

Revelation Chapter 16

1) The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath (16:1-20:10)

- a) **1** Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." **2** So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. **3** The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. **4** The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. **5** And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. **6** For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!" **7** And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!" **8** The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. **9** They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. **10** The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish **11** and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds. **12** The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. **13** And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. **14** For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. **15** ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") **16** And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. **17** The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" **18** And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. **19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. **21** And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell

from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

- b) a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” (16:1)
 - i) Rev. 15:5 - the sanctuary of the tent of witness
 - ii) Rev. 15:8 - the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary
 - (1) Since the temple (tent of witness) was filled with smoke so that no one could enter, the command may have come directly from God.
 - iii) As with the reapers of Rev. 14:14-20, all was prepared but no action began without a command from the temple (or angels who came out of the temple).
 - iv) After the revelation (opening of the seals), and after the warnings (sounding of the trumpets), the punishment begins.
- c) Before proceeding with the pouring out of the bowls, compare the first six trumpets bowls.

Trumpets (Rev. 8-11)	Bowls (Rev. 16)
1. The earth	1. The earth
2. The sea	2. The sea
3. Rivers and springs	3. Rivers and springs
4. Sun/heavenly bodies	4. The Sun
5. Torment	5. Pain
6. Euphrates and army	6. Euphrates and army

- i) The sounding of the first four trumpets warned of the effect of sin on the earth.
 - (1) The pouring of the first four bowls brings punishment upon the earth.
- ii) The fifth trumpet warned of the effect of sin on the individual.
 - (1) The pouring of the fifth bowl brought punishment on the individual.
- iii) The sixth trumpet warned of the effect of sin on others.
 - (1) The pouring of the sixth bowl brought punishment on others.
- d) The First Bowl (16:2)
 - i) So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. (16:2)
 - ii) Exodus 9:8-12 - ... And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. ...

- (1) Here is a parallel to the sixth plague upon Egypt. Only the Egyptians were affected, because Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people of Israel go.
- (2) The sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.
- iii) The sores are not literal – they are symbolic of the pain and anguish men bring on themselves because of their sin.
- e) The Second Bowl (16:3)
 - i) The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. (16:3)
 - ii) People were dependent on the sea for fishing and shipping – commerce.
 - iii) The symbol is that sin disrupts life and corrupts whatever it touches.
- f) The Third Bowl (16:4)
 - i) The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. (16:4)
 - ii) Rivers and springs are fresh water, vital to life.
 - iii) Exodus 7:20-25 - ... all the water in the Nile turned into blood.... the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.
 - iv) Blood is used in the 2nd and 3rd bowls because the Holy Spirit has a point to make, which will be emphasized in 16:6-7.
 - v) The idea is, that the punishment fits the crime.
- g) **5** And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, “Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. **6** For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!” **7** And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!” (16:5-7)
 - i) Here is the point the Holy Spirit is making – they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink.
 - ii) “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”
 - (1) Obadiah 1:15 - For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. (judgment on Edom).
 - iii) As in 11:17, “is to come” is not used, because the Lord had come in judgment.
 - iv) Saints and prophets indicates all Christians, not special classes.
 - v) Two truths reflected in 16:6.
 - (1) ***The recipients of God’s wrath bring trouble on themselves.***
 - (a) Deuteronomy 28:15, 20 - **15** “But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his

statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. **20** “The Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me.

(2) *The punishment generally fits the crime.*

(a) Pharaoh tried to drown the Jewish male babies, but it was his own army that eventually drowned in the Red Sea.

(b) Esther 7:9-10 – **9** Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” **10** And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

(c) 1 Samuel 15:1-34, 2 Samuel 1:1-16 – Saul refused to obey God and slay the Amalekites, so he was slain by an Amalekite.

h) The Fourth Bowl (16:8-9)

i) **8** The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. **9** They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. (16:8-9)

ii) Rev. 8:12 - The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

(1) The sun was darkened.

iii) Here, the sun was intensified.

iv) They were scorched by the fierce heat. The repetition of *scorch* and *fierce* heat suggest *intense* heat.

v) Rather than surrender to God, they cursed him and did not repent.

(1) Rather than blame themselves for the consequences of sin, and repent, they blamed God.

i) The Fifth Bowl (16:10-11)

i) **10** The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish **11** and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds. (16:10-11)

ii) At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, the sun and the air were darkened, and demonic locusts had swarmed from the abyss to torment men – symbolic of the effect of sin on the individual.

- iii) The fifth bowl plunged persecuting Rome into darkness, and individuals were in pain by the effect on the beast and its kingdom – demonstrating the painful effect of sin.
- iv) Rev. 9:20-21 - [20](#) The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, [21](#) nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.
- v) As with the warning trumpets, they did not repent of their deeds.
- vi) As with the fourth bowl, men cursed God for their pain and sores, and did not repent of their deeds.
- vii) Exodus 10:21-29 - “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.”
 - (1) Everything came to a halt in Egypt (except where Israel lived). No one arose from their place for three days.
 - (2) The darkness brought on by the fifth bowl may symbolize the disruption of the persecuting Roman Empire, in addition to demonstrating the painful effect of sin.
- viii) Col. 1:13 - He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
- ix) People gnawed their tongues in anguish may indicate that they were out of their minds with suffering, just as one who has a seizure is not aware of what they are doing and must be protected from damaging their tongues.
- x) The phrase “gnawed their tongues” does not appear anywhere else in the Bible, although gnashing of teeth does, as in extreme pain.
- xi) Matt. 22:13 - Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
- xii) Matt. 25:30 - And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
- j) The Sixth Bowl (16:12-16)
 - i) [12](#) The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. [13](#) And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. [14](#) For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. [15](#) (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about

- naked and be seen exposed!”) **16** And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.
- ii) Rev. 9:14-19 - saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ...
- (1) The sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl each have something held back at the Euphrates river.
 - (2) The sixth bowl dries up the waters of the Euphrates to prepare the way for kings from the east.
 - (a) In the first century, the eastern boundary of Rome was the Euphrates river, and Rome had not been able to extend its rule beyond it.
 - (b) The Euphrates River had been a natural barrier between the Romans and their enemies to the east.
 - (c) The drying up of the Euphrates indicates the removal of that boundary.
 - (i) Some scholarly commentators say that this opened the way for the Parthians to battle against Rome (again) and spurred Satan to bring forth his three agents to unite the kings of the earth to battle against God.
 - (3) The Euphrates River has been used as a symbol of military power before.
 - (a) Isaiah 8:5-8 - **5** The Lord spoke to me again: **6** “Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, **7** therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks, **8** and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.”
 - (b) A mighty action of God has been frequently associated with drying up waters.
 - (i) Exodus 14:21-22 – **21** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. **22** And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.
 - (ii) Joshua 3:16-17 **16** the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people

passed over opposite Jericho. **17** Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

(c) The Medo-Persian armies diverted the waters of the Euphrates so that they could invade Babylon by walking in on dry ground to conquer the city.

(i) The waters of the Euphrates had been a natural barrier around Babylon, and the Babylonians were having a party rather than preparing for an invasion by the armies that surrounded them.

iii) **13** And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. **14** For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. (16:12-13)

(1) The 2nd beast of Revelation 13 is call the false prophet beginning here.

(2) The unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the unholy three, so it would not make sense that they were conjuring up war against the beast.

(a) They are demonic spirits (or unclean spirits) – of the devil. The devil would not wage war against the beast whom he recruited to assist him in battle.

(i) Rev. 13:2 - And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

(b) Performing signs – possibly the same false signs of the false prophet/2nd beast.

(i) Rev. 13:13-15 - **13** It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, **14** and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. **15** And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

(3) They are summoning kings of the whole world to battle against God.

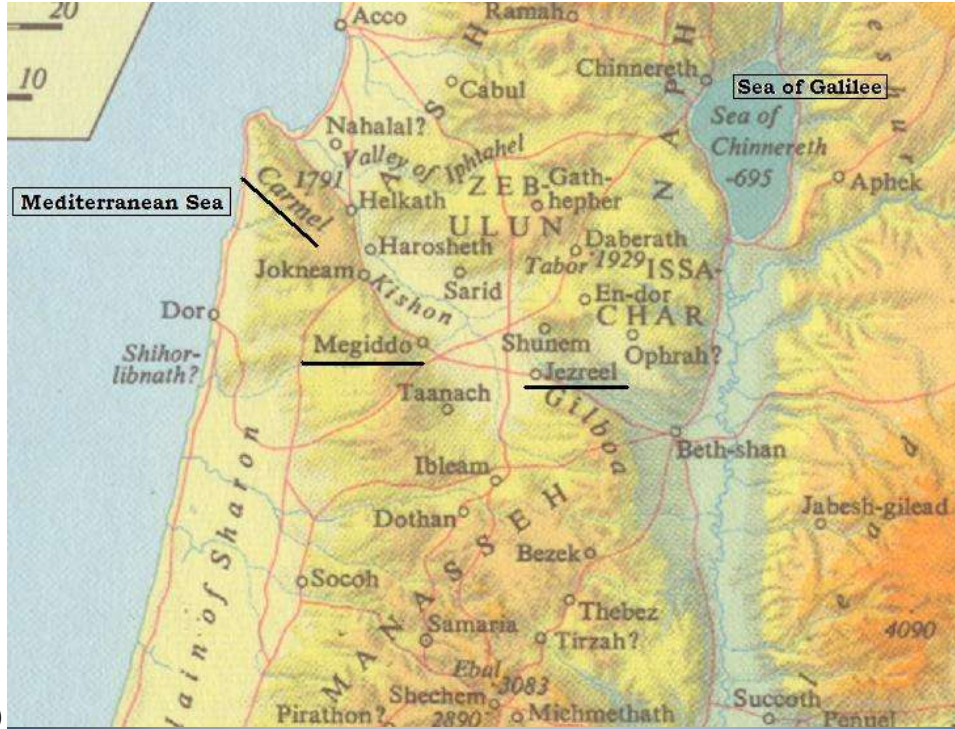
(a) Now Satan has expanded his army to include the kings of the whole world.

(b) If they thought it was *their* war, they thought wrong – they were falling in line with God's purpose.

- (c) Consider that the “day of the Lord” has been used exclusively to speak of a time when God would send judgment, and this time it is ***“the great day of God the Almighty.”***
- (d) It is God’s day, not the day they thought all their forces would defeat God’s cause.
- (4) 16:16 will reveal that this battle is to occur at a place call Armageddon.
- (5) Those who take the view that a literal battle is to take place, should also take the view that the forces arrayed against God are led by a committee of frogs (or like frogs, somewhat loathesome).
- iv) Rev 16:15-16 - [15](#) ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") [16](#) And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.
 - (1) Coming like a thief – underscores the fact that it is God’s day, not the day of Satan and his recruits.
 - (a) Matt. 24:43 - But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.
 - (b) 2 Peter 3: 10 - But the day of the Lord will come like a thief ...
 - (2) Blessed is the one who stays awake ...
 - (a) Rev. 3:5 - The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. (Sardis)
 - (b) Rev. 3:18 - I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. (Laodicea)
 - (c) Verse 15 is given to encourage Christians, especially to keep their garments, and not be deceived by false signs.
 - (3) Armageddon (or Har-Magedon)
 - (a) Appears nowhere else in the scriptures.
 - (b) [Har|magedōn](#) – a mountain of uncertain location.
 - (c) Not an event happens in the Middle East that does not bring forth much discussion of the battle of Armageddon from various theologians.
 - (d) A common belief is that the reference is to Megiddo, which is mentioned 11 times in the O.T., and since “Har” means mountain, then the conclusion is that the meaning is “mountain of Megiddo”.

- (i) Joshua 12:7-24 - [7](#) And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, ... [21](#) the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one;
- (ii) Judges 1:27-28 - [27](#) Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. [28](#) When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not drive them out completely.
- (iii) 1 Kings 4:7-19 - [7](#) Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household. Each man had to make provision for one month in the year. [8](#) These were their names: Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim; ... [12](#) Baana the son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth-shean that is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, and from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, as far as the other side of Jokmeam;
- (iv) 2 Chron 35:20-27 - ... [22](#) Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. ...
- (e) The use of the name may not be to a specific place, but rather to a concept.
 - (i) When the people of God went into battle *with* God's approval, they were victorious.
 - (ii) When they went into battle *without* God's approval, they were defeated.
 - (iii) In 2 Chronicles 35, Josiah went to battle in the plain of Megiddo, he was killed.
 - (iv) When the 3 frogs (demons) summon all the kings of the earth to go to battle against God in the plain of Megiddo (or anywhere else), they lose.
- (f) You have probably heard "valley" used, as in the valley of Armageddon.
- (g) Megiddo - a tell in northern Israel near Kibbutz Megiddo, about 30 km south-east of Haifa, known for its historical, geographical, and theological importance, especially under its Greek name Armageddon. In ancient times Megiddo was an important city-state.

Excavations have unearthed 26 layers of ruins, indicating a long period of settlement. Megiddo is strategically located at the head of a pass through the Carmel Ridge overlooking the Jezreel Valley from the west.



(h)



(i)

(4) Interpretations are abundant.

(a) Futurists see that as a final battle which ends the history of the world and secures God's throne.

- (b) The Continuous-Historical group sees this as papal apostasy and a battle between Catholicism and the true church (reformers).
 - (i) Catholics are inclined to see this as a defeat of the reformers who battled against them to stop the spread of Catholicism.
- (c) Neither (a) nor (b) offers any help to Christians living in the 1st century.
- (d) The symbolic view pictures Satan and his agents (beast, false prophet, kings of the earth) in array to battle the forces of righteousness.
 - (i) The three frogs (demonic spirits) issue false propaganda against Christians (a favorite device of Satan) to recruit more to join their alliance against righteousness.
 - (ii) Har-Megiddo/Armageddon/Megiddo is a well-known Hebrew battlefield.
 - There Gideon and 300 men defeated the Midianites.
 - King Saul was defeated by the Phillistines.
 - Barak and Deborah overthrew the hosts of the Canaanite king, Jabin.
 - Ahaziah died from the arrows of Jehu.
 - Pharaoh-Necho overthrew and killed Josiah.
 - (iii) If there is to be a literal, material battle, the army of Satan must be led by three frogs. There is no reason to make one literal and the other symbolic.
 - (iv) The symbolic view offers encouragement for Christians in the 1st century and beyond. **Righteousness will triumph!**

a) The Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)

- (1) **17** The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" **18** And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. **19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. **21** And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

- (a) The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” (16:17)
- (i) Actually, no battle occurs. God sends a 7th angel who says “It is done!” All the conjecture about a literal battle of Armageddon is for nothing.
- (ii) Into the air may have one or all of three different meanings:
- Water is vital to man – man can only live for a few days without water – but air is even more vital – man can only live for a few minutes without oxygen.
 - Ephesians 2:1-3 - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
 - a. Satan, the prince of the power of the air, will not survive.
 - Air is pervasive.
- (b) And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. (16:18)
- (i) Manifestations of divine wrath
- Lightning
 - Rumblings – voices
 - Peals of thunder
 - A great earthquake
- (c) The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. (16:19)
- (i) So great was the earthquake of God’s wrath, that imperial Rome was split into three parts.
- Three is a divine number (i.e. Father, Son, Holy Spirit) indicating that Rome’s fall was the work of God.
 - There had been divisions after the death of Nero and there would continue to be division of Rome. I do not believe that this applies to future divisions.
- (ii) The cities of the nations fell – all who were allied with and depended upon Rome fell also fell.

- (iii) Drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath
 - Rev 14:8 - Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."
 - Persecuting Rome was guilty. She had shed the blood of saints and seduced nations, and God remembered her in this time of pouring out his wrath.
- (d) And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe. (16:20-21)
 - (i) Rev. 6:14 - The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.
 - (ii) Rev. 6:15 - ... hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,
 - Many of these judgements were revealed beforehand with the sixth seal was opened. (Rev. 6:12-17)
 - Islands and mountains may be intended as places of refuge or hiding, but there will be no hiding.
 - (iii) Hail is referred to as marble size, golfball size, baseball size, etc. None of these weight 100 pounds.
 - Ice was once sold in blocks of 10, 25, 50, or even 100 pounds, which would be used in an icebox or chipped up to make ice cream.
 - We avoid being out in the open in any size of hail. Image the damage a 100-pound block of hail would cause.
 - Since the size of hail is dependent up on the strength of the storm, the storm which produces 100-pound hail would be extremely powerful.
 - (iv) fell from heaven on people;
 - Exodus 9:22-26 - **24** There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. **25** The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field.
 - (v) they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.`

- For the third time in chapter 16, men cursed God for their troubles (16:9, 11, 21), and they did not blame themselves or repent.