

**SEVEN VIALS POURED OUT  
REVELATION 16:1-21**

Well let's turn, please, in our Bibles to the book of Revelation, chapter 16. We're going to read the entire chapter together because God willing, we're going to get through the entire chapter today. Follow along, then, as I read Revelation 16, verses 1 to 21.

“<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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.

“<sup>3</sup> 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.

“<sup>4</sup> And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. <sup>7</sup> And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

“<sup>8</sup> And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. <sup>9</sup> 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.

“<sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

“<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. <sup>16</sup> And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

“<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. <sup>21</sup> 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.”

Now as we have studied this fifth parallel section in the book of Revelation, we have seen that the theme of this section is God’s anger against the willfully defiant. This fifth parallel section, just like each of these parallel sections, traces out God’s dealings with people all during this age we are currently living in; that is, the age between the first and the second coming of Christ. This anger and wrath of God against willfully defiant people in this age is symbolized by the pouring out of the seven vials full of wrath upon them.

As we have studied this fifth parallel section in chapters 15 and 16, we have seen that it is divided into three parts. We have seen the prologue to the seven vials in chapter 15, verses 1 to 4. We have seen the presentation of the seven vials in chapter 15 and verses 5 to 8. Today, we want to look at the pouring out of the seven vials in chapter 16, verses 1 to 21.

As we have said, there are remarkable parallels between the Exodus plagues brought on Egypt by Moses and the seven trumpets of judgment in Revelation chapter 8 through 11, and the seven vials of judgment in Revelation chapter 16. The Exodus judgments on Egypt are a foreshadow and an indicator of the kinds of judgment that will be brought upon the wicked in this age, whether they are partially expressed in the warning of the trumpets, or whether they are fully expressed in the wrath of the vials.

Now both the trumpet judgments and the vials of wrath present the plagues in the same order. Both present the plagues as first striking the earth, then the sea, then the inland waters, then the sun, then the realm of the wicked is stricken with darkness, then on the Euphrates River, then on the whole world in final judgment. The tremendous similarity of the trumpets and the bowls is a result of both of them being based on the Exodus plagues.

But the contrast between the trumpet and the vial judgments is very clear as well. The trumpet judgments are partial and limited in their effect, while the vial judgments are more complete and total in their effect. And the reason for this is because the trumpet judgments were meant to call men to repentance, but the vial judgments are meant to bring God’s wrath to bear upon them, to their final destruction, because they refused to repent. Since the trumpet warnings were ignored, the vial judgments are poured out upon their idolatry, their refusal to repent, and their persecution of the saints.

Both the trumpet judgments and the vial judgments are God’s answer to the prayers of the saints for justice that were offered back in Revelation chapter 6, verses 9 to 11, when the souls under the altar said, Lord, how long before you bring vengeance upon those who martyred us on the earth? And of course, in chapter 8, verses 3 to 5, the prayers of the saints for vengeance were

offered on the altar. And you recall the angel at that point sent forth lightnings and thunders of God's judgment, which then began the trumpet judgments.

So when God says "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," God is not kidding around. He obtains vengeance, not only for Himself and for the offenses that are done to Him, but He also obtains vengeance for His saints and the offenses and the injustices that are perpetrated against *them*. And these trumpet judgments, and now these vial judgments, are what God's vengeance looks like in this life, in this world, on this side of the day of judgment.

Now it is clear that these plagues are directed against unbelieving humanity, and are not directed at believers at all. We see the trumpet judgments were not to be poured out on those that had the seal of God in their foreheads, and in the same way, the vial judgments now are specifically said to be poured out on those that have the mark of the beast and who worship his image.

So although believers may experience some sufferings as an indirect result of these judgments on the wicked, those sufferings will not harm them, and will all be worked together for their good by God. The very judgment that is meant to destroy the wicked will wind up sanctifying the believer, or promoting that believer to heaven, but he will never be harmed by the judgments that fall on the wicked.

Now these vial judgments in chapter 16 can be broken down into two groups. In the first five vials that are poured out on the earth, we have plagues that will occur over and over again, all throughout this age between the first and the second coming of Christ. The first five vials are not onetime events; rather, they each represent categories of events that repeatedly occur as judgments on the wicked, all throughout this age.

But the last two vial judgments represent judgments that will occur at the end of this age, when the Antichrist appears and the united nations of the world make their final assault upon the church to eradicate it from the face of the earth, at which time Jesus returns in power and glory to deliver His church from Antichrist and his transnational coalition.

Now we saw this same pattern with the seals, where the first five seals represented categories of behavior that the wicked would carry out throughout this age, over and over again. And then the sixth seal represented the judgment of God that would occur at the end of the age. In the same way, these first five vials talk about things that will occur all throughout the age, and the last two talk about what's going to occur at the end of the age.

So these first five vial judgments occur in every century, in every generation, all around the world. The only chronological aspect of these vial judgments is confined to the last two of them, the sixth and the seventh, which speak of the activity of Antichrist and the final judgment.

Now we would expect that at the end of each of these parallel sections, we would be brought to the end of the age and we would be brought to the second coming of Christ. And that of course

is exactly what we see once again in this fifth parallel section—we are brought to the second coming of Christ. So this is the fifth time in this book that we have journeyed through this age to the second coming of Christ.

Well that brings us then to our passage today, which we want to consider together. In the first place then this morning, let us consider together the wrath of God poured out throughout this age. Now the wrath of God poured out throughout this age is in verses 1 through 11, which as I said, encompasses the first five vial judgments.

Notice if you will verse 1 of chapter 16. It says, “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.” Seven of course is the number that symbolizes completeness, and these seven angels with their seven vials of wrath represent the concept that God will completely judge the wicked, and He will be complete *in* the judgment that He brings upon them in this age. God will not fail to bring retribution against each of the wicked, and He will not fail to bring retribution upon them for all of their deeds. Not one of them will escape His wrath.

So this loud voice from the temple clearly is God’s, because at this point in John’s vision, nobody else is in the temple. Remember how the smoke filled the temple back in chapter 15, and no person could be in the temple with God while He was expressing the glory of His wrath and His vengeance and His justice? But now out of the temple comes a voice, so it has to be the voice of God. God Himself personally commands the angels to commence the execution of His wrath upon the wicked. It says in Isaiah chapter 66 and in verse 6, “...A voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies.” And so this is exactly what we have, is a voice coming out of the temple rendering recompense to His enemies.

Now this concept of God’s wrath being poured out is used frequently in the Old Testament. It is used to indicate God’s judgment against Israel for breaking her covenant, or else it is used to indicate God’s judgment against the persecutors of the people of God.

Listen to the language of pouring out in Psalm 69 and verse 24. It says, “Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.” In Psalm 79 and verse 6, it says, “Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.” In Jeremiah chapter 7 and in verse 20, it says, “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.” In Jeremiah 10:25 it says: “Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him and have made his habitation desolate.” And then finally, Ezekiel 7 and verse 8: “Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations.”

So we see that when this language of pouring out is used, it is the final and full expression of the irreversible wrath of God upon those who willfully defy Him. Trumpets sound warnings; vials simply pour out wrath. What God threatened then in the Old Testament, He accomplished then, and what He threatens now in this age, He will also accomplish as well.

The fact that God commanded in John's own day that these vials be poured out makes it certain that these vial judgments are among those things that must shortly come to pass, as we are told in Revelation 1 and verse 1, and that these vial judgments began to be poured out in the first century, and they have been being poured out ever since, in every subsequent century. And so verse 1 tells us the beginning of the pouring out of the indignation and the wrath of God and His fury upon the wicked.

Now notice then first of all, the first vial of wrath in verse 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"—notice—"the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." How long has the mark of the beast been going on, and the worship of the image of the beast been going on? Ever since the first century. So how long has this first vial been being poured out? Ever since the first century.

Now as we said, these images set before us are symbolic. But the symbol does convey a physical reality, and these symbols that are described in these seven vials each contain indications of what that physical reality actually is.

These first four vials of wrath involve God using nature as an instrument of His judgment upon wicked men. It talks about the earth, and the sea, and the inland waters, and the sun. Nature is the agent of the wrath of God, and God, as it were, arms creation with weapons in order to use it to punish His enemies.

Now this first vial is poured out on the earth, with the result that ugly and painful sores broke out upon men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. These unsaved men who worship humanistic civil authority as their god are stricken with loathsome and disgusting sores on their bodies as a result of their willful defiance of God.

This would encompass every kind of disease that strikes ungodly people as a result of their ungodly behavior. Sinful lifestyles are exceedingly unhealthy lifestyles, and bring with them diseases and sicknesses and injuries that those who live according to the law of God do not experience.

Dementia and cirrhosis of the liver as the result of drunkenness; sexually transmitted diseases; the negative health effects of drug addiction—these are just a few examples of destructive diseases that God brings upon those who live in willful defiance of His laws. People ask if AIDS is an expression of the anger of God against sexual immorality, and the answer is that it

absolutely is. It is an expression of this first vial of His wrath that He has poured upon those who have the mark of the beast because of their willful defiance of God.

Now on occasion, does a totally innocent person get AIDS, for example, through a needle stick or something similar when they're giving someone health care? Certainly that happens. But as I said, those things are not designed for their injury, but rather, will work together for their good if they are a believer.

While it is true that believers do get ordinary diseases, like cancer and various things that are universally distributed among the population, and while they do die from them, these diseases are not an act of God's judgment upon them; rather, they are means of deliverance for them, to deliver them out of this present evil and to deliver them into the blessed presence of God. Romans chapter 8 and verse 28 says, We know that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, and to those who are the called according to His purpose.

So there are unique diseases that are poured out upon the wicked because of their wicked, sinful lifestyle choices, and these are the vials of God's wrath that fall upon them. There are ordinary diseases that are evenly distributed throughout the population, which Christians themselves get. These are meant by God, not for their destruction, but for their sanctification and ultimately for their deliverance into heaven, and thus those things never harm them. But for the wicked, their diseases are meant as acts of judgment upon them, to bring an end their wickedness, and to usher them into hell.

And so every destructive and fatal disease that is brought to bear upon the wicked by God is a result of God's wrath being poured out upon them in this first vial. This first vial is like the judgment of Exodus chapter 9, verses 8 to 11, in which boils broke out upon all the Egyptians for their willful defiance of God, but they did not fall upon the Jewish people.

You recall in Acts chapter 12, verses 20 to 23, when Herod gave his speech and the people said, It's the voice of a god! It says the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. This is an example of what the pouring of this first vial would look like, in terms of being a means of God's judgment on the physical health and bodies of men.

That brings us then to the second vial of wrath, and that is spoken of in verse 3. It says, "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." This second vial of wrath is like the plague of Exodus 7, verses 17 to 21, in which the Nile River was turned into blood, and you recall all the fish that were within it died.

Here the judgment is much more severe than that of the second trumpet judgment. The second trumpet judgment was only partial, in which only a third of the ocean was turned into blood, and

only a third of the sea creatures died. But here, the whole ocean becomes blood like that of a dead man, and every single last creature in the sea dies.

Now the picture, the symbolism, that is conveyed here is horrible and shocking—an ocean of coagulated blood in which everything is dead. Here is represented every kind of maritime disaster through which men are killed and cast into hell by God. Sea battles, hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons, tidal waves, and shipwrecks have killed countless millions as a result of God’s wrath against them.

You recall how the Red Sea swallowed up Pharaoh and his army, and the seas of the world have been instruments of God’s judgment on the wicked in swallowing them up in a similar fashion countless times since, in order to kill them and cast them into hell. And the seas of the world are saturated with the blood of the millions and millions and millions who have died upon it under the wrath of God, in His providence and His judgment against their wickedness.

That brings us then to the third vial of wrath, and that is contained in verse 4 to 7. Notice it says, “<sup>4</sup> And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. <sup>7</sup> And I heard another [angel] out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”

Now this plague, like the previous one, is like the plague of Exodus 7, verses 17 to 21, when Moses turned the Nile River into blood. However, instead of it affecting the ocean, like in the second vial, here this third vial affects all the inland waters. And once again, we have a very severe intensification of the third trumpet judgment that also struck the inland waters. In the third trumpet, only a third part of the inland waters were affected, and they were made bitter with wormwood. But here in this third vial judgment, all of the springs and rivers are turned to blood.

Now inland waters are critical to human life. They are the source of our fresh drinking water, without which we would quickly die. They are the source of our food, because without rain or irrigation, food production ends and famine begins. The inland waters are the means to achieve a thousand tasks in society, from cleaning to industrial production, without which economic collapse is absolutely certain. Water pollution, waterborne diseases, droughts, tornadoes, floods, and many other similar events are instruments in the hand of God to bring His judgments on the wicked and to cast them into hell.

Now in verse 5, notice it says, “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.” Now this angel of the waters is apparently an angel God has appointed to administer all of His inland waters on the earth, just like He appointed these seven angels to administer His wrath. We saw back in chapter 7 that there were four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth. So God doesn’t directly run the world Himself; He appoints angels to

manage various aspects of His creation and to carry out various activities that He has ordained to be accomplished.

And so this angel in verse 5—this angel of the waters—is apparently an angel God has appointed to administer all the inland waters, just like He appointed these seven angels to administer His wrath. The angel of the waters sees this judgment on the waters that he is administering as an excellent example of the punishment fitting the crime. He speaks of God the eternal judge, in verse 5, as being altogether righteous and just and proportionate in the punishment He imposes on the wicked for their persecution and their martyrdom of the saints. He says, Lord, you are righteous for judging these people in this fashion.

In verse 6, it says, “For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.” In other words, the same injury they have brought upon the saints is the very injury that will be brought upon them. We see ISIS going around slaughtering innocent people, and then they themselves become slaughtered as well. They have killed, and therefore, they must *be* killed and must be cast into hell. It is the punishment they have made themselves worthy of by their evil deeds.

And so, this has been going on through the century, where the persecutors and the murderers of the people of God have themselves wound up being persecuted and murdered, because they made themselves worthy of reaping what they have sown.

In verse 7, we see another angel. It says in verse 7, “And I heard *another*”—notice—“out of the altar say...” Now it doesn’t say who this “another” is, but the implication is that it’s another angel. We have the angel of the waters and we have the angel of the altar. Now this angel of the altar is mentioned in Revelation chapter 8, verses 3 to 5, and he’s also mentioned in Revelation chapter 14 and verse 18. This angel of the altar now concurs with the angel of the waters, and he also justifies God in His judgments that God exercises upon the wicked.

The point that’s being made with the unified voice of these two angels is that all of the people in heaven, as we saw in chapter 15 and verses 2 through 4, and all of the angels in heaven, concur that God’s justice and God’s anger and God’s wrath that He executes against the willfully defiant is totally appropriate, and that it is entirely righteous and just. So when those in heaven, be they glorified saints or be they angels, see God pouring out His wrath upon the earth—all they have for that activity is approval, agreement, and applause.

Well that brings us then to the fourth vial of wrath, and that is contained in verse 8. It says, “<sup>8</sup> And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. <sup>9</sup> 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.”

Now just like with the trumpet judgments, we have seen these first four vial judgments strike the earth, strike the seas, strike the inland waters, and now striking the stellar heavens. In the fourth



trumpet judgment, the sun was partially darkened, but here in the fourth vial judgment, the power of the sun is expanded and increased in order to smite the wicked of the earth, so as to scorch them and burn them.

Now this intensification of the sun may be a reference to solar flares, or it may be a reference to atmospheric conditions on the earth that cause temperatures to soar into such high levels that men die from heat stroke, from dehydration, and from sunstroke. The tremendous rise in melanoma skin cancers in the last century could very well be an aspect of this judgment.

The pouring out of God's wrath in the Old Testament is often figuratively expressed as being accompanied by fire. For example, in Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 20, it says, "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." So you see God pouring out His fire upon the natural creation.

In Ezekiel 22, verses 21 through 22, God says: "<sup>21</sup> Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. <sup>22</sup> As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you."

So it may be that the sun, rather than literally bringing high temperatures, is a symbolic reference to the melting power of God's wrath when He pours it out upon the wicked. Lending evidence to that, it says of the saints in Revelation 7:16, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

You know, ever since the fall of man, the sun has not been our friend. That's why people in the Middle East completely cover their bodies, because they can't bear the sun's rays striking and harming their flesh and their skin.

So even in the face of this wrath, this heat of God's wrath—whether literal or judicial, as the case may be—this heat of God's wrath falling upon men on the earth and scorching them does not bring them to repentance. In verse 9 it says that they "blasphemed the name of God," and "they repented not to give him glory."

And so when the wicked receive punishment for their sin, rather than repenting and justifying God in bringing the punishments, they slander God as being evil for bringing pain into their lives. They will not give Him glory by admitting that they are evil and that God is righteous in bringing these judgments upon them. Instead, they justify themselves and accuse God of evil for bringing this pain into their lives. It's kind of like when your little child acts up, right? So you righteously take them and spank them for the sin they've done, and in response the child says, I hate you!

And that's exactly what the people of the earth are doing towards God. They have committed great wickedness; He brings punishment upon them, and instead of humbling down and saying, I'm sorry, I've done wrong, please forgive me, they just shake their fist in the face of God and rebel and defy Him even more and even further.

Well that brings us then to the fifth vial of God's wrath, and this is in verses 10 and 11. Notice it says, "<sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Now "the seat of the beast" is the throne of the beast, and of course we have seen that the beast represents anti-Christian civil government. In John's day, that was Rome. In our day, it's America—our civil government is the beast. And every nation has a civil government over it, and they are all the beast.

The point in this fifth vial of wrath is that anti-Christian governments are not allowed by God to rule in ease and in comfort. God brings darkness and pain and epidemics upon wicked rulers and upon the people who support them. The throne of civil government suffers internal strife, coups, seditions, the assassination of their leaders, economic depressions, wars, famines, rebellions, and endless problems in the administration of their rule—all of these things are the judgments of God upon the beast out of the sea.

All of this causes great emotional and personal anguish to wicked rulers and their people, so they, as it were, are constantly chewing their tongues in pain over the fact that they can't get their agenda achieved. Because of God's wrath, kingdoms are in turmoil, they experience civil war, and strife, and division, and lawlessness, and disrespect for authority. And all of this causes men to be filled with fear and anxiety and anger. Great health epidemics break out, due to the judgments of the first vial, and healthcare systems are overwhelmed and people die from lack of medical attention, as it says in verse 11, because of their pains and their sores.

Now the result, verse 11 says, is that these willfully defiant people do not repent, but they blaspheme God even more, and dig themselves into ever deeper holes of ever greater wrath from God as a result of their ever-increasing blasphemy and rebellion. It says in verse 11, "and [they] blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

So we see that the god of civil government is a poor god at best, and yet how many worship at the altar of human government and human authority, even though it is constantly wracked with the judgments of God upon it, in all of the failings that it has and all the destructive effects that it brings upon its people that it rules.

Well these first five plagues occur throughout this age, and both nature and human government become instruments of God to bring His wrath to bear against defiant humanity, and there is

nowhere anybody can go to escape either of them. Everyone is subject to God's wrath administered through nature, and everyone is subject to God's wrath administered through corrupt, evil, wicked civil governments. This is what those who worship the beast experience as the wrath of God upon them.

Having then seen the wrath of God that is expressed throughout this age in these first five vials, in the second place this morning, let us consider together the wrath of God at the end of the age. We've seen the wrath of God throughout this age, as our first major point; our second major point—the wrath of God at the end of this age.

Now the wrath of God at the end of this age is contained in verses 12 to 21, the remainder of the chapter, and it encompasses these last two vial judgments—the sixth and the seventh. These next two vials of wrath, then, bring us to the end of this age. The judgments of God upon the Antichrist and his transnational coalition of his one-world government, in which he gathers all the nations together to try to eradicate the church, is the subject of these last two judgments.

Notice then, first of all, the sixth vial is poured out. It says in verse 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.”

This river Euphrates was introduced to us in the trumpet judgments in Revelation chapter 9 and verse 14, and there we saw that the river Euphrates symbolized the coming of war, because from across that river, the enemies of the people of God came in order to assault them and to attempt to conquer them. Both Assyria and also Babylon came across the Euphrates to execute God's judgment and God's wrath upon Israel when the northern kingdom was taken away by Assyria and the southern kingdom was taken away by Babylon. So this river symbolizes war, and the kings of the East represent the enemies of the people of God coming to wage war against them.

Notice verse 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.” Now this gathering of the nations together to make war against the people of God is provoked by this unholy trinity made up of Satan, the dragon; anti-Christian government, the beast; and anti-Christian religion, the false prophet, also known as the beast out of the earth, in Revelation 13 and verse 11.

So here in verse 13 we have come to the time when Satan is loosed, and he goes out to deceive the nations and to bring them together into a unified, one-world effort, to destroy the Christian church off the face of the earth. Antichrist appears for his little season, for his three and a half days. And so what we have in verses 12 and 13 and following is the same time period that is described in Revelation 11, verses 7 to 10, and is described in Revelation 20 and verses 7 to 9.

You remember in Revelation chapter 20, verses 7 to 9, it says, “<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, <sup>8</sup> and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the

number of whom is as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” That’s exactly what we’re dealing with in this sixth and seventh vial judgment.

It says back in chapter 11 and verse 7: “And when they shall have finished their testimony,”—that’s the end of the thousand years, figuratively speaking, the church age—“the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations”—there’s the transnational coalition—“shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. <sup>10</sup> And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. <sup>11</sup> And after three days and an half”—we have the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection, and the rapture occurs, and the world is destroyed, and the final judgment is brought.

Now back in chapter 16 and in verse 13, it says, “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.” These unclean spirits are in fact demons. Verse 14 says “they are the spirits of devils.” Now Jesus frequently referred to demons as unclean spirits in the gospels. So this term “unclean spirits” is used of demons in Matthew 12:43 and in several other passages.

And these demons, or these unclean spirits, are metaphorically said to be like frogs. Frogs, of course, were unclean animals, and therefore an apt metaphor for demons, just as snakes are unclean animals and a metaphor for Satan, and represent him. And you recall that Pharaoh’s magicians brought forth both serpents and frogs as a result of their magical incantations before Pharaoh.

So through the persuasive power of demonic influence, the Antichrist, aided by the false prophet, both of whom are under the direction of Satan the dragon, will wind up persuading the whole world to unite together to wage war on the people of God in order to destroy them off the face of the earth.

Now when this transnational coalition gathers together, and as a result of the persuasive power of the Antichrist and the false prophet, because of the demonic supernatural abilities that they are given to bring all the nations together—that is the time when you know the second coming of Christ is imminent. Notice verse 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.”

So it says in verse 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.” When they’re gathered together to the battle, then you can say that Jesus can

come back at any moment. But until that happens, you can't ever say that Jesus will come back at any moment.

In other words, presently, the second coming of Christ is not imminent. People say, Oh, He could come any day. No, He can't. And the reason why He can't is because Antichrist hasn't arisen, and the transnational coalition of nations hasn't been gathered together in order to do war against the church to eradicate it from the face of the earth. When you see *that* happening, that's when you see the tree budding as Matthew 24 tells us, and then you know the end is near. That's when the woman starts to have her birth pangs, and you know that the delivery is near.

So in verse 15, Jesus says, I come as a thief. In other words, My coming will be a surprise to the wicked. *You'll* know about it. That day will not take *you* unawares, it says in First Thessalonians chapter 5, but it will take the Antichrist and his transnational coalition unawares. He says, “<sup>15</sup> Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.” Now this is talking about the robe of righteousness that Christ has given to us.

When Christ returns, we don't want to be found naked; that is, without the robe of Christ's righteousness on us as a result of our repentance and faith in Jesus. If all we've got is the filthy rags of our own righteousness, then we have no righteousness at all with which to dwell in the presence of God, and to be properly clothed in for the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Now notice verse 16: “And he”—that is, Antichrist—“gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” That's the only place in the Bible where the term Armageddon appears, and it literally means “the mountain of Megiddo.” Now Megiddo was a large plain, many miles wide and long, in northern Israel. It was a place where Israel experienced tremendous deliverance by God from her enemies during the days of the Judges.

In Judges chapter 4 and in Judges chapter 5, we have the historical record of Deborah and Barak fighting against Sisera and defeating the Canaanites that were oppressing Israel. And what's interesting is that in Judges chapter 5 and in verse 20, as they sing their song of triumph after Sisera has had the nail driven through his head—you remember the story—it is said that the heavens fought on behalf of the people of God. And that is exactly what we see in this Armageddon, this mountain of Megiddo: God is going to fight on behalf of His people and deliver them from a far superior enemy.

Now as I said, this term Armageddon means “the mountain of Megiddo,” and Megiddo is a plain. There is no mountain there. So this is a metaphorical term that draws an allusion to God fighting on behalf of His people when they were delivered in Judges chapter 4 from their superior enemy. So Armageddon is not a particular place, because there is no mountain of Megiddo. Such a geographical feature doesn't exist. In the Bible, mountains are symbols of strength. People would see God as their mountain, as the place that they could flee and find refuge and protection.

So Armageddon is just a symbolic term of the time and the place where the strength of the Lord is revealed to deliver His people from their enemies, for He is their mountain of deliverance. Armageddon is wherever in the world the strength of the Lord is revealed in the deliverance of His people in the final battle against Antichrist and his transnational, one-world coalition of governments that come together to wipe out the church. It's not necessarily going to happen in Northern Israel.

Well that brings us to the seventh vial. Verse 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. <sup>21</sup> 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."

Now there's a very interesting phrase in verse 17, and that's the phrase, "It is done." And it's the same phrase Jesus uttered on the cross when He said, "It is finished." In other words, just as Jesus finished the redemption of the elect, God is finishing and completing His program and purpose for this world. It is done. The end of the world and the completion of God's program and purpose has been achieved.

Now in verse 18 and in verses 20 to 21, we have a description of the cataclysmic destruction of the created world at the hand of God. This cataclysmic destruction of the world at the end by the hand of God is described in Revelation chapter 6, verses 12 to 14, under the sixth seal. And you remember there it says, when he opened the sixth seal, "<sup>12</sup> ... lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; <sup>13</sup> and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." So we have the description of this same event.

It's also described in Revelation chapter 11 in verse 13, when it says, "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

Here in Revelation 16, we see this tremendous destruction described as voices and thunderings and lightnings and a great earthquake; and the city's divided into three parts, "and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath, and there fell upon men great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great." So these three passages—Revelation chapter 6, Revelation

chapter 11, and here in Revelation chapters 16—are all describing the same event at the end of the age.

Now this hail that falls, it says, is about the weight of a talent—a talent is somewhere between 40 and 100 pounds. It's really, really heavy. And of course, this a metaphorical description. I mean, you know the destruction that an ordinary hailstorm causes. Like in Texas, they have hailstones the size of a golf ball, and it just flattens crops and destroys and wrecks everything. I went to purchase an airplane once that had flown through a hailstorm, and they had to completely re-skin the airplane, because the wings were just beaten to pieces by these hailstones that this plane had flown through. Fortunately, the person was able to land safely, but they had to completely re-skin the airplane, due to its journey through the hailstorm. And so if ordinary hail causes that kind of damage, imagine the damage of 40 pound hailstones! So what is being said here is that total destruction is going to occur.

What we have in verse 18 and verses 20 to 21 is described in Isaiah chapter 28, verses 15 to 17. It says: “Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: <sup>16</sup> therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. <sup>17</sup> Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.” In other words, as strong as this coalition of wickedness is, God is going to just flatten it with the hail of His judgment, and His own Son is going to prevail.

In Haggai chapter 2, and in verses 6 and 7, it says, “<sup>6</sup> For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; <sup>7</sup> and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.” And so you can see how the language in Revelation 16 is drawn directly out of these passages in Isaiah 28 and in Haggai 2.

Now notice if you will Revelation 16 and verse 19. It says, “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.”

Now when it speaks of Babylon being divided into three parts, you remember three is the number of perfection and completion and finality. And so when the city is divided into the three parts, it's saying that there is complete, perfect, and final destruction of Babylon, which represents anti-Christian society, as we have seen, and thus the entire kingdom of Satan is completely and perfectly and finally destroyed at the second coming of Jesus.

So once again, we're brought to the second coming of Christ at the end of age for the fifth time in this book, thus demonstrating the cyclic nature of the book of Revelation. It is not a linear chronology, as the Futurists would say, as the Dispensationalists would say, but rather, it's a

cyclic, traveling over and over again that journey from the first to the second coming of Christ, each journey emphasizing a different theme. Here the theme that is being represented is the wrath of God against the willfully defiant. And so what we see is that there comes a point in time where, when people don't listen to the warnings of God's trumpet judgments, God pours out final destruction upon them.

And however you want to interpret these first five vials, what is clear from all of them is that God's wrath is terrible, it is conclusive, it is final, and no one can escape it, no matter where they go or what they look to for refuge. So, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God—that is the message of Revelation chapter 16.

And we would do well to flee from the wrath to come, lest it fall on us, by instead of defying God and blaspheming God and rebelling against God, we rather humble ourselves before God, we confess our sins, and we ask God for mercy through Jesus Christ to be shown to us, and forgiveness to be given to us, and a robe of righteousness to be bestowed upon us, so when He comes, He will look upon us and say, There is one of mine.

And so what we have here is as close to hell on earth as there will ever be in these vial judgments that are poured out on the earth before the second coming. May God cause us to flee from the wrath to come by fleeing to Christ and finding in Him forgiveness, shelter, and protection. Shall we pray together.

Father, we thank you so much for these warnings of how you work in this age and what you will do at the end of the age to all the enemies of the people of God. They will gather themselves together against you, and you will crush them.

Thank you, Father, for these wonderful lessons of how spiritual warfare is carried out in this age and how you are defeating and will defeat all of your and our enemies. Thank you that Jesus has crushed, continues to crush, and will eternally crush the head of the serpent under His heel, in triumph and victory. And in that triumph and victory, we find ours.

Father, thank you for Jesus. We trust in Him as a shelter from the time of storm as a protection from the wrath of God and as the supplier of our righteousness and our robe, so that we might stand before God without shame, without fear, holy and unblemished and undefiled in His presence. Thank you for Jesus. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.