

Rev. 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Next John hears a “great voice” from inside the temple instruct the angels to go/ depart and empty the vials upon earth. Go your ways—indicates that they each have a specific direction to follow. The original for “pour out” is: **ekcheo**, *ek-kheh´-o*, or (by variation) **ejkcu/nw ekchuno**, *ek-khoo´-no*; from 1537 and **ce÷w cheo** (to pour); to pour forth; figuratively, to bestow:—gush (pour) out, run greedily (out), shed (abroad, forth), spill.

This entry seems to imply that the vials will be emptied quickly and with a drowning like impact. They are all sent out at one time, and the next few verses indicate that these judgments come in rapid succession.

Rev. 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

When the first angel empties his vial on the earth, those who have received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image will develop an ulcer-like sore that causes great anguish.

Rev. 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

The second angel empties his vial on the sea, and it thickens or becomes semi-solid like the blood of a dead man. This causes every living soul in the sea to die; no life form would be able to “breathe” in that substance. The “sea” is a reference to salt waters, and the impact appears to be worldwide.

I have read news articles about unusual things happening in nature, some of which discussed the abnormal “dead zones” being found in the Gulf of Mexico and off our Pacific west coast. It made me wonder if this could produce a phenomenon similar to a massive red tide, a very toxic condition that shows up in portions of sea waters from time to time.

Rev. 16:4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

The third angel empties his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; these represent the fresh waters necessary for life. They became blood. It doesn’t say “as” blood or “like” blood.

I think this is a good point to note the difference in these judgments and the trumpet judgments. The trumpet judgments were limited in their impact (thirds). The vial judgments are universal in their impact. I just don’t see how

one can conclude that these judgments are the same but just described differently.

Rev. 16:5 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.

Rev. 16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

Rev. 16:7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

It's interesting that after the third vial is poured out, the angel of the waters (which I believe is the angel pouring out the vial) takes the time to declare the righteousness of God in using this judgment. Water is life giving. Unrepentant man deserves this judgment since he is responsible for taking the life, "shedding the blood," of the saints and prophets. They are worthy/deserving of being given blood to drink.

Another voice then speaks out of (denotes the origin, or point from which it proceeds) the altar. He basically says Amen—"even so," surely, truly, verily; this is a word of affirmation.

Again, the angels seem to take every opportunity to speak of God's eternal state and praise Him as Lord God Almighty and affirm the rightness and righteousness of His judgments.

Rev. 16:8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

Rev. 16:9 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.

The fourth angel pours out his vial upon the sun. He is given power to scorch/burn men with fire. What does man do when he experiences this great heat? Does he repent and beg for mercy? No. He blasphemes, reviles and abuses the name of God, the power behind the plagues. They still refuse to repent and give Him glory, honor, praise or worship. I found a verse in Malachi that seems to apply here.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Rev. 16:10 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,

Rev. 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

Once the fifth angel pours out his plague of wrath, the kingdom of the beast is covered in a darkness that causes great pain. The wording allows for the thought that this “darkness” could be a reference to spiritual darkness, the overwhelming evil and wickedness that covers the world at this time. No reference is made to the sun or moon as specifically referenced in previous judgments. Many verses in scripture use darkness as a reference to evil.

Matthew 6:23 *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

Luke 11:34 *The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.*

John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Again, do people repent and ask for mercy? No. They continue to blaspheme the God of heaven. They realize He is the one judging them and causing their pain and sores.

When studying the book of Isaiah, I noticed a section that seemed to apply here.

Isaiah 13:10 *For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

Rev. 16:12 **And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.**

Rev. 16:13 **And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.**

Rev. 16:14 **For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.**

The effects of the sixth plague will occur over a period of time. The vial is poured over the waters of the Euphrates River to dry it up to prepare a crossing for a great army led by the kings of the east.

John also sees spirits that look like “frogs” emerge from the mouths of the dragon/Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet—the false trinity. They are empowered to work miracles (supernatural wonders/signs) and will use these supernatural powers to persuade the kings of the earth to join forces with the Antichrist.

We are not left to wonder at their purpose. They are gathering to do battle against “the great day of God Almighty,” the return of Jesus as King of kings.

Again we see from scripture how the actions of invisible spiritual forces work in conjunction with humanity in accomplishing God’s purposes. We see these forces (both good and evil) at work throughout the whole of scripture, and they are just as surely at work today. Paul very clearly stated that our fight is primarily against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

***Ephesians 6:12** “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

The writer to the Hebrews declares that the angels are “sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”

***Hebrews 1:13–14** “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*

I liked the observations on spiritual warfare made by Tony Evans in answer to questions from Jim Dailey (for an interview published in the February 2005 issue of *Decision Magazine*): “...if we are to be victorious over the devil and his army, we must learn to fight him on a spiritual level through the power of the Holy Spirit.... The spiritual realm precedes, influences and, to many degrees, determines the physical realm. The better we understand the spiritual and how it relates to the physical, the better we are able to operate as Christians.... The materialistic nature of our culture camouflages the spiritual world and makes it seem insignificant and unimportant. That is to our spiritual detriment. As Christians we have contributed by not giving the spiritual dimension high play. Look at the theologies out there today that emphasize a physical blessing as the sum of all things. We have to help people understand the cause-effect relationship. There frequently is a strong link between the spiritual and physical. That is, what we are dealing with in the physical realm often can be determined by what is taking place in the spiritual realm. Our failure to deal with the spiritual cause of the problems we encounter can really mess us up.”

Rev. 16:15 **Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

This is obviously Jesus speaking. He is saying that he will come as a thief. How does a thief come? My first thought was suddenly and unexpectedly, but the Greek states, “a stealer, to filch.” That changes my perspective, but it is still a hard verse. Satan is the thief; Jesus is coming to take back that which rightly belongs to Him. The statement is made in context with encouragement for the believer to stay strong in his faith so as not to suffer shame, and I think it references the characteristic of a thief to come suddenly and unexpectedly.

The rule of evil will be at its height, and it will be easy for one to begin to have doubts about the outcome—just as John the Baptist did when things looked the darkest to him.

***Luke 7:19** “And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”*

Jesus declares that those who stay vigilant and guard their faith as they await His return will be “extremely blessed” (**makarios**, supremely blest).

Rev. 16:16 **And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.**

This is a very interesting “he” used here. You immediately think of the Antichrist as the one who is gathering his forces together to do battle. The last person speaking to whom the *he* would apply is Jesus. Jesus is the one in control and has been all along—He will dictate the time and place of this gathering. Where did He choose? Armageddon—the hill country of Megiddo. (cf **Rev. 14:20**)

Though the armies will gather in the plains of Megiddo where other great battles have been fought, scripture declares that the final battle will be fought in the valley of Jehoshaphat outside the walls of Jerusalem.

***Joel 3:2** “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will **plead** with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”*

The Hebrew for the word “plead” makes reference to “avenge.” It is this battle that will accomplish God’s vengeance against those that have persecuted the nation of Israel.

Rev. 16:17 **And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.**

The seventh angel pours out his vial into the air; this is followed by John hearing a “great voice” from inside the temple in heaven, from the throne, saying “It is done.” David Guzik made another good point, “The fact that the bowl is poured into the air may show judgment against the prince of the power of the air and his allies.”

***Ephesians 2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Thinking—The fact that the throne is in the temple is really thought provoking. It has to be a massive, unbelievable place to accommodate all the events we have

had described to us in the scripture, and especially in Revelation, occurring around the throne of God.

“It is done”—God’s wrath is complete; the time has come for Jesus to remove Satan from power and assume His kingship on earth.

Rev. 16:18 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.

As with the 7th seal and 7th trumpet, there are voices, thunder, lightnings and an earthquake. This earthquake, however, is described as the most devastating earthquake ever “since men were upon the earth.”

As I have continued to meditate in Revelation, it occurs to me that this seems to indicate that that there might have been an earthquake that would have compared to this earthquake before man was on the earth. This again takes my thoughts back to the fall of Satan and his angels and that event’s probable impact on our planet. (See my journal on Genesis 1.)

Rev. 16:19 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.

I stopped for a little while to look up references on “great city” and to consider the flow of the narrative here in Revelation. Both Babylon and Jerusalem are referred to as the “great city” in scripture. I believe John is referencing Jerusalem as the great city divided into three parts. The second statement begins with and (also, too) which indicates the thought of another city. Also, the important truth about Babylon is that it will be destroyed. There would be no significance to its being divided that I can see.

Rev. 16:20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

I think this means exactly what it says and is referenced by the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:4--Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

Rev. 16:21 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.

This is continuing the narration of the results from the seventh vial. Men are pounded with great hailstones from heaven weighing from 83-95 lbs. according to Easton’s Bible Dictionary. It was the largest Hebrew measurement and was considered to be the largest weight a man could carry.

Do the inhabitants of earth finally repent? No. They again blaspheme God because of the exceedingly great calamity and misery caused by the hail.

There is a section in Job that has application here I believe: ***Job 38:22-23*** *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?*

I think it appropriate at this point to repeat a quote attributed to John Abent regarding the sixth seal and the seventh vial judgments. He states that they "form a giant *inclusio* in the Greek. With the sixth seal open we are told that the great Day of God's/the Lamb's wrath 'has come' and with the seventh vial we are told 'it is done.'"