

Bowl 5, v10-11 The throne of the beast is destroyed.

“The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority”, 13:2.

Satan’s throne was in Pergamos, pagan and centre of the cult of emperor worship, 2:13.

The throne of the beast is the centre of political power of a final world empire – the epicentre of Babylon..

God's throne is in Heaven and is absolute and eternal, v17, c.f. Rev.4.

The beast's kingdom is by permission of God, 13:5, 7, c.f. Luke 4:6, John 19:11.

It is **temporary and limited in scope**, and can be terminated at any time, Daniel 7:21-27.

In John's day the kingdom of the beast was the Roman empire, with its throne in Rome, the Babylon of the time.

There will be a final and universal world empire, with a modern equivalent of Babylon.

The plague renders his kingdom “full of darkness”. This corresponds to **the ninth plague of Egypt**, Ex.

10:21-29, and was a horrifying experience for a people who worshipped the sun god Ra, now obviously defeated by the God of Israel.

It marked the end of the contest and final destruction (plague 10) was now inevitable.

The fourth trumpet judgement involved partial darkness but this is total introducing the imminent “Day of the Lord”, Amos 5:18-20, Joel 2:1-2, 30-31, c.f. Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30, (note the association of darkness and pain), and 2Peter 2:17.

The actual manifestation of this darkness is not clear – it may be literal but is more likely symbolic of some catastrophic loss of power with breakdown in communications, commerce, energy supply, law and order, resulting in chaos, and resulting in severe pain and distress and anxiety. **“Their pains and their sores” – one plague piled on another – do not cause a change of heart.**

They blaspheme the God of Heaven, c.f. 11:13 where repentance is implied, (“they gave glory to the God of Heaven”), **concentrating on their suffering rather than the sin that caused it, and blaming God for their predicament.**

They refuse to repent, c.f. 2:22, and 9:20 for a list of their sins.

The particular emphasis here is on their worship of the beast, 15:2-4 and murder of the saints, 16:5-6.

Bowl 6, v12-16 The battle of the great day of God Almighty.

In each case the angel pours out his bowl (the cause), and this results in an event (the effect) on earth.

In the case of this particular bowl John sees the process by which the outcome is accomplished, v13.

The goal of the process is **“The battle of that great day of God Almighty” - the final showdown.**

John identifies the place of the battle and gives it its **Hebrew name - Armageddon.**

The information is scanty. He obviously expects his readers to make connections from the Scriptures and fill in the details.

We need to understand the significance of the terms used.

- **The Great Day of the LORD (God Almighty). The Day of the LORD is a day(time) of judgement.**
 - **The prophets used this term when warning Israel/Judah** about impending judgement if they did not repent. They sometimes thought that they were safe and that it only applied to other nations, but they were mistaken, **Amos 5:18-27**. In **Joel 2:15-20** it initially took the form of a locust plague with the threat of a more severe "Day" in the form of an invading army, 2:1-11, c.f. **Zephaniah 1 esp.v7, 14, and 18.**
 - **It was also used to describe God's intervention to punish the nations that had attacked Israel/Judah and to rescue and restore His people after they have been chastened for their sins,** see **Zeph. 3:8** and 16-17 in the whole context of chapters 2-3, and also **Joel 2:21-27**. **Isaiah 13** is closely connected to this passage in Revelation because it describes the Day of the LORD as it would affect ancient Babylon, v6, 9, 13; 14:1-8 reveals it to Israel as "the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow ...", v3, c.f. Rev. 7:16-17. The description of the destruction of Babylon in 13:9-13 takes on a more cosmic dimension, becoming prophetic of the scenario in Rev. 16.
 - **The Great Day of the LORD refers to the events of the final judgement, of which the others are prophetic.** **Joel 2:30-32** and **Malachi 4:5** spoke of the "Great and Awesome Day of the LORD".

Once again John sees something, v13. Unclean spirits (demons) like frogs, Exodus 8:1-15, come from the mouths of the "the counterfeit trinity", This is a parody of the authority of God, 1:16, 19:15, c.f. Isaiah 55:10-11.

Ultimately satan can only serve the purpose of God, which is now to summon the nations to battle and judgement.

The earth dwellers gave their allegiance and worship to the beast 13:3-4, and became vulnerable to deception, 13:14 - part of their judgement Mark 13:22, 2Thess. 2:9-10, 2Peter 2:1-2.

Lying spirits are ultimately under the sovereignty of God and tell people what they want to hear, 1Kings 22:19-23, Ezek. 14:6-10,

Human rulers acted in a similar way, 17:1-2, 12-13, 18; **now they also are deceived by lying signs and wonders**, v14.

- **The Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty.**

God is portrayed as the warrior God - the Lord of Hosts - who fights on behalf of His people. This is a very frequent theme in Israel's history, e.g. Exodus 15, 2Sam. 5:17-25, 2Kings 19:32-35, 2Chron. 20:14-24, Psalm 18.

Of particular relevance to Revelation 16, there are several descriptions of a great final battle in the Land of Israel and involving **the physical descendants of Abraham, now restored to the Promised Land.**

Israel has attracted the hostility of the nations throughout her existence, by virtue of being a chosen people who cannot lose that identity, Ezek. 20:32-38. **They are the target of the anger of the nations against the Creator God who claims jurisdiction over the whole earth; He makes choices and apportions land according to His will and purpose. John does not need to document all of this - it is already in Scripture.** It is interesting that the Gog/Magog prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39 follows on from the prophecy of Israel's "resurrection" and restoration as a nation in chapter 37.

The Euphrates was a barrier that invading armies had to cross, e.g. the Parthians were, in John's day, a feared enemy of the Romans. In Rev. 16 **God removes any obstacles** to the invading army - **He has summoned them to come.**

The location, "Armageddon", refers to the area of the Jezreel valley adjacent to Mt. Carmel. It is the site of ancient battles, Judges 5:19, 2Chron. 35:22-24, and the route taken by many invading armies. **It is the place of assembly**, Rev. 16:16, Zeph. 3:8. **The battle itself centres on Jerusalem**, Joel 3, Zeph. 3:14-20, Zech. 12:1-9, 14:1-15.

How then should we live?

In the middle of the description of these coming events Jesus intervenes and speaks directly to His people, v15.

His words combine blessing and warning, as in the letters to the seven churches and in 21:6-8. **"Behold, I am coming as a thief"**, c.f. 3:3, Matt. 24:42-44, 1Thess. 5:2-4, 2Pet. 3:10-13. We need to be ready at all times, prepared for His coming. People who are not prepared will lose everything they have lived for - as when the burglar pays a visit!

Those who keep watching are ready to welcome the King have nothing to lose and nothing to fear; those who are not watching will suffer loss and shame, Mark 13:32-37, Matt. 25:14-30, Luke 12:35-48, 1Thess. 5:1-11.

Nakedness is synonymous with shame, Gen. 3:7-11, and judgement, Isaiah 20:1-4, Ezek. 16:36, 23:10, 29, Rev. 3:18.

Let us not be ashamed before Him at His coming, 1John 2:28-29

Keep your clothes on! In other words maintain your identity and behaviour in Christ at all times. In Revelation this is symbolized by clothing, 3:4-5, 18, 6:11, 19:8, 21:2.

Bowl 7 v17-21 It is finished (done)!

The end has come. This is the same event as in 6:12-16 and 11:15-18. The theophany, v18, 21 **is similar in nature but even more intense. This really is the end. The words of Jesus from the cross have reached their intended conclusion**, John 19:30, c.f. Rev. 21:6.

The Creator causes creation to turn on His arrogant and rebellious and God-denying human creatures. Judgements of a physical nature shake the earth. They are utterly vulnerable, despite their proud independence (though willing slaves of the dragon and his agents). Hail was another of the plagues in Egypt, Exodus 9:13-26 (hail mixed with fire, v24).

Their response, even in the midst of overwhelming judgement, only serves to confirm the righteousness of the wrath of God - they blasphemed God because of the exceedingly great plague rather than repenting of their exceedingly great sin that had brought it down on their heads.

Great Babylon, the great world city and its satellite cities, - human civilization, organized apart from and in opposition to God - is a special focus of God's anger. **It represents mankind's quest to be his own self-sufficient god**, Dan. 4:28-30, c.f. Babel, Gen 11:1-9. Babylon made all nations drink of the wrath of her fornication, 14:8.

Now God "remembers" her and is given the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath, 16:19.

Rev. 17:1-19:6 give a full description of her sins, her judgement and the rejoicing of Heaven in response to her total destruction.

This is a prelude to the presentation of the New Jerusalem - the final chapter of "The tale of two cities" that runs through the story of the Bible. The New Jerusalem is revealed as the people of God, the Bride of the Messiah, in eternal relationship with Him.