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Revelation 16:1-12

We come now to the final Tribulation judgments, which are the bowl judgments. There are eight observations we want to make before we examine them:

Observation #1 - The bowl judgments are the third series of judgments. **First**, there were the seal judgments (6:1ff). **Second** were the trumpet judgments (8:7ff). **Third** there are the bowl judgments.

Observation #2 - The bowl judgments are the actual contents of the seventh trumpet judgments (11:15).

Observation #3 - The bowl judgments are the last Tribulation judgments of God. 15:1

Observation #4 - The bowl judgments are the wrath of God. 15:1; **16:1**
These judgments clearly inform us what God's wrath is like.

Observation #5 - The bowl judgments are judgments of God against those who live on the earth. **16:1c**

Observation #6 - The bowl judgments are judgments that begin as a result of a direct command from God. **16:1d**

Observation #7 - The bowl judgments will be poured out one right after another with no time lapse in between. Some could be simultaneous.

Observation #8 - The bowl judgments are poured out on unbelieving, unrepentant people.
16:2b, 6, 11

BOWL JUDGMENT #1 – The judgment of boils. **16:2a**

Bowl judgment #1 is a very painful boil on all who receive the mark of the beast. This is the same word used in the Greek Septuagint in the plague against the Egyptians (Exodus 9:8-12). These boils or sores are described as being “loathsome” and “malignant.”

The word “sore” is a Greek word that describes an ulcer or wound. The word “loathsome” refers to that which is bad or harmful, which makes one very ill. The word “malignant” is one that means this is very physically painful. According to **verses 10-11**, these sores do not disappear.

It is so interesting and ironic that the one thing these people thought could save them - receive the mark of the beast (13:16-17), is actually the one thing that will condemn them.

BOWL JUDGMENT #2 – The judgment against the sea. **16:3**

There are predictions in Scripture that predict a major future judgment of God against the earth (Isaiah 24:1, 3-4, 6, 11). There are times we lost track of how dependent on God we really are. We get bills from an electric company, gas company, water company, but what most neglect to realize is that the light, the gas, the water all come from God.

The second bowl judgment is a terrible judgment against the sea. God causes the sea to become blood just as He did in Exodus (Ex. 7:20-25). This type of judgment has already occurred in Revelation 8:8 and in that judgment one third of the ocean water was affected. We may assume that the remaining ocean water is affected by this judgment and the end result is death.

Every living being connected to the sea dies in this judgment. Billions of sea creatures will die and float to the surface which will bring about terrible stench and disease.

BOWL JUDGMENT #3 – The judgment against fresh water. **16:4-7**

Apparently there is an angel in charge of “fresh water.” This is God’s superintendent of the fresh water department. Angels are obviously involved in more things than we realize, and obviously one of those things is this judgment against fresh water. It is clearly revealed in Scripture that God, is the powerful God, who created springs and fresh water (Job 38:16).

What God is going to do is to turn the fresh water into blood. During this time, those who are faithful to God will be provided for by God. Just as in Moses’ day when God called fresh water to come out of a rock, so He will also provide water for His people (Psalm 107:33-35; Isaiah 30:25; 35:6-7; 41:18).

Verse 5 makes it clear that these judgments are coming from a Righteous and Holy God, which means this judgment is righteous and holy. There are three reasons why:

Reason #1 - Because God is the One who designed this judgment. **16:5c**

This is powerful. The judgments of the Tribulation are righteous and holy because they are God’s judgments; end of discussion. Whatever God does even in judgment is perfectly right. It doesn’t matter what the tragedy or calamity is; it is right because God does it. If a person doesn’t agree with what God is doing, it is not God who is wrong, it is the person.

Reason #2 - Because the people killed the saints and the prophets. **16:6a**

God has kept the records of what has happened to His people and it is only fitting and right that they drink blood.

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Reason #3 - Because the people deserve it. **16:6b**

What a God-rejecting humanity deserves is the wrath of God. What all don't deserve is the grace of God. God has permitted a God-mocking, Christ-rejecting world to drink His fresh water for years and years in pure grace. It is only right that He pours out His judgment on them for their persistent rejection.

According to **verse 7**, a heavenly praise acknowledgement takes place at the sacred altar of God. These Tribulation judgments are heavenly and holy and they are coming directly from the throne of God.

BOWL JUDGMENT #4 – The judgment of the scorching sun. **16:8-9**

We know from Revelation 8:12 that there has already been a reduction of light. But what this judgment does is bring about an intensification of heat. There are predictions in Scripture that God is going to burn up this world (i.e. Malachi 4:1; II Peter 3:12).

In this bowl judgment, God will use His sun to scorch men with ferocious and unbearable heat. This will be an intense burning and scorching that will come directly from the sun.

If we remember that the ocean has been turned to blood and the fresh water has also been turned to blood, this will be a horrible judgment. God will turn up the thermometer as a Tribulation judgment and there will be no water to quench the thirst. Shade trees will be gone because there will be no water to maintain leaves. God will turn the entire world into a burning hot desert. This will be very close to being a “hell on earth.”

There is an interesting promise that God makes to His faithful people from the nation Israel in Psalm 121:5-8 and we think it has great application to this moment in the Tribulation.

When God unleashes bowl judgment #4, there are two main reactions:

Reaction #1 - Humanity will blaspheme God. **16:9a**

The people on this earth will know this is a direct judgment of God and they will speak blasphemous things against Him.

Reaction #2 - Humanity will not repent. **16:9b**

These people will be covered with boils that are eating their flesh and they are baking in a hot sun and instead of crying out to God for mercy, they will not repent.

BOWL JUDGMENT #5 – The judgment of darkness. **16:10-11**

Tribulation darkness is clearly predicted in several passages (Isaiah 60:2; Joel 2:1-2, 31). It is specifically stated that this bowl judgment is aimed at “the throne of the beast” and the people who comprise his “kingdom.”

This judgment is aimed at the satanic Antichrist and all those affiliated with him.

- 1) All the people are smitten with painful boils.
- 2) All drinking water is gone.
- 3) These people are being scorched with intense heat.
- 4) All light goes out.

The people are literally in total darkness and in so much burning pain that they “gnaw their tongues.” This is a physical prelude to hell. Here is a literal picture of what people in hell experience forever and ever. They are in burning pain with no relief, in total darkness, and there is weeping and gnashing of tongues and teeth.

What we read in **verse 11** is staggering:

- 1) They blasphemed God.
- 2) They would not repent of their evil deeds.

The threat of ferocious judgment does not change the evil, hard heart of man. Most people when faced with the threat of burning in hell will not repent. William Newell used to say, “If men are not won by grace, they will never be won.”

BOWL JUDGMENT #6 – The judgment against the Euphrates. **16:12**

There is little room for doubt in that this is a literal prediction of what will happen to the literal Euphrates river.

In this judgment the Euphrates river is dried up, which is the eastern boundary of the land that God has promised to Israel (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7; Joshua 1:4). **The purpose of the drying up of this river is to open the door and make it easy for eastern political powers to come against Israel so Jesus Christ can destroy them. This is all a prelude to the battle of Har-Magedon (Rev. 16:16).** The prophet Isaiah predicted this very event (Isaiah 11:15-16).

The mention of the kings of the east would seem to suggest that there has been a uniting of eastern kings which, of course, were under the control of the Antichrist. These eastern kings would include nations such as China, Japan, and India. The reason the kings come from the east is not actually stated, but the drying up of the Euphrates sets the stage for it.

Revelation 16:13-21

It is predicted in Daniel that the Antichrist will hear of troubling rumors from the East which will disturb him (Dan. 11:44-45). One of those rumors will be the drying up of the Euphrates. Kings from the East will begin to move toward Jerusalem where the Antichrist is headquartered. We may assume that this could involve countries like China, Japan, India, Afghanistan.

One question that comes to mind is why are they moving? Let me give four reasons:

Reason #1 - Because of God's Divine Sovereignty in working out His prophetic program. 16:12, **15-16**

God clearly predicts in many passages that He will gather nations together to destroy them (Psalm 2:1-3; Joel 3:9-21; Zechariah 14:1-3). This act of drying up the Euphrates is simply part of the sovereign plan of God in fulfilling His prophecy. God is going to bring these nations into a specific spot so He can destroy them and this is part of His sovereign plan to get them there.

Reason #2 - Because of satanic instigation. **16:13-14**

Notice the work of the satanic trinity - dragon, beast, false prophet. Satan is using demonic power to bring all nations to the valley of Megiddo to fight against God and Jesus Christ. The Antichrist is ruling the world and Satan and his forces are confined to this earth and demons will be involved in causing people to move against Israel.

We may notice how he lures people, through miracles (**Rev. 16:14**) and signs. Unclean demons can do the miraculous.

Verse 15 is clear to point out that Jesus Christ will come as a thief. Paul alluded to this very moment in I Thess. 5:2, proving that the "Day of the Lord" is a day connected to the Tribulation. This is not a day for Grace Age Christians (I Thess. 5:4, 9). What we are looking for as Christians is "the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ" at the Rapture (Titus 2:13).

I do not think it is any coincidence that according to **verse 15**, nudity and immorality will become more and more prevalent as we near the Tribulation time, because in the Tribulation it will be rampant.

Reason #3 - Because of individual, personal rebellion. **16:21**

Notice men blaspheme God and will not repent no matter what God does. This rebellious attitude will cause many to arrogantly move into a war against Almighty God.

Reason #4 - Because of personal survival.

It is highly probable that there will be things necessary to survival that will exist in the Promised Land that does not exist in other parts of the world. It is probable that people will learn that God is providing for a remnant of His people, and they will want the provisions God is giving to them.

They will be lacking food and water and they may make a move toward this area for personal survival.

Now **verse 16** is clear to point out that the actual place where these eastern armies come together is a place which in the Hebrew language is called “Har-Magedon” (Αρμαγεδων). This is the Mount of Megiddo area. There are two facts we want to observe:

(Fact #1) - What the name means in Hebrew.

We have a legitimate license to examine the meaning of the root words in Hebrew based on the fact of the language brought out in this verse. The Hebrew is comprised of two words:

- 1) Harmah which means destruction .
- 2) Gedon which means army .

Combined, the meaning of the Hebrew word means destruction or slaughter of an army.

(Fact #2) - Where the place is located.

The O.T. location is Megiddo. Megiddo is a proper noun used for both a city and valley. It was the place of some great O.T. battles. Dr. C. I. Scofield observes that this place was the place of Deborah’s victory (Judges 4:10-24); Gideon’s victory (Judges 6:33; cp. 7:1-25); Saul’s defeat (I Samuel 31:1 cp. 29:1) and it will be the place of the last great battle against God (C. I. Scofield, footnote on Judges 5:19).

Megiddo was located east of the Jordan River in the northeast portion of the Promised Land. The city Megiddo was located about 70 miles north of Jerusalem and was a “strongly fortified and elevated” city. The valley area is located about 50 miles north of Jerusalem. The valley is approximately 14 miles wide and 20 miles long. Napoleon called it “the most natural battlefield of the whole earth.”

This will become “the” central location of many armies during the Tribulation. This place is the very place that is picked and prophesied by God. Nations will come to this place and God will slaughter them. Kings of the “whole world” (**16:14**) will go down in this slaughter. In Zechariah 12:11-14, we get information about how this will affect Israel. What will ultimately happen at this moment is described in Revelation 19:17-21.

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BOWL JUDGMENT #7 – The final judgment of great cosmological destruction. **16:17-21**

The battle of Armageddon begins the finale of the wrath of God at the end of the Tribulation. We may observe from **verse 17** that this finale is announced at the Temple which is located at the Throne of God.

The seventh angel pours out his bowl upon the air and immediately a voice from heaven loudly says, “It is done.” Air is what people on earth breathe. These judgments will apparently do something to the air that people breathe.

According to **verse 18**, there will be major flashes of lightening, loud roaring thunder which will be at the most intense level. As we have observed, if we track the theme of lightning and thunder through Scripture, it is a sign of judgment.

Also according to **verse 18**, there will be an earthquake which will be the worst earthquake in the history of the world. Earthquakes typically do three things: 1) Destroy property; 2) Panic people; 3) Destroy life. This will be the worst to ever hit the world.

This earthquake will cause five results:

Result #1 - It will split Jerusalem into three parts. **16:19a**

In **Revelation 11:8** Jerusalem is called the great city. In Zechariah 14:4 it is predicted that there will be some major topographical changes to the city of Jerusalem and undoubtedly this earthquake will play a part in all of this.

Result #2 - This earthquake will bring down all of the major cities of the world. **16:19b**

At this point in the Tribulation, much that was on the earth will have already been demolished, but this earthquake will finish the job with the world cities. All of the major population areas will be destroyed - Paris, Hong Kong, Tokyo, London, New York, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit just to name a few.

Result #3 - This earthquake will destroy Babylon. **16:19c**

The specifics of this judgment are about to be revealed. What is stated here is that God remembers all of the false religion, idolatry, and immorality that started here, and He will pour out His full and final wrath and give her the cup of the wine of “His fierce wrath.”

Result #4 - This earthquake will destroy every island and mountain. **16:20**

The difference between what is revealed here and what is revealed in Revelation 6:14 is this - Revelation 6:14 features mountain and island relocation and Revelation 16:20 features mountain and island annihilation.

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Result #5 - This earthquake will be followed by huge hailstones. **16:21**

In the O.T., hail is part of God's arsenal of weaponry used for His wrath purposes (Joshua 10:11; Job 38:22-23; Isaiah 28:17; Ezekiel 38:22; Haggai 2:17).

At this point in the Tribulation, huge hailstones weighing about 100 pounds each will fall out of heaven. The Greek literally reads that the hailstone is the "weight of a talent" (ταλαντιαα) which weighs somewhere between 108-130 pounds.

We know that when a man freefalls as a skydiver, he can reach a speed of 200 miles per hour. If one were to take a 16 pound bowling ball and drop it from a 16-18 foot overpass, it will go through a car windshield or even the top of a car and can kill a driver. These will be one hundred pound hail stones falling from heaven through our present gravitational force at close to 200 miles an hour. Whatever these hailstones hit they will destroy.

We must remember that the purpose of the Tribulation is not one of grace and mercy, but wrath. These hailstones are wrath stones and they are designed to destroy and kill.

But carefully notice **verse 21**, men will not repent, but will continue to blaspheme God.