

Revelation 16 – The Seven Last Judgments

We have been working our way through the book of **Revelation** pretty close to verse by verse through this book. And we are now picking up in chapter **16** in this last book of the Bible. Beginning in chapter **15** we find ourselves at the end of the end times for planet Earth. And the end of the end times signals the end of man's failed attempt to govern himself. But it also ushers in the beginning of the rule of Jesus on the Earth. The rule of Jesus on this Earth, we're told in the book of **Revelation**, will span 1,000 years – Hence the title – the millennium or the millennial rule of Jesus. And at the end of the millennium Jesus ushers in a new heaven and a new earth, where he rules forever and ever. And we, with the gift of eternal life, enjoy him and exalt him forever and ever.

Now students of the Bible have given this chapter the title '**The Great Chapter**'. And they call it '**The Great Chapter**' because – The Greek word '*me-gas*' is how you'd transliterate that Greek word into the English language – We get our English word '*mega*' / '*great*' from it – Sometimes in this chapter that Greek word is translated into English as "**great**". But as we read through this chapter we're going to see words like "**loud**" and "**fierce**". And they are actually that same Greek word '*me-gas*'. So before we start looking at the events of this chapter there are a couple things we want to do. But the first is pray. So let's bow our hearts and heads before the Lord in a word of prayer.

Lord, thank you so much. We thank you so much for the 500+ Monday nights you have been so faithful to unfold your Word to us, flood our hearts with light, transform us by the renewing of our minds, save souls, and make disciples. We thank you for every Monday night you've given us the privilege to meet. Thank you for this building. Thank you, Lord, for those who give to this fellowship, this ministry, so we can have a building and be in it. Lord, thank you that you've given us people who love to serve so that the Word of God can be served. Lord, thank you for all the moving pieces that go into every Monday night. It's just amazing to think the first hundred or so of them were portable, unloading a trailer, loading the trailer back up. And there was such joy in it. And there was such reward in seeing people hearing the Word of God, people being saved, people growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. So for another Monday night in your Word, thank you. For this chapter of your Word, thank you. We're so glad that you're the God who speaks. And, Lord, we're so glad that you speak clearly to us. You don't hedge on anything concerning the realities of who you are, the realities of how much you love us, the realities of what sinners we are, and the judgment we deserve, and the mercy you extend in the sending of your son to die in our place for our sins. Lord, I pray that once again you'd overlook my inadequacies as a man and as a teacher, so that your Word would go forth in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power, bringing glory to the name of Jesus. For it's in his wonderful name we pray, amen.

Well, before we actually move through these events, the seven last judgments, I think it's important that we address a very reasonable question that's frequently asked about these seven bowls of God's judgment. Do the bowls of the wrath of God follow chronologically from the seven trumpet judgments; or are they actually the same judgments as recorded in the trumpet judgments; and they're just being reiterated for us? Now for sure there is a great deal of similarity between the trumpet judgments that we see in chapters **8** & **9** and the bowl judgments described here in chapter **16**, particularly in the order of those judgments.

But **John Walvoord** said this – "*Similarities do not prove identity.*"

When we compare the trumpet judgments with the bowls of God's wrath we find some striking differences. In the trumpet judgments generally speaking, a third of the heaven, a third of the earth, is afflicted. Whereas the bowl judgments are upon the entire earth. So there's a very important limitation in the scope of the trumpet judgments as opposed to the bowl judgments. The bowl judgments are also more severe. There is an obvious finality about them. The order of the bowl judgments is tremendously climactic. The judgments become more intensive and extensive as the second coming of Jesus approaches.

And as we look at the condition of man on the face of this planet during these bowl judgments that are being poured out, there is really, literally, physically not much time that man can have left on this earth when we see what happens in these judgments.

Again, here's how **John Walvoord** describes the bowl judgments – *“The bowl judgments fall with trip hammer rapidity on a world that's reeling under previous judgments and a gigantic world war.”*

So there have been judgments.
There's been the seven seal judgments.
There's been the seven trumpet judgments.

And we've had that all backfilled what was entailed in those judgments –
the rise of the antichrist,
the coming forward of the false prophet,
the whole planet worshipping Satan, essentially by way of worshipping the antichrist and taking his mark.
And then we're going to see that the world is actually moving to a huge world war in this chapter.

So as we look at this chapter I think it's much clearer to use the view that –
the seven bowls of God's judgments flow out of the seventh trumpet,
just as the seven trumpet judgments proceeded from the breaking of the seventh seal.

**“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.””**

Two phrases in the beginning of this verse really hit me this morning.

“a loud voice” – there is our word ‘*megas*’ – great.

And we're going to see the reason that it's given this label.

Here's the other phrase – and this one really has something packed into it – **“from the temple”**. I find it noteworthy that by inspiration of the Holy Spirit John is very careful to tell us the place from which this great voice issues.

He doesn't just say there **“was a loud voice”**.

But he tells us where this **“loud”**, where this ‘*megas*’, where this great, voice is coming from.

He says it's coming **“from the temple”**.

And I believe that phrase speaks volumes to us about the heart of God as these final judgments take place.

And we learned in our last study that these are the final judgments.

We also learned in our last study that in these final judgments is the completion of the wrath of God.

Would you draw a line there from verse **1** back to the last verse of chapter **15**?

“⁸ and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and”—this is important—
“no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.”

It seems that God has withdrawn; he's withdrawn into the heavenly sanctuary.

And it says, **“no one could enter until”** these final bowls of judgment are poured out.

There is no access to God by angelic beings.

There is no access to God by redeemed men and women.

Why? I believe that the impending finality of these judgments utterly breaks the heart of God.

Would you put in the margin of your Bible there **Ezekiel 33:11**?

Ezekiel 33: “¹¹ Say to them, As I live declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way & live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die?”

Also in the margin of your Bible there write **Ezekiel 18:32**.

Ezekiel 18: “³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”

Remember in our last study –

We walked around a bit in the reality that some Christians struggle with the Scriptures talking about the wrath of God. And they're kind of shy talking about that.

And sometimes they're actually embarrassed about the wrath of God.

They want the world to know that God is a God of love and a God of mercy. And he is that.

But God is not a one-dimensional God.

Man creates God in his own image.

He invents a God of his own imagination.

And the God of man's imagination is very one-dimensional.

But the God of the Bible is not that.

He is so multi-dimensional.

He is so divinely infinitely complex in his glory and in his beauty and in his personality and in his attributes.

And here are the seven last bowls of God's judgment – so intense –

It's the finality of God's judgment upon a world that has turned its back on him.

And it's the completion, it's the fullness of his wrath, the fullness of his judgment.

And as he's ready to pour it out he shuts out – no one comes into this heavenly sanctuary – no angel, no man – Because I believe he is just so broken over what's about to happen.

**“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.””**

Withdrawn from angels and redeemed men and women –

God himself personally initiates the horrific judgment of these bowls upon men and women who are not going to turn.

Remember he's pleading in **Ezekiel 33** –

**“I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,
but that the wicked turn from his way and live;
turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die?””**

The people that will be the object of his wrath are not going to turn.

**“² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth,
and harmful & painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast & worshiped its image.”**

The **New Living Translation** reads “harmful and painful sores” as – “horrible malignant sores”.

And who did these “horrible malignant sores” come upon? –

“the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.”

We need to remember who it is that's left upon the earth at this very moment in the chronology of the tribulation.

There are 144,000 that have the seal of God upon them.

They are not touched by any of these plagues.

They are not touched by the antichrist.

This is that indestructible army of born again Jewish evangelists that we learned about earlier in **Revelation**.

There are going to be other Jews who refuse to take the mark of the beast or to worship his image.

And they will become believers in the Lord Jesus.

And there are non-Jewish people who will refuse to take the mark of the beast or to worship his image.

And they will become believers.

The rest of the world – we would say virtually the world because of the difference in numbers here –
They have now taken the mark of the beast.
And these horrible malignant painful sores have no intended outcome of repentance.
That is why God is so grieved.
These men and women have made a decision that literally brands them as beyond repenting.

Would you write **Revelation 14:9-11** in the margin of your Bible there?

Revelation 14: ⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

Now there’s the eternal perspective of the wrath that they will endure.
But they’re going to experience torment now in the wrath that’s being poured out.

By taking the mark, worshipping the beast and its image, they have branded themselves as those who have ultimately and forever rejected God. So when God says, “*I don’t take any pleasure in anybody’s death; I don’t want to see the wicked die; Turn and live*”, God knows that the objects of his wrath are now those men and women who are going to perish because they are not going to turn; and thus they will not live. So it’s those who worship the beast and receive its mark are now marked by God with these horrible painful malignant sores.

This is so incomprehensible.

I’m at a loss for adjectives here – utter, incomprehensible, incredible, beyond imagination.

I can’t find one that satisfies what’s rolling around in my heart.

Almost the entire population of the world is suffering from horrible painful malignant sores that nothing can cure.

Let’s just try to get this. This is what came to my mind. Imagine being really ill - or worse yet, your children being really ill or hurt, so much so, that you have to go to the ER. I don’t know about you, but there have been those times when I have had to take Nathan, with his asthma, to the ER in the late night or early hours of the morning. And you get there; and it’s a circus, like it’s 1 o’clock in the morning, and you’re thinking, ‘*What’s going on here?*’ It’s like the whole of the greater Sacramento area has either been in an automobile accident or got burned while barbequing or broken bones skateboarding or cut themselves in the kitchen or were in a fight or had a high fever or something.’ And when you’re there, and it’s just packed and crowded, there’s a gnarly effect on your psyche. Does anybody know that feeling? It does something to you. It’s not just the fact that you’re waiting, and either you’re really ill or really hurting, or, worse yet, your kid is really ill or really hurting; and you’re thinking, ‘*I just want my kid to get help here. I just want somebody to be able to take care of my child.*’

But it messes with your head. It magnifies your own suffering. It exacerbates your sense of urgency.

And I don’t know about you, but your pastor will confess this, it brings out the worst in him.

I find that I get this disregard for the needs of others in the face of my urgent need.

Now take that and multiply it by billions – literally. Everyone is suffering. And there is no remedy for anyone. The scene is a nightmare. The world is literally filled with self-serving idol-worshipping men and women whose hearts are utterly void of the compassion of God. And they’re suffering with no hope of relief. There is no hope of a cure. How do you think they’re going to behave towards one another?

There are moments when I get ‘hangry’. Any of you ever get ‘hangry’?

It means you’re so hungry you’re angry – ‘hangry’.

My wife will look at me sometimes – and there is just this look on my face – ‘hangry’ comes on my face.

And she says, “*You need to eat.*” I’m not fun to be around when I’m ‘hangry’.

But I can tell you this –

The world is Godless now. The world is worshipping Satan himself by way of the antichrist. Kindness, care, compassion will not be the signature of human relationships during that period. It will be the worst that man can treat man ever.

The irony in all of this – I want you to think about this – This is what I thought of – These are the very men & women who thought they could create a world filled with peace & love by organizing themselves without God & against God. They rejected him. How utter and complete was their rejection? – so much so that – They worship the antichrist; They bow before the beast; They take the mark of the antichrist. And in so doing they worship Satan himself. And as a result they face the judgment of God. They didn't bring in a world full of peace and love. They created this world in **Revelation 16**.

“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.”

In **Revelation 8:8 & 9** we have the description of a partial contamination of the seas. But here the contamination is complete – **“every living creature died”**. It says – **“it became like the blood of a corpse”**. I don't think it's saying that it became blood. But it's saying – **“it became like the blood of a corpse”**. And here's what kills me – it became like a corpse' blood – not just like blood – but like the sickening appearance and consistency of the blood in a dead body.

Now don't miss this –

In a few minutes we're going to get to the Battle of Armageddon. People around the world are really familiar with that name, Armageddon, right?

A friend of Billy Graham's once said that every world leader that Billy Graham ever met – and he met them all – They've all asked Billy Graham about Armageddon and the end of the world – every single one of them.

How many times have the covers of Time Magazine or, the now not so operable, Newsweek, said something like, *“Armageddon”*, or *“The Apocalypse”*, or *“Is Armageddon Coming?”*

In the minds of military leaders Armageddon is synonymous with the concept of the last and worst battle in the history of the world.

But as we come to this chapter I don't want us to miss how Armageddon is just a small part of this scenario. And Time and Newsweek never put that bit into their stories.

The things that lead up to the Battle of Armageddon are – stranger than, more radical than, more impactful than – Armageddon itself.

It says – **“and every living thing died that was in the sea.”**

Now try to imagine every ocean and every sea in the world becoming like the blood of a dead man. Then try to imagine every living thing in the ocean is dead – every whale, every porpoise, every dolphin, every fish, and – by the way – most importantly – all the plankton. I don't remember a whole lot about science in high school – but I remember this – The O₂ component of the atmosphere is tied into plankton – big time.

Men and women will not only be walking around with horrible painful malignant sores;
They will be gasping for their next breath.

That's why I said the imminence of Jesus second coming is so near.

And you might be thinking,

'That's impossible! 'How is that going to happen?'

'How can all the oceans become like the blood of a corpse?'

'How can all the plankton die – how that affects the ecosystem, that we so desperately need that delicate balance?'

'How can that be?'

Well, it's not going to be for long.

If you really want to look into these things, **Dr Henry Morris**, in his commentary on the book of **Revelation** – His specialty was in the area of hydraulics, water;
He gives a lot of the scientific ramifications of these plagues.

“4 The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.”

Now this one doesn't say **“like blood”**.

This one says, **“they became blood”**.

Even as in the book of **Exodus** –

It doesn't say that the Nile became like blood;

It says it became blood.

So this could be taken literally as the fresh water systems.

Again, there's the distinction between the third trumpet and this third bowl.

In the third trumpet judgment a third part of the fresh water systems is polluted, contaminated – turns bitter.

In the third bowl judgment all of those bitter waters, along with the rest of the world's fresh water systems are turned into blood – much more intensive.

So following the third of the last seven judgments of God –

Every man and women who has rejected Jesus, and instead took the mark of the antichrist –

has been struck with horrible painful, malignant sores;

they're gasping for oxygen;

they're desperate for water;

they have no fresh water to wash their sores.

Just try to get your head around it.

And it's at this point there's this interlude in the flow – not a big parentheses –

But just think of a Selah moment – think of taking a breath.

“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.”

He's making the statement that these judgments are tied to the **“Holy One”**.

And in the Old Testament in the book of **Isaiah** God says, **“I am the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity”**.

In another place he says that he is **“the Holy One”**.

Remember in **Isaiah 6** the angelic beings are crying out, **“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.”**

**“6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink.
It is what they deserve!”**

God is vindicated once again.

Again, the throne of God is the centerpiece of the book of **Revelation**.

These judgments are issuing from God who is ruling.

That last sentence in the **ESV** – “**It is what they deserve**” –

I’m going to get to it in a little different angle in a moment –

But may we never forget God’s judgments are never undeserved – never.

The Bible says that – “**The wages of sin is death**” –

separation from God – here and now – and without Jesus – forever.

We earned it. We earned the wages of our sin.

The judgment that comes is not unjust – it’s earned.

When we see things like 9/11 –

When you see kids being killed on the streets of Tel Aviv by homicidal bombers –

When you see starvation in East Africa, war lords stealing all the provisions that are brought in from non-governmental agencies and organizations and charitable groups – people are just starving –

The reflex is to say,

“*Lord, why are you letting this happen?*”

“*Lord, how can you let this happen?*”

“*Why is it happening?*”

“*How can you let it happen?*”

But here’s the deal –

We want God to rectify things.

But when we’re told of God’s judgments in the Bible; when we read of God’s judgments –

We kind of want to explain it away as, “*God would never do that.*”

Any many people actually apologize for the text even being there.

And we want to say, “*God, really? I have to take this literally that you’re going to judge like that?*”

So from heaven comes this cry.

Now remember I believe God has withdrawn. He is in his sanctuary.

What does that look like? I don’t know.

I do know this – When God told Moses to build the tabernacle he says,

“*You do it exactly like this because this is a pattern from heaven.*

Don’t you alter this. This is a model of the heavenly reality.”

So I can’t tell you what I think that looks like.

But whatever it is, and however the heavenly sanctuary looks –

God is there – And no one is allowed to come in –

Because he is about ready to pour out judgment on the world.

“*Who can know the weight of glory on a human soul?*”

These are human souls, men and women, who were made after his image that have rejected him ultimately forever.

And he has no pleasure in it at all.

And so from heaven comes this cry – “*Lord, what you are doing is right.*”

Now this is so important –

In God’s government the punishment always fits the offence – always – always.

All through the Bible God states the importance of just balances, just measures.

We saw it when we were going through the book of [Proverbs](#).

We saw it when we were going through the **Pentateuch**.

God is really insistent on balances being accurate.

In the **ESV** it says – “**It is what they deserve**”.

In the **KJV** it says – “**For they are worthy**”.

In other words – They are worthy of this judgment.

And that word “**worthy**” – it’s the Greek word ‘*axios*’.

And it’s a word that was used to speak of scales used in the marketplace.

And when they were calibrated and found to be accurate they were labelled ‘*axios*’ – worthy.

It literally meant – to weigh as much as.

And so this angelic being is saying,

“God, you are so just in this.

These people that are the objects of your wrath, the weight of your wrath is equal to their rejection of you.

They are worthy of what they are getting, as horrible as it is.”

And we need to be very careful when we read these things.

Some people read these things, and they just think, ‘*Yeah, right – as if! That is beyond science fiction.*’

Remember in our last study we said that the gospel begins with God, not man.

The death of Jesus on the cross – that is God saying – This is what sin is. This is how horrible sin is.

Don’t ever forget that. We have such a hard time comprehending the weight of the wrath of God because we have such a lightweight concept of sin before a holy God.

But in God’s government the punishment is never less than or greater than – it always fits the crime.

You remember how Pharaoh was killing the newborn males amongst the descendants of Abraham.

When God brings his final judgment upon Egypt and upon Pharaoh all the firstborn males of Egypt die.

Pharaoh tried to kill the newborn males of the Israelites by drowning them in the Nile.

In the end it was Pharaoh’s army that was drowned in the Red Sea.

In the book of **Esther** – you might remember a man named Haman.

And he had this plot, a genocidal plot, to wipe out all the Jews.

He even built the gallows on which to hang a man named Mordecai as his plan to commit genocide would be launched

But it was Haman who was hanged on the very gallows that he had built for Mordecai & his family was exterminated.

Here’s what **Adam Clark** said in his commentary on the passage –

“The thirsted after blood and massacred the saints of God. And now they have blood to drink.”

Now what follows this interlude is radical.

“⁷ And I heard the altar saying,” – Isn’t that an odd statement? –

“⁷ And I heard the altar saying, Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

Now there are those really amazing scholars of the Scriptures who say that this should be understood as an angel speaking from the altar or the altar is personified, representing the corporate testimony at one point –

in **Revelation 6:9** as the martyrs,

in **Revelation 8:3-5** as the prayers of the saints.

But I want you to think about this –

God’s true altar is the cross, right?

It’s where the only sacrifice for sins was made.

On that altar the justice of God and the mercy of God kissed.

Christians, the cross speaks, the cross testifies of God’s righteous judgment.

Whenever you and I are thinking about pulling the – “*God, this just isn’t fair*” –

Whenever there is something we don’t understand – the general rule is –

Run to the cross because it answers everything.

You see, Jesus made it clear – Satan is the liar; he is the father of lies.
We've seen that very thing stated about him in the book of **Revelation** during that parenthetical section.
And he wants to lie about God all the time.

And in **Genesis 3** one of his big lies – one of the first lies that he told – was that –
God is not fair. He's keeping some good thing from you.
He wants to accuse the true and living God of being unfair.

And one of our great struggles is –
when we don't get what we think we ought to be getting,
or if we get something that comes our way that we think ought not to have come our way –
Like when suffering shows up at our door – Maybe you had suffering show up at your door this week.

And, by the way, that's the theme of the Paul Tripp conference that we're going to have in October.
We were able to get him to come back for another conference.
And he suggested that he would like to talk on the subject of suffering.
And the title is – *'When Suffering Shows Up At Your Door'*.

When that happens what are we prone to do?
"Well, God, this just isn't fair."

Every now and then as a dad my brain will go to some dark place, thinking –
I know my kids are travelling some place or they're on the road or they're doing some activity –
My brain can go to – *'What if this happens?'* – or – *'What if that happens?'* – Because it happens.
There are parents who get phone calls late at night. It's a horrible thing.
I've gotten those phone calls because parents couldn't be reached before.
It's the worst nightmare of any parent when you pick up the phone; and it's the highway patrol;
And they're saying, *"Do you know so-and-so?"* And my first response is – It's not my son.
Those phone calls come.

And in those moments everything in our flesh wants to say,
"How could God let that happen?"
"God is not fair!"

The cross says –
God is so fair. God is so just. This is the penalty for sin.
And yet he is so merciful.
He says, *"I will stand in your place; and I will endure the penalty that you deserve so that you can receive mercy."*
That's how fair God is.
And that's who merciful God is.

And I find it so profound that as these judgments are coming forth –
This angelic being says, *"All your judgments are right. You are right, Lord, in doing this.*
The weight of their sin equals the weight of this judgment. It is axios."
And then the altar says this.

I believe the cross testifies, the gospel testifies, of God's righteous judgment.
It's where God in his love offered the way to escape judgment.

"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" – and there's our Greek word *'megas'* again –
"⁹ They were scorched by the fierce" – or the – **"great heat,**
and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues.
They did not repent and give him glory."

People speculate –

Is the sun going into a supernova?

Or is the atmosphere just absolutely totally wrecked because of some nuclear event?

Upon seeing the awesome and righteous judgments of God upon the earth, these people, who are worthy of it –

And they were warned were warned beforehand – Remember the angelic being said, “**Give glory to God.**”

And the angelic being said, “*Whoever takes this mark it's done. It's your final forever decision between you and God.*”

Upon seeing the awesome and righteous judgments of God upon the earth –

These people will not fall on their knees and repent of their rebellion against God. Instead they curse God.

There is not a place in Scripture that says that being an eyewitness of the miraculous or being as desperate as humans are at this moment on the earth will make you a believer, or that it will change the human heart.

This will be more desperate than any other time in human history.

Jesus said that this great tribulation – there never has been, and never will be a time after it, like it – ever.

These people will have witnessed the supernatural power and judgment of God.

They're gasping for oxygen.

They're parched for water.

They have these painful oozing sores.

They're being scorched with this intense heat.

They will have seen the love and the mercy of God – angels flying through heaven proclaiming the everlasting gospel.

And he's proclaiming it to people who are going to bow down and worship the antichrist.

And yet these people do not repent.

William Newell said this in his commentary on the book of **Revelation** –

“If men are not won by grace they will never be won.”

By the way – The intense heat amplifies the previous judgment.

Heat produces thirst; but now there is no water supplies.

Henry Morris says this – “*The heat is going to melt the ice caps*”. This is going to be real global warming.

Morris says – “*Water levels around the world would on average rise 100 feet.*”

That means anything lower than 100 feet above sea level was going to be submerged. It's hard to imagine, even begin to imagine, a 100 foot high sure of ocean water that's like the blood of dead men filled with the rotting remains of stuff in the ocean.

“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.”

Now again we're reminded of the judgment of God upon Egypt when God brought 3 days of darkness on the land.

The Jewish historian Josephus said that the darkness had a thickness to it.

Have you ever been in pitch black before?

In San Francisco, in the Exploratorium, they have this tactile dome – and it's pitch black in there.

And you have to feel your way through it. You put your hand in front of your face, and you cannot see it.

You can feel the darkness.

So while Egypt is literally buried in darkness for 3 days; it was a darkness that was palpable; it had a thickness to it, Goshen was in the normal cycle of night and day, where the descendants of Abraham were.

Now here in **Revelation 16**, while the rest of the world is in scorching sunlight –

The kingdom of the antichrist is in this painful darkness.

This darkness is so insane that people are gnawing their tongues.
And yet they stop gnawing their tongues long enough to blaspheme God.

Wow! Again, that's unimaginable to me.

People might say, "*Well, how is this darkness there? And how?*"

It's supernatural. God is doing this.

Such darkness is easier for me to imagine than the fact that human beings at that moment would not turn to him.

“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.”

Literally it's the kings from the rising sun.

So think India, Japan, China, Korea.

The “**Euphrates**” has always been dividing line in every civilization.

It was the border that God gave to Abraham for the promised territory he was going to give to him & his descendants.

It was the border of the Roman Empire.

It has always separated east from west.

But now at this moment it's going to be dried up.

This is an interesting side note –

Rudyard Kipling is famous for saying – “*East is East and West is West, and never shall the twain meet.*”

And that's all that is ever quoted of that. But here is the entirety of it –

*“East is East and West is West, and never shall the twain meet
Until Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat”*

Now think about this –

For the Euphrates to stop running means its source has to be dried up.

The source of the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers are the mountains of Ararat.

Those mountains have glaciers and snowpack on them year round.

Under the scorching heat of these judgments the glaciers and the snowpack from Ararat are going to disappear.

When that snowpack and glaciers disappear something will reappear – Noah's ark.

Noah's ark will be out in the open for the first time since the last time God judged the earth.

Man is thinking God will never judge.

And at this moment man is going to look and see the very testimony that God did judge the earth once.

And how foolish were they to think that they would never judge it again.

Verse 13-16 is another brief interlude in these last judgments.

“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,” – so here's the satanic trinity – **“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.”**

Now this is a last ditch effort by Satan to gather all the armies of the world to the Middle East.

Verse **15** is in parentheses in the **ESV**.

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!”)

Now the Bible uses garments as a metaphor of –

spiritual righteousness, positional righteousness (if you would),

and practical righteousness.

Upon faith in Jesus we're given the righteousness of Jesus.

It's like a garment. It's referred to as robes of righteousness.

In **Galatians 3:27** Paul talks about how we put on Christ.

But we're also called to put on the nature of Jesus in terms of practical holiness in **Ephesians 4:20-24**.

To be naked in the Scriptures is a metaphor for being left to stand before God in our own righteousness, which **Isaiah 64:6** says is like filthy rags in the sight of God.

“¹⁶ And they assembled them” – this is these three demonic spirits –
“they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.”

Now in the midst of all of these horrific events Satan is still able to stir up the inhabitants of the world into a global conflict. Some believe it's a war in which the nations hope to actually take the political power of the antichrist for themselves. They're kind of saying, *“Look we want to be the powerbrokers in the world now, not you.”* And the war involves actually house-to-house fighting in Jerusalem itself on the day of the Lord's return.

In the margin of your bible you can write **Zechariah 14:1-3**.

Doesn't it blow your mind that the Bible is that prophetically specific?

So the nations are deceived into entering into this war in the hope of gaining world political power.

But the Satanic purpose in this deception is to turn these armies, when they have finally assembled and are finally going at one another, to turn them against Jesus in his second coming.

Now let me ask you this –

How messed up is man without God?

They are so messed up that he will not use what's left of his resources to somehow bring relief and comfort to human suffering. No, instead he'll gather whatever men can even walk, use whatever little bit of water can be found, and march to wage war against other pathetic dying suffering human beings.

“they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.”

So there you have it – **“Armageddon”** – It's the only time in the Bible that you hear that word, that you see that word. The very word **“Armageddon”** – it just sounds so foreboding.

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,”

Wow! –

New York, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Hong Kong, Tokyo, London, Paris, Rome, Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney –

“all of the cities of all of the nations”

Put this in the margin of your Bible there – **Isaiah 24:17**.

Isaiah 24 is titled in the ESV by the translators – **‘The Judgment of the Whole Earth’**.

¹⁷ **Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth!**

¹⁸ **He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare.**

For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

¹⁹ **The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken.**

²⁰ **The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut;**

its transgression lies heavy upon it,” – that *‘axios’* concept – **“and it falls, and will not rise again.**

²¹ **On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth.**

Again, try to get your head and heart around the world as it will be in this chapter.

Apart from the handful of believers alive in the world, every man and woman is plagued with horrible painful malignant sores, gasping for oxygen, parched and burned by the scorching heat of the sun. There are no fresh water supplies to satisfy their thirst or clean their wounds. And now there are no structures to shelter them.

You remember the footage of the collapse of the Twin Towers. You're watching it, and it was still unbelievable.

Think of the entire skyline of New York City and every other metropolitan city in the world

We cannot begin to fathom the destruction of the planet's infrastructures.

When there's a local earthquake all infrastructures are lost. This is all global now.

“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,” – the Greek word there is ‘sank’ – **“and no mountains were to be found.”**

Think of the Twin Towers – that vertical collapse.

Imagine Mount Everest – vertical collapse.

“²¹ And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people;”

So the armies of man are now gathered to Armageddon. That's the name of the battle.

The battle field ranges from Dan to Beersheba.

The battle will rage from north to south, from the valley of Jezreel to Edom.

It will be about 185–200 miles of men and military gear gathered together.

And, again, think of Hollywood versions of the last great battles – these insanely mechanized hi-tech forces. And the soldiers are portrayed as these insanely physical specimens trained and armed with insane gear. Again, that's not the picture here. Imagine the physical and mental condition of these armies, what these men look like who have marched into that battle. They don't look very good. They're not in the mood for taking orders from anybody. But they are so incredibly deceived. They're marching. And then God begins to throw down 100 pound hailstones on them.

This is quite interesting – Put this one in the margin of your Bible –

**Job 38: “²² Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
²³ which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?”**

“and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.”

I'll close with this quote by **John Walvoord** – *“The wishful thinking of some that men would repent if they only knew the power and righteous judgment of God is shattered by frequent mention in this chapter of the hardness of the human heart in the face of the most stringent and evident divine discipline.”*

When I look at this, and I see these people not repenting in the face of what is evidently divine –

if you are a Christian, you are the biggest miracle in God's universe;

if you have repented and believed the good news, you are the biggest miracle in God's universe.

If you are not a Christian, I want to tell you something, you are here because God loves you, because God has been calling you. He has been breaking into your world to rescue you from judgment, judgment that is ‘axios’. You are going to be worthy of all of it. But he wants to rescue you from it. He has been breaking into your world to redeem you from the power and the penalty of sin. He has been breaking into your world to reconcile you to himself to make you his child. The invitation from God to you to repent of your sin – and if you're having a hard time getting your head around sin; and you're trying to categorize it under different titles – sin is looking to something else besides God for your salvation. Sin is putting yourself in the place of God. Sin is you becoming your own Savior. And as we look at this scene in chapter 16 man got there because they essentially said, “No thanks, God, we'll take care of planet Earth ourselves.” The invitation that God extends to you if you are not a Christian, to repent of your sin and believe the good news – if received, if you embrace that invitation, you will be saved; you'll know God; you'll know the love of God here and now and forever. To reject that invitation will be the cause of your judgment.

Father, thank you for this time in your Word. I want to pray right now that men and women would be found responding to you. To think of the impossibility – when Jesus was asked, “Then who can be saved?” – and Jesus, you answered that question, “With man it’s impossible; but with God nothing is impossible” – only you can save. I pray, Lord, that every Christian would remember that, and that it’s our privilege to join with you in the work of salvation. I pray that we would throw ourselves wholeheartedly into your passion to see souls saved, that, Lord, we would pray. I pray that right now Christians would be found thinking of men and women who don’t know you, and they would see those faces in their mind’s eye; and they would be praying for them constantly, interceding for them, that somehow, some way. And should you bless them to be the instrument by which you would break in, crash in, to that person or those person’s lives, to bring the gospel, that, Lord, the gospel would reach them, and that you would do in their lives what you’ve done in the life of that man or woman praying for them. I pray, Lord, that we would take prayer really seriously. I pray that we would take the news at 10 really seriously. I pray that we would take the news on our web browser really seriously. But I pray that above all we would take your Word with the utmost seriousness.