

“The Super Bowls” (16:1-21)

For many Americans, the greatest Sunday of the year is “Super Bowl Sunday.” The Super Bowl is the National Football League Championship. It takes place every January. I came across some Super Bowl Sunday Fun Facts that I would like to share with you:

- Most Super Bowls generate \$100 million in merchandise sales bearing the Super Bowl logo.
- The Super Bowl is the top at-home party event of the year, surpassing New Year’s Eve.
- Super Bowl Sunday is the second largest day of food consumption per year, surpassed only by Thanksgiving.
- The average number of people attending a Super Bowl party is 17.
- Ninety-five percent of Super Bowl watchers watch with at least one other person.
- Nine of the 10 most-watched TV programs of all time are Super Bowls.
- An estimated 14,500 tons of chips and 4,000 tons of popcorn are eaten on Super Bowl Sunday.
- The California Avocado Commission says that on Super Bowl Sunday, Americans scarf down eight million pounds of guacamole.
- Sales of antacids increase 20 percent the day after Super Bowl Sunday.
- Six percent of Americans will call in sick the day after Super Bowl Sunday.
- Fifty-four percent of all Americans will drink coffee the morning after.
- Super Bowl Weekend is the slowest weekend for weddings.
- Sales of large screen TVs increase five times during Super Bowl Week.
- Fans spend an average of \$15 on food and drink at the stadium during Super Bowl.
- Fans spend an average of \$15 on souvenirs at the stadium.
- Fans spend more than \$50 million on food during the four days of the Super Bowl Weekend.
- Fourteen miles of soft-drink pipeline leading to 160 dispensers serve fans at the game.¹

If you think this is both impressive and bizarre, you haven’t seen anything yet. This June morning, it is “Super Bowls Sunday”! However, I won’t be preaching on football (sorry men). Rather, I will be preaching a message on “The Super Bowls” that are found in Revelation 16. These judgments are both impressive and bizarre. They are also God’s most intense and horrible judgments. Everything starts to die. The seals judgments destroyed a quarter of the earth and the trumpets judgments a third of the earth. The bowls will affect the whole earth. Moreover, while the seals and trumpets affected the people indirectly, the bowls are poured out directly on people. Let’s examine these judgments and their significance to our lives.

Verse 1 begins with a heavenly command. John writes, **“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.’”** The **“loud voice”** John hears belongs to God (cf. 15:8; 16:17).² The word translated **“loud”** is the Greek adjective *meGas*. *MeGas* means “great or large.”³ Our English translations somewhat obscure an important emphasis of this chapter because of the various ways they have translated this word. The NASB, for instance, translates *meGas* with “loud,” “fierce,” “great,” “huge,” and “severe,” all good translations, but the English reader might not notice that *meGas* is used eleven times in this chapter in connection with its events: There is a “great” voice (16:1, 17); heat (16:9); river (16:12); day (16:14); earthquake (16:18, twice); city (16:19); Babylon (16:19); hail (16:21); and plague (16:21).⁴ Since all of these “greats” are related to the plagues, we are compelled to take this series of judgments most seriously. This emphasizes the intensity or unprecedented nature of what will begin to take place on earth at this point in the tribulation.⁵ The fact that God tells all seven angels to **“pour out”**⁶ **“the seven bowls”**⁷ seems to indicate that these judgments will follow each other in rapid succession. The final act of history has begun.

Now we will look at the seven bowl judgments. The first four bowl plagues are poured out on the natural realm (16:1-9). The remaining three bowls are poured out on the Beast's throne (16:10-21).

1. The First Bowl: terrible sores (16:2). This bowl resulted in “loathsome” (evil)⁸ and “malignant” (painful) sores. This is an abscessed or ulcerous sore, often caused by infection.⁹ Have you ever had a canker sore? I have been plagued with canker sores over the course of my life. I have had up to a dozen in my mouth and throat at the same time! These sores have always been my “thorn in the flesh.” Fortunately, they only occur in the mouth. Can you imagine if you had a case of canker sores over your entire body? You would be unable to walk, sit, or lie down without pain. Such will be the case during the tribulation for those who experience these sores. It will be nearly impossible to get along with other people. People think they have relational struggles now; during this period of the tribulation, relationships will reach an all-time low. Since medical supplies will be exhausted in a few days with such a universal disaster, the world's population will have to suffer from sores that nothing can cure.

It is important to see that these sores break out “**on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.**” This plague and those that follow are not the expression of God's wrath against sin in general, nor are they punishments for individual wrongdoing. The judgment comes from God because of the world's allegiance to God's supreme opponent.¹⁰ Since these people received the Antichrist's mark (13:16-18; 14:9-10), God adds His mark to them as well. They begin to pay the penalty for their allegiance.¹¹

It's not always best to follow the crowd (see Matt 7:13-14). The crowd might be going away from God and turn you away from God. Judgment is sure to follow. Are you currently involved in practices that warrant the chastening of God? Now is the time to “get right.” Don't put it off.

2. The Second Bowl: sea turns to blood (16:3). This judgment results in the destruction of all sea life. Imagine all the world's oceans and seas turning to blood “**like that of a dead man.**” In the second trumpet judgment, one-third of all sea life perished (Rev 8:8-9). The emphasis here is greater with the phrase “**every living thing in the sea died.**” Quite frankly, this is far beyond our comprehension. The stench alone would make most people want to die.

3. The Third Bowl: inland waters turn to blood (16:4-7). Not only are the world's oceans and seas affected, so are the fresh bodies of water (“**the rivers and the springs**”).¹² Even these “**became blood.**” This resembles the first Egyptian plague where the Nile River and its tributaries were turned into blood and all the fish died (Exod 7:14-21). This is not a time for the ecologists. All of their dire predictions will come true. There will be no fresh water to drink on the earth. We think of the value of oil in the earth. Nations fight over it; wars are waged because of it. During this period of judgment, fresh water to drink will be more valuable than oil! After all, people cannot exist long without any water to drink. We take water for granted. May we never do so again!

Verses 5-7 explain why God turns all the world's waters to blood. John hears a hymn that glorifies God's justice: “**And I heard the angel of the waters saying, ‘Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.’ And I heard the altar saying, ‘Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.’**” The “**angel of the waters**” evidently refers to the angel responsible for the sea and fresh water, the superintendent of God's water department.¹³ This angel attributes righteousness and holiness to the eternal¹⁴ God for His judgment (cf. 15:3-4; Gal 6:7). He affirms that those guilty of slaying the saints (Israel) and prophets (two witnesses) deserve what they get. The tribulation martyrs from under the altar also acknowledge God's judgments as “**true and righteous**” (6:9; 15:3-4).¹⁵ Because the earth-dwellers poured out the blood of God's saints and prophets, they will drink blood. He makes the punishment fit the crime (cf. Isa 49:26).¹⁶

Think about this for a moment. How could an earthly judge be called just if he refused to condemn a wicked man and sentence him to be punished? How could a policeman be praised for standing by as a helpless victim was being robbed and beaten by a brutal assailant? God is just because He is angered by sin and He does something about it. While His delay is the manifestation of God's grace, the judgment of Rev 16 is the manifestation of God's holiness. A God who refuses to respond to man's sin is not worthy of praise. The Almighty God of Rev 16 is praised because He has judged men for their sins.¹⁷

Two principles can be found in 16:6-7: First, the world will one day pay for its treatment of believers (Rom 12:19). They rejected those who preached, and offered them the "water of life." God judges them for it by turning their water to blood. Second, because the world rejected the blood that brings forth life (Jesus), God poured out blood that brings forth death. The lesson is clear: reject what the blood of Jesus gave to save you and you will perish for eternity.

4. The Fourth Bowl: the sun scorches people (16:8-9). The fourth trumpet judgment darkened the sun (8:12), but this judgment increases the sun's intensity.¹⁸ The Beast-worshippers¹⁹ will be scorched on top of sores (16:2) and there will be no fresh water to drink to give people relief from the heat! The world rejected the S-O-N, now God sends the S-U-N to judge them.

Previously, some people repented because of the earthquake in Jerusalem (11:13), but now none do. Instead of repenting and giving God glory,²⁰ the Beast-worshippers blaspheme God. They recognize His sovereignty, but they refuse to honor Him as sovereign.²¹ They have now taken on the character of the god whom they serve (13:5-6). This means blaming God for the first four plagues, rather than blaming their own sinfulness.²² There is a real progression of rebellion in this chapter. Initially, those who dwell on the earth "**blaspheme the name of God**" (16:9), but later they go on to "**curse the God of heaven**" (16:11). Finally, as a result of the deception of the "frog-like demons" (16:13-14), and the leadership of the kings whom the demons have deceived (16:14), the men of the earth seem to gather at Armageddon in a futile attempt to overthrow God by waging war with Him (16:16). When the pain gets great enough, people do one of two things: repent or blaspheme. Sadly, most will blaspheme and curse God. This reveals that the human heart is incurably wicked.²³ No amount of punishment will purify it and change it (Eph 2:1). God must actively draw rebellious men to Himself (John 6:44).

5. The Fifth Bowl: the Beast's throne in darkness and pain (16:10-11). The darkening of the Anti-christ's throne (i.e., government) causes great pain.²⁴ From a scorching sun to debilitating darkness!²⁵ They will be groping around in pitch black running into things, hitting and bumping their sores and scorched skin.²⁶ As we have noted, there are terrible sores, an increase of heat, and an absence of water. Everyone on earth will no doubt be real testy. Imagine three little kids in the back seat of a car on a long car trip without water and air conditioning. Now multiply their reaction ten-fold and you probably have a good picture of what it will be like on planet earth. There will be great chaos, pain, and agony!

This is just a preview of the hell that is to come (Matt 8:12; 13:42). Those who reject Christ will spend eternity in darkness. But this ultimate fate is unnecessary. Hell was not prepared for humans. It was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). There was another time when there was darkness on the earth (Matt 27:45). Jesus endured three hours of darkness on the cross to take away our sin. God couldn't look upon the face of His dear Son, as every despicable sin known to mankind was placed upon Jesus. God hid the face of Jesus in darkness so we could have the "light of life." Here, the world rejects the Light so God gives them darkness.

6. The Sixth Bowl: preparation for final war (16:12-16). In these five verses, three critical events take place: The Euphrates dries up²⁷ (16:12); the false trinity gathers kings for battle (16:13-14); and the kings gather at Armageddon (16:16).

The problem that the sixth bowl poses for earth-dwellers is not a result of the judgment itself but its consequences: war. It does not inflict a plague on people but serves as a preparation for a series of final battles. The Euphrates River forms the eastern boundary of the land God promised to Israel.²⁸ This river, sometimes called the “great river,” flows some 1,800 miles from its source on the slopes of Mt. Ararat to the Persian Gulf. Now God supernaturally dries up this river that had previously turned into blood (16:4) so the kings of the East can cross with their armies.²⁹

The reason for this battle is given in 16:13-14. This battle is inspired by the false trinity to overthrow the true Trinity. The Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet³⁰ will evidently join in making a proclamation that will mobilize the armies of the world to converge on Palestine.³¹ The three unclean spirits that proceed from their mouths are demons.³² These demons resemble frogs in that they are unclean and loathsome (cf. Lev 11:10-11, 41).³³ The demons persuade the kings, but their decision is something that God, the ultimate cause, puts in their hearts (17:17). The nations are moving according to God’s plan. Movements of armies, confederations of nations, and worldwide opposition to God cannot thwart God’s purposes. Men may think they can do as they please but in reality they are accomplishing the plans and purposes of God.

These kings from all over the world will gather to destroy Israel.³⁴ That is why the armies converge in Palestine. When Jesus Christ returns to earth, specifically to the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:1-4), they will unite in opposing Him. However, God’s sovereign hand will be regulating Satan’s activities (Zech 14:2). This will not be the day of Satan’s triumph but that of **“God, the Almighty”** (16:14). He will show Himself supreme in this climactic battle (cf. Joel 2:31).

In the midst of this end-times scenario, there is a parenthetical statement in 16:15: **“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed³⁵ is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”** Jesus Christ Himself evidently gave this invitation and warning (cf. 3:3, 18). It is an encouragement directed to the Christian readers of this prophecy during the church age, before the tribulation begins.³⁶ By the time the sixth bowl is poured out believers who have not taken refuge (12:13-17) will have suffered martyrdom (13:15; 14:1-5, 13; 15:2). Therefore, there will be no believers on the earth by the time the sixth bowl judgment occurs.³⁷

This section concludes in 16:16 with the armies of the world gathering together **“to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”** We sometimes hear people speak of “the battle of Armageddon,” but nowhere does the Bible use that phrase.³⁸ The name Armageddon comes from two Hebrew words, *har* and *Megiddo*. The word *har* literally means “mountain or hill.” The word *Megiddo* means either “place of troops” or “place of slaughter.” Interestingly, there is no Mount Megiddo.³⁹ There is only a city and a plain called Megiddo in northern Palestine in the valley of Jezreel.⁴⁰

Although the phrase “battle of Armageddon” is a familiar one, it is somewhat misleading for two reasons: First, it is not a single battle but rather a whole series of conflicts that culminate at Jesus’ second coming. The word **“war”** (*polemos*) in 16:14 signifies a war or campaign, while *mache* signifies a battle, and sometimes even single combat. Second, this plain of Megiddo is 14 miles wide and 20 miles long.⁴¹ This area is not large enough to contain armies from all over the world, so this must be the assembly area for a much larger deployment that covers a 200-mile distance from north to south and the width of Palestine from east to west (cf. Rev 14:20). Several other locations are also mentioned in the Scriptures, other than Megiddo; namely Jerusalem, the valley of Jehoshaphat (an area east of Jerusalem), and Edom.⁴² So the many armies that gather are apparently spread out over a much larger area than the plain of Megiddo. John calls this area of land the “winepress” of God’s wrath (14:19; 16:19).⁴³

7. The Seventh Bowl: cosmic judgment (16:17-21). In 16:17, John writes, **“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’”** This final judgment has the greatest impact of all since the air into which the angel pours his bowl is what humans breathe. John hears God’s voice from the throne (cf. 16:1) that declares, **“It is done.”** Men would not have the Savior’s “It is finished!” on the cross; so they must have the awful “It is done!” from the Judge!⁴⁴

In 16:18-19a, John then observes a huge worldwide earthquake. It is the greatest earthquake mankind has ever experienced. The **“flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder”** are signs of divine judgment, but this earthquake is much larger than any previous one.⁴⁵ All islands are gone, every city destroyed, all mountains sink. No more Hawaii. No more Paris or D.C. No more Himalayas. John writes, **“The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”** The “great city” likely describes Jerusalem. It contrasts with the cities of the nations, and the phrase **“the great”** described it before (11:8).⁴⁶ Evidently the earthquake will destroy virtually all the cities of the world. Babylon is the most significant of these cities (14:8). It is the special object of God’s judgment, which the cup of wine that she receives symbolizes. Chapters 17 and 18 will describe the fall of Babylon in more detail. The point of these verses is that this is God’s expression of judgment (16:19b).

John describes the results of the judgment in 16:20-21: **“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.”** The earthquake will produce other effects. It will level mountains and cause islands to disappear. As the flood produced global topographical changes, so will this earthquake. It will prepare the earth for the Edenic conditions that the prophets predicted would characterize the earth during the millennium. These changes will be a fore view of the final disappearance of the old creation and the creation of a new earth (cf. 20:11; 21:1-2).⁴⁷

Our passage concludes with hailstones raining down. However, these hailstones are unusual—they weigh almost 100 pounds each!⁴⁸ Talk about a severe thunder storm! We better think twice before we complain about our weather in Washington! God’s judgment is not a laughing matter.

You think the “Super Bowl” will be exciting? It doesn’t compare with the “Super Bowls” that God has in store for planet earth. When will all this happen? Seven years from the time of the rapture. Think about it...it could happen seven years from today! If you have a relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, you’ll be spared all of this. But if you’ve never trusted Jesus to be your Savior, you will be there. You’re looking at your future...if you even survive that long!

The message today isn’t very uplifting, is it? It’s rather depressing, isn’t it? But this will literally happen. God is a God of wrath and judgment. One day He will say, “Enough is enough.” Now, let me give you some good news. The same God who is a God of wrath and judgment is also a God of grace and mercy. He wants to save you from all of this. He put a plan into place 2,000 years ago that is still in effect today.

The message is simple: God is a holy God that cannot tolerate sin. Fortunately, Jesus Christ took God’s wrath for sin upon Himself when He died on the cross. The penalty for sin was met by Jesus. If you believe in Christ’s work on the cross as the substitute for your sins, you will be pardoned. If you reject Christ’s work on the cross, God will have to punish you. But this is unnecessary, since Christ has already taken your punishment upon Himself. Will you believe in Him today?

Addendum: The Chronology of Tribulation Judgments (Revelation 6-16)

The Seals (Rev 6:1-17)

- First seal (Antichrist)
- Second seal (war)
- Third seal (famine)
- Fourth seal (death takes 1/4 of the earth)
- Fifth seal (martyrdom)
- Sixth seal (heavenly and earthly disturbances)
- Seventh seal (trumpet judgments)

The Trumpets (Rev 8:2-9:21)

- First trumpet (earth 1/3 smitten)
- Second trumpet (sea 1/3 smitten)
- Third trumpet (1/3 smitten)
- Fourth trumpet (sun, moon, and stars 1/3 smitten)
- Fifth trumpet (locusts torment men for 5 months)
- Sixth trumpet (200,000,000 horsemen slay 1/3 of men)
- Seventh trumpet (heavenly temple opened and bowl judgments)

The Bowls (Rev 16:2-21)

- First bowl (sores upon worshippers of the beast)
- Second bowl (sea smitten entirely)
- Third bowl (rivers smitten)
- Fourth bowl (sun scorches men)
- Fifth bowl (darkness upon kingdom of the beast; sores give pain)
- Sixth bowl (Euphrates dried to prepare the way of the kings of the east)
- Seventh bowl (exceeding great earthquake and hail; Babylon remembered for destruction)

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Notes

¹ Super Bowl Sunday Fun Facts: http://www.nfl.com/fans/forher/sb_funfacts.html

² Many scholars believe this verse echoes Isa 66:6 in the Greek OT, in which Isaiah tells the righteous remnant among the nation to hear “a voice from the temple, the voice of the LORD who is rendering recompense to His enemies.” See Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 578.

³ BDAG classifies *megas* in these five categories: (1) pertaining to exceeding a standard involving related objects, large, great; (2) pertaining to being above average in quantity, great; (3) pertaining to being above standard in intensity, great; (4) pertaining to being relatively superior in importance, great; and (5) pertaining to being unusual, surprising.

⁴ The KJV translates the word *megas* as “great” all eleven times in Rev 16.

⁵ The word *megales* also occurs nine times in Rev 18, which is an elaboration on the seventh bowl judgment introduced in 16:17-21.

⁶ Gk. *excheo* (“pour out”) is a term often used in the Greek OT for “pouring out” drink offerings to the Lord (Exod 30:18; Lev 4:7, 18, 30; Num 19:17) or the sprinkling of blood in the covenant rite (Exod 24:6, 8). The image is used figuratively in Jeremiah’s prayer in Jer 10:25 that God would “pour out [His] wrath on the nations (cf. Ps 69:24; Jer 7:20; Zeph 3:8), a prayer that could well be the background here. See Osborne, *Revelation*, 579.

⁷ See Lev 26:18, 21, 24, and 28, where God promises a sevenfold judgment on Israel if they refuse to obey His decrees: “If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins.”

⁸ Gk. *kakon*: pertaining to being harmful or injurious, evil, dangerous, pernicious, see BDAG.

⁹ The word translated “sore” (*helkos*) is the word used in the Greek OT to translate the Hebrew word for boils inflicted on the Egyptians (cf. Exod 9:9-11; Lev 13:18-27; Deut 28:27, 35; 2 Kgs 20:7; Job 2:7; Luke 16:21).

¹⁰ Osborne, *Revelation*, 578.

¹¹ Believers who apostatize and worship the Beast may suffer from this plague (cf. 14:9-12), but the faithful will be in a safe refuge (cf. 12:13-17) or God may protect them in other ways.

¹² However, other cataclysmic changes follow that will evidently make water available again (cf. Rev 16:17-21).

¹³ Scripture reveals that angels affect the elemental forces of nature (cf. Ps 104:4; Heb 1:7; Rev 7:1; 9:11; 14:18).

¹⁴ Cf. Rev 11:17; see also 1:4, 8, 4:8.

¹⁵ One of the dominant OT themes is the “rightness” of God’s judgment of His people and the nations (e.g., Ps 7:11; 9:8; 67:4; 75:2; Isa 11:4; Jer 11:20). Revelation also builds on this theme (15:3; 16:7; 19:2).

¹⁶ Pharaoh tried to drown the Jewish boy babies, but it was his own army that eventually drowned in the Red Sea (Exod 1:22; 14:28). Haman planned to hang Mordecai on the gallows and to exterminate the Jews; but he himself was hanged on the gallows, and his family was exterminated (Esth 7:10; 9:10). King Saul refused to obey God and slay the Amalekites, so he was slain by an Amalekite (2 Sam 1:1-6).

¹⁷ Bob Deffinbaugh, *God’s Final Word on the Last Times: Lesson 24: The Seven Bowls (Rev 16)*, 12/2/84, unpublished notes.

¹⁸ In the OT, the sun’s “scorching heat” is used in God’s judgment of Jehoiakim in Jer 36:30 and in the affliction of Job in Job 30:21, 30; cf. Jer 17:8 (cf. Deut 32:24; Isa 24:6; 42:25; Mal 4:1; perhaps the destruction of the ozone layer?). This is the only one of the first five bowls not based on an Egyptian plague.

¹⁹ Lit. “the men.” There is a definite article before “men” (*tous*) in the Greek text. The men in view are evidently the people who have the mark of the Beast and who worship him (16:2).

²⁰ Throughout Revelation, “giving God glory” is synonymous with conversion (9:20-21; 11:13; 14:7).

²¹ Cf. Rom 1:28; 2:24; 1 Tim 6:1; Jas 2:7.

²² Thomas, *Revelation 8—22*, 257.

²³ See Eccles 9:3; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-22.

²⁴ Cf. Exod 10:21-23; Isa 60:2; Joel 2:1-2, 31; Mark 13:24.

²⁵ The darkness in Rev 6:12-17 caused even world leaders to fear “the wrath of the Lamb” (6:16). But at this late date, the Beast and his followers only blaspheme God.

²⁶ Evidence that the bowl judgments will follow each other quickly is that the sores of the first bowl are still on people in the darkness of the fifth bowl. The bowl judgments come in swift succession, one right after another. In contrast, each of the seal and trumpet bowls ended before the next one began.

²⁷ The sixth bowl involves the Euphrates River, as does the sixth trumpets (9:14). Both judgments deal with the demonically inspired military forces. The army of 200 million (9:16) will kill a third of all humankind (9:18); the army in 16:12-14 will do battle against God (19:19-21).

²⁸ Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7; 11:24; Josh 1:4.

²⁹ God earlier dried up the Red Sea so the Israelites could advance on the Promised Land from the west (Exod 14:21-22; cf. Isa 11:16). He also dried up the Jordan River so they could cross over from the east (Josh 3:13-17; 4:23). Elijah too parted the waters of the Jordan (2 Kgs 2:8). Cyrus may have conquered Babylon by draining the Euphrates and marching into the city over the riverbed (cf. Jer. 50:38; 51:36). All these previous incidents should help us believe that a literal fulfillment of this prophecy is possible.

³⁰ This is the first mention of the False Prophet, but he is clearly the Beast out of the earth (cf. Rev 13:11-17). He deceives the people. What he urges them to do for their advantage eventually results in their destruction.

³¹ A deceiving spirit earlier lured King Ahab into battle (1 Kgs 22:21-23).

³² I.e., Fallen angels, 16:14; cf. Matt 10:1; Mark 1:23-24; 3:11; 5:2, 13; Acts 5:16; 8:7.

³³ The second Egyptian plague involved frogs (Exod 8:5), but these demons are only like frogs.

³⁴ Cf. Ps 2:1-3; Joel 2:11; 3:2; Zech 14:2-3.

³⁵ This is the third of the seven beatitudes in Revelation (cf. 1:3; 14:13; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

³⁶ An alternative view is that Jesus' second coming will be as a thief in that it will be sudden, and His enemies will not expect it (cf. Matt 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess 5:2). Believers who understand the revelation of this book, on the other hand, will be expecting His return. Christ's coming for the church will not be as a thief because the church is looking for His return (1 Thess 5:4; Titus 2:13). Jesus Christ urged these faithful believers to be watchful and pure (cf. Matt 25:1-30). The alternative is embarrassment (cf. Exod 20:26; Lev 18:6-19; Deut 23:14; Isa 47:3; Ezek 16:37; 23:24-29; Hos 2:10; Nah 3:5).

³⁷ See also Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 267.

³⁸ To learn more about the events of Armageddon read the following passages: Ps 2; Isa 34:1-16; 63:1-6; Joel 3:1-17; Zech 12:1-9; 14:1-15; Mal 4:1-5; Rev 14:14-20; 16:12-16; 19:19-21. See Mark Hitchcock, *101 Answers to the Most Asked Questions About the End Times* (Sisters: OR: Multnomah, 2001), 189-190.

³⁹ Alternatively, Har-Magedon may refer to the mountain closest to Megiddo, namely, Mt. Carmel. At Mount Carmel God humiliated the host of prophets of Baal who gathered to oppose Him in Elijah's day (cf. 1 Kgs 18:16-40). God and Elijah slaughtered them in the Valley of Jezreel. Mt. Tabor is another prominent hill (1,850 feet high) at the east end of this valley. Some believe it is the mountain in view here.

⁴⁰ Earlier Deborah and Barak had defeated the Canaanites in this valley (Judg 4-5), and Gideon had routed the Midianites (Judg 7). King Josiah also died there when he opposed Pharaoh Neco (2 Chron 35:22).

⁴¹ A point of interest is that Napoleon called this location "the most natural battlefield of the whole earth."

⁴² Isa 34; 63; Jer 49; Joel 3; Zech 12, 14.

⁴³ See also Paul N. Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 263-64.

⁴⁴ The Greek words used are not the same.

⁴⁵ Cf. Rev 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; Hag 2:6; Heb 12:26-27.

⁴⁶ Zechariah's prophecy of topographical changes taking place around Jerusalem at this time argues for a geophysical rather than an ethnographic division (Zech 14:4).

⁴⁷ Rev 20:11; cf. also Isa 54:10; Jer 4:24; Ezek 38:20; Nah 1:4-5.

⁴⁸ The accompanying storm will include huge hailstones that will fall on the earth crushing people (cf. 8:7). Hail was often an instrument of divine judgment in biblical history (cf. Josh 10:11; Job 38:22-23; Isa 28:2, 17; Ezek 13:11-13; 38:22-23). In spite of all these judgments the hearts of earth-dwellers will remain hard, as Pharaoh's did during the plague of hail in Egypt (cf. Exod 9:24). They will know that God sent this calamity, but rather than repenting they will shake their fists in God's face. God will stone these blasphemers with these huge hailstones (cf. Lev 24:16).