almighty God, he is the false prophet (the great liar) which leads the wicked into destruction. The devil is described as three entities in the book of Revelation because he uses three disguises to accomplish his evil plans. I believe that the demons in verse 13 are described as frogs, because frogs catch their prey with their tongues.

When the kings of the Earth discover that the glorious being they worship is actually the devil, they will hate him and refuse to have anything to do with him. Therefore, to bring them back into the clutches of his control, the devil will send his most powerful demons to the kings of the Earth with a simple message. They will perform amazing miracles and then tell the ten kings that Jesus will appear in the sky in about ten days. They will warn the kings that their only hope for survival is to unite with Lucifer and his army so that together, everyone can make war against Jesus when He gets close enough to Earth.

{14} Lucifer sends his demons throughout the world to deceive the kings and gather them for battle when the Lord returns.

Lucifer's miracle working demons will deceive the kings of the world with lying tongues and this will set the stage for a battle that will culminate with the destruction of everyone having the mark of the beast. Ironically, the wicked received the mark in order to survive, but now, the mark dooms them to certain destruction.

{15} While Lucifer's demons were uniting the kings of Earth, Jesus spoke a word of encouragement to His waiting saints. "Behold, I am on my way. Do not be discouraged. You will soon be blessed, therefore, stand firm in your faith and remain alert. Do not fret over Armageddon! I will strip my enemies of their weapons so their nakedness and shame will be exposed."

{16} As they prepared for war, the kings of Earth found themselves in a great predicament called Armageddon in the Hebrew tongue.

Armageddon is not a geographical location. The term Armageddon consists of two Hebrew words that are joined together to create a colloquialism. This colloquialism basically means, "caught between the devil and the deep blue sea." In other words, there is no solution, no escape, no savior, and no place to go. Literally translated, the words 'ar means mountain and mageddon refers to Megiddo, a plain where Kings Ahaziah and Josiah died.²⁵

During the days of Elijah, a defining contest between Baal and Jehovah took place on the top of Mt. Carmel.²⁶ When it became clear that the prophets of Baal could not call fire down to consume the sacrifice, Baal was proven to be a false god. When Israel saw that Baal was a worthless god, Elijah legitimately killed Jezebel's 450 prophets. In a similar way, the kings of the Earth will unite with the devil and his demons to destroy Jesus when He appears, but the wicked will find there is no contest on the mountain. There is no other God but Jehovah! Jesus will throw the devil and his demons into a lake of fire and Jesus will destroy the rest of the wicked by a command that comes out of His mouth. Jesus will legitimately kill His enemies. The word Armageddon is a contracted word. The first portion of the word points to a mountain top experience and the second portion points to the plain of Megiddo where kings died. Anyone who fights against an omnipotent God will die.²⁷

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.

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.

Rev. 16:16

Before we leave this section, consider the condition of the wicked kings during the sixth bowl. They once were confident and loyal to Lucifer, but now they see that their loyalty was misdirected and their confidence misplaced. They were once part of a powerful world government, but now they are powerless and broken. They were deceived and after their eyes are opened, they will realize that there is no chance of survival other than to knowingly unite with the devil. The wicked will look around on Earth and see that everything is dead or dying. They still suffer from the boils, the oceans are dead, the springs of water are poisoned, the heat is unbearable, and their great savior turns out to be the devil himself. The planet they call home has been ruined. It is as hostile to life as sin is to happiness. The kings wear a crude tattoo imposed on them by their demonic leader, yet they continue to oppose a God of love, who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Because their hearts have been hardened by rebellion and hatred, they will voluntarily unite with Lucifer in an effort to destroy Jesus when He appears. This is the delusion and curse of sin.

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.

{17} The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and from the temple, a loud voice was heard saying: "It – is – finished!"

When these words echo through Heaven, the angels, the elders, and the four living creatures will become jubilant. Finally, the Plan of Redemption is consummated. The knowledge of good and evil is complete. The behavior and nature of sin has been fully disclosed. A God of love has given mankind every possible opportunity for salvation. From now on, no one can intelligently question God's love and righteousness ever again. All that remains on Earth is to destroy the wicked and rescue the saints!

Rev. 16:18-19

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. And the great city was

{18} As the Father, the Son, the glorious angels and 144,000 servants of God appeared in the distant sky, there came huge flashes of lightning, rumblings, deafening peals of thunder, and a severe earthquake. No earthquake of this magnitude has ever occurred since man lived on Earth. The whole world was leveled. {19} The great city of Babylon split into three parts and all of the cities of the nations collapsed. Jesus remembered each deed committed by the leaders of Babylon and He poured out the wine of the fury of His wrath on them.

Jesus will divide the great empire of Babylon into three segments for punishment. First, Jesus will destroy Lucifer's throne and authority by casting him and his angels into the lake of fire.

(That is, Lucifer and his angels will lose the physical bodies given to them at the fifth trumpet. Jesus will strip them of their physical bodies and return them to the Abyss for 1,000 years.²⁸) Second, Jesus will throw Lucifer's government (that is, the employees and officials of his theocracy) into the lake of fire where they will perish. Finally, Jesus will destroy all of the citizens of the world, who wear the tattoo "666," with white-hot meteorites. Babylon is divided into the three parts so that each part can receive appropriate vengeance! The Lord will righteously and completely dispense justice.

{20} The earthquake was so powerful that every island disappeared and all the mountains crumbled. {21} Huge meteorites, weighing a hundred pounds each, fell upon the wicked. As King Jesus appeared in clouds of glory and the wicked cried out for the rocks to "fall on us and hide us from them that sit on the throne."²⁹ In spite of God's demonstration of power and justice, the wicked continued to curse Him because the plague was so terrible.

The Rules of Interpretation

Consider how the Rules of Interpretation (discussed in the Introduction of this book) are observed in this prophecy:

Rule One says an apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning point and ending point in time and the events within the prophecy occur in the order given. This prophecy easily conforms to Rule One because the chronological order of the seven bowls is self evident.

Rule Two says a fulfillment only occurs when all of the specifications are met, and this includes the order stated in the prophecy. Again, this rule will become self evident when the seven bowls are poured out on the wicked.

Rule Three says that apocalyptic language can be literal, analogous, or symbolic. To reach the intended meaning of a prophecy, the reader must consider (a) the context, (b) the use of parallel language in the Bible, and (c) if an element is thought to be symbolic, the Bible must interpret the symbol with a *relevant* text. The language used in this prophecy is a mixture of literal, analogous, and symbolic. The great river Euphrates is used in an analogous way and the term Babylon is symbolic. Babylon is defined with relevant Scripture in Revelation 17:5,15,18.

Rule Four is not used in this prophecy.

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. 16:20-21

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 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.

References

1. This claim is based on five underlying presuppositions. First, the Bible says the devil will not honor a particular religious body when He physically appears. The devil will not favor one religious system and alienate the others. To be consistent, he will oppose them all. (2 Thessalonians 2:4) In fact, when the devil establishes his one world church state (theocracy) he will eliminate all of the religions of the world including their holy days.

Second, the Bible says the core conflict during the Great Tribulation will be one of worship. (Revelation 13:15-18; 14:9-12) Lucifer will have to establish a day for worship that does not have anything in common with existing holy days. For this reason, I believe Friday, Saturday, and Sunday will become ordinary days.

Third, the Bible says that Jesus will open the sky and show the Ark of the Covenant to the inhabitants of Earth at the close of the seventh trumpet. (Revelation 11:19) I believe He will do this for several reasons. One reason is to show the world that literally, there is a *higher* law than any law on Earth! Another reason will be the exposure of the “worship commandment” which the wicked refused to obey. The worship commandment is the fourth commandment. (Exodus 20:8-11) It declares a weekly cycle of seven days beginning with the first day of Creation week. The fourth commandment also declares the seventh day of each week (Saturday) to be God’s holy day. When Jesus reveals the Ark of the Covenant, everyone on Earth will plainly see the defiance manifested toward God’s higher law. Thus, God’s lawful condemnation of the wicked will be clear and inescapable.

Fourth, the length of the Great Tribulation will be 1,335 days. The Two Witnesses will testify for 1,260 days and after lying in the street for 3.5 days, the 144,000 will be resurrected on the 1265th day of the Great Tribulation. This means the seven last plagues will be seventy days in length, perhaps with ten days allotted to each plague. God’s clocks are based on the number seven. (Seven days per week, seven months in the religious year, seven years in a week of years, and seven weeks of years in a Jubilee cycle and seventy weeks in one “Great Day.”) On the

other hand, man's numbering system is based on ten. We count in terms of tens, hundreds, and thousands of years, or ten years per decade, ten decades per century, and ten centuries in a millennium. Ancient civilizations in Egypt and China followed ten day weeks for centuries. After the French Revolution, France enacted a ten day week for a few years (1793-1805) trying to overthrow the influence and power of Catholicism.

Finally, if the devil does change the weekly cycle to ten days, people who worship on God's seventh day will be easily identified because God's Sabbath rest will land on different work days within a period of ten days. In fact, some ten day weeks will have two seventh day Sabbaths in them! Thus, Satan's establishment of a ten day week will physically flush out the remnant of the woman who keep the fourth commandment of God.

In summary, it seems possible that a ten day weekly cycle may be forthcoming at the time of the sixth trumpet because a new day for worship will not favor any religious system on Earth, it defies God's seventh day Sabbath, and clearly exposes those who keep it. Of course, time will tell.

2. Revelation 16:21; 19:19-21
3. 1 John 4:8,16
4. Exodus 22:1,3,4
5. Leviticus 4:27-29
6. Genesis 19:15
7. Exodus 21:23-25
8. Revelation 18:6 Note: A double portion of restitution is required when malicious intent is premeditated and carried out. Exodus 22:4-9
9. Romans 12:19
10. If a murderer is caught and executed for his crime, the demands of the law (life for life) have been met. However, restitution for the suffering caused by the crime (to the victim and the family of the victim) has not been met. Restitution must also be paid in full. God's law encompasses punitive (punishment) action as well as compensatory damages (restitution). If a murderer should confess

and repent of his sin before his execution, his death will satisfy the punitive requirement of God's law and the compensatory requirements for suffering will be transferred to the scapegoat (Lucifer) at the end of the 1,000 years. On the other hand, if a murderer does not repent of his sin and he dies a natural death, the murderer will suffer in the lake of fire at the end of the 1,000 years according to the amount of compensation required of him. (1 Corinthians 6:2,3) Then, he will die the second death because the penalty for his sin remains upon his own head.

11. Hebrews 10:30,31
12. Revelation 11:10
13. Hebrews 13:8
14. Genesis 4:10; Revelation 11:18; 15:4
15. Exodus 24:17; Deuteronomy 4:24; Psalm 97:3; Hebrews 12:29
16. Obadiah 1:15
17. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12
18. John 8:44
19. Revelation 9:13-15
20. Isaiah 41:25; Jeremiah 1:14; 46:2-6; Ezekiel 26:7
21. Job 37:22 (NIV)
22. Revelation 19:19-21
23. Matthew 26:64; Revelation 6:15-17
24. Revelation 17:16
25. 2 Kings 9:27; 23:28-30; 2 Chronicles 35:20-24
26. 1 Kings 18
27. Revelation 19:19-21
28. Revelation 20:1-3
29. Revelation 6:14-17