

Revelation 16

When John wrote sent this message to the first century churches, did the Roman Empire appear to be on the verge of collapse? No, not at all – the Empire was at its peak of power in world history at the end of the first century AD.

Revelation 16.1-7 – The first 3 plagues

-Similar to the 7 trumpets, except:

1. The trumpet plagues were only partially effective (1/3 of men killed, etc.)
2. The trumpets called people to repentance, but the bowls of wrath were for punishment
3. Mankind is attacked directly by the 7 bowls of wrath

V1 – **Instructions from God?** Pour the bowls out

V2 – **Did the mark of the beast help people now?** No - sores (or ulcers)

- The sixth plague on Egypt was sores and boils on everything
- Also, Job was sent sores

V3 – **Second bowl?** sea was changed into blood

-**Why would this be an awful plague?** Water is needed to sustain life

V4 – **Third bowl?** Rivers and springs were turned to blood

V5-6 – **Describe the justice of God (according to the angel)?** God was fair – he was giving the Empire just what they gave the first century Christians

V7 – **The altar speaking?** Remember *Rev. 6.9* – there were martyrs under the altar; their request was "*How long?*", and it was now being fulfilled

Ray Summers, *Worth Is the Lamb*, p. 187: "Once the Empire had made the blood of the martyrs run like water; now all the Empire can find to drink is blood."

Revelation 16.8-12

V8-9 – **Fourth bowl of wrath?** Men were scorched by the heat of the sun

-**Result?** More blasphemy, cursing, etc. (no repentance)

V10 – **Fifth bowl?** Darkness on throne of the beast and his kingdom

-They bit their tongues in pain, but still did not give up idol worship

V11 – More blasphemy

V12 – **Sixth bowl of wrath?** The Euphrates dried up

-**Why was that so awful?** Because the Euphrates River was the only thing that kept the Persians from attacking the eastern flank of the Empire

-by drying up the Euphrates, God was turning the Empire River over to its enemies
-According to the ancient historian Herodotus (*History*, Vol. 1, p. 191), Cyrus the Persian emperor diverted the flow of the Euphrates and entered the city of Babylon on the dry river bed and defeated the nation of Babylon in 586 BC (remember the handwriting on the wall in *Daniel 5*) – it took place later that night

Revelation 16.13-16 – Preparation for the final battle

-Pause – **Why?** Before the seventh bowl of wrath (as with previous 7's)
-Before the seventh seal, the sealing of the saints (*Rev. 7-8.1* – thirty minutes of silence)
-Before the seventh trumpet, the eating of the book and the 2 witnesses (*Rev. 10-11*)

V 13 – 3 wicked beings?

1. Dragon = Satan (7 heads, *Rev. 12*)
2. Beast = beast from the sea (*Rev. 13.1-10*)
3. False prophet – beast from the earth (*Rev. 13.11-17*)

V 14 – What do these 3 being do? Deceive the people

How? By they are encouraging the people to go to war against God (very foolish)

V 15 – The third Beatitude – Read Galatians 3.27

V 16 – Valley in Palestine – represents all battles between God and Satan

[Read *New International Commentary, Rev.*, p. 302 – good comments here]

-If we take the Battle of Armageddon as being literal, then we must also take literally that 3 frogs will lead Satan's army (this disproves the premillennial theory about the "Battle of Armageddon")

-**Truth?** The Battle of Armageddon is symbolic of the constant battle between God and Satan, and good and evil

How do we know that it was symbolic? Because of the spelling of the location in the New American Standard Bible = Har-Magedon

-This is not the same spelling as the name of the actual battlefield in Israel: Armageddon

-So John is using symbolic language to confuse the censors at the prison

Revelation 16.17-21

V 17 – Seventh angel? the destruction of Rome

V 18 - What happened to the Empire? Lightning, thunder, a great earthquake....

V 19 – What happened to the city of Rome? It was split into 3 parts (which would have destroyed it)

V 20 – The islands and mountains fled away

V21 – 100 pound hailstones fell to the earth

What point was Christ making to John in these verses? The Empire would be destroyed (and that destruction began around 110 AD (shortly after this book was written) and ended in 476 AD (when a German tribal chieftain deposed the Roman Emperor and ended Roman rule)

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