

The Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 16:12ff



Revelation 16:12-16 - The 6th Bowl

¹²The 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. ¹³And 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, three unclean spirits like frogs. ¹⁴For 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. 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!") ¹⁶And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

THE FOLLOWING NOTES ARE COVERED ON THE NEXT FEW SLIDES

Verse 12.

We see another parallel with the trumpets. The sixth trumpet dealt significantly with the Euphrates river, as does the 6th bowl.

The Euphrates and drying it up was the strategy of Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon in 536BC. He diverted the flow of the river which ran under the walls. In diverting the water he could enter the city, taking Belshazzar by complete surprise.

Given such historical fact, one does not need to conclude that the Euphrates river completely dries up (literally) to fulfill this passage.

Just as we use the word Waterloo as a symbol of defeat, so too may we use the drying of the Euphrates as a symbol of defeat.

It means that the obstruction for invaders has been removed. The city is now ready to be conquered. Its protection is removed and it is now vulnerable.

Here we have a new Babylon that must be conquered by a new Cyrus, that will

then lead to the deliverance of the new covenant people to their inheritance.

Verse 13.

Frogs? Another allusion to the exodus from Egypt. Another plague upon "Egypt" (Rev 11:8).

They are not physical frogs but "demonic spirits" who are gathering kings "for battle on the great day of God the Almighty" (v. 14).

Ahab was drawn into battle by a lying spirit in the mouths of the prophets (1 Kings 22:21-33) and he died. The demons are at work, but they are fulfilling the Lord's purposes. They are seeking victory but the Lord is setting them up for defeat.

Verse 15.

"Coming like a thief" (see Revelation 3:3). Cf. Matt 16:28. This coming of the Son of Man could refer to the judgment upon Jerusalem.

He's coming to judge. He is coming to conquer. This battle will be the judgment of Christ.

Verse 16.

Armageddon, literally, "the mountain of Megiddo." Some believe it refers to the plains of Megiddo which was the sign of many significant battles (defeat of the Canaanites by Deborah and Barak, battle in which wicked king Ahaziah and good king Josiah were killed). The nearest hill to the plain of Megiddo is Mount Carmel, where Jezebel's prophets were defeated by Elijah.

The 6th Bowl Symbols - Euphrates

1. A parallel with the trumpets (6th trumpet mentioned the Euphrates).
2. Redirecting and “drying up” the Euphrates was the strategy of Cyrus who conquered Babylon in 536BC.
3. The “drying up of the Euphrates” is therefore a symbol of defeat. The obstruction for invaders has been removed and the end is inevitable.
4. Therefore, a new Babylon is about to be conquered by a new Cyrus, that will lead to a new deliverance of the new covenant people into their inheritance.

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Here we have a new Babylon that must be conquered by a new Cyrus, that will then lead to the deliverance of the new covenant people to their inheritance.

The 6th Bowl Symbols - Frogs

1. An allusion to the exodus from Egypt and plague of frogs (cf. Rev 11:8).
2. The “frogs” are demonic spirits gathering kings for battle (v. 14).
3. Ahab was drawn into battle by a lying spirit (ordained by God) into the mouths of the prophets (1 Kings 22:21-33). This is how God judged and killed Ahab.
4. Therefore, even as the forces of evil are at work, God is setting them up for defeat.

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The 6th Bowl Symbols - Coming Thief

1. To Sardis, "Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you" (Rev 3:3).
2. To Philadelphia, "I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown" (Rev 3:10-11).
3. To Laodicea, "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen" (Rev 3:18).
4. This "coming" is the judgment of Christ upon his enemies (Matt 26:64).

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He's coming to judge. He is coming to conquer. This battle will be the judgment of Christ.

Matthew 26:64, "Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'"

The 6th Bowl Symbols - Armageddon

1. Literally means, “the mountain of Megiddo.”
2. There is no mountain of Megiddo.
3. There is the plain of Megiddo which was the site of significant battles.
4. The nearest hill is Mount Carmel where Jezebel’s prophets were defeated by Elijah.
5. Therefore, it is best to conclude that this is symbolic of a decisive battle that changes the course of history and the rulers assembled.

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The nearest hill to the plain of Megiddo is Mount Carmel, where Jezebel’s prophets were defeated by Elijah.

Revelation 16:17-21 - The 7th Bowl

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, 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, and no mountains were to be found. ²¹ And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

After so many judgments, we get to the "It is done!"

Finally, Babylon the great (v. 19) is being judged and destroyed.

Parallels to the last trumpet, Revelation 11:19, "**19** Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail."

The decreation language (v. 20) is prophetic language to speak of the fall of empires or nations, not necessarily literal in their fulfillment. No mountains? No islands? This is great political upheaval and a redrawing of the map of nations.

Who is Babylon?

1. City was struck by a great “earthquake” (Hebrews 12:26-29; 8:13).
2. Great city was split in three parts (v. 19) which has no discernable application to Rome, but to Jerusalem (cf. Ezekiel 5:1-12).
3. “Wine” (v. 19) a reference back to Revelation 14:8. The “wine of Sodom” was used to describe Jerusalem in her rebellion.
4. The hail was a judgment on Egypt, while some suggest that the great hailstones weighing “a talent in weight” refer to the heavy, white stones hurled over Jerusalem’s walls by Roman catapults, according to the account of Josephus.
5. Revelation 17 goes into further detail...

#1

Hebrews 12:**26** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” **27** This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. **28** Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

The old covenant has vanished away.

John Owen, in his commentary on Hebrews, said, “It is therefore the heavens of the Mosaical worship, and the Judaical churchstate, with the earth of their political state belonging thereunto, that are here intended.... This was the greatest commotion and alteration that God ever made in the heavens and earth of the church, and which was to be made only once.”

#2

Ezekiel 5:**1** “And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword. Use it as a barber’s razor and pass it over your head and your beard. Then take balances for

weighing and divide the hair. **2** A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. And a third part you shall take and strike with the sword all around the city. And a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them. **3** And you shall take from these a small number and bind them in the skirts of your robe. **4** And of these again you shall take some and cast them into the midst of the fire and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will come out into all the house of Israel.

5 “Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. **6** And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her; for they have rejected my rules and have not walked in my statutes. **7** Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, and have not walked in my statutes or obeyed my rules, and have not even acted according to the rules of the nations that are all around you, **8** therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. **9** And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again. **10** Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers. And I will execute judgments on you, and any of you who survive I will scatter to all the winds. **11** Therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will withdraw. My eye will not spare, and I will have no pity. **12** A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in your midst; a third part shall fall by the sword all around you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them.

It could also be a reference to the warring factions in Jerusalem (there were three factions warring and because of that, they were conquered by Titus).

#4. See Josephus, Wars V: 6:3—“The engines [catapults], that all the [Roman] legions had ready prepared for them, were admirably contrived; but still more extraordinary ones belonged to the tenth legion: those that threw darts and those that threw stones, were more forcible and larger than the rest, by which they not only repelled the excursions of the Jews, but drove those away that were upon the walls also. Now, the stones that were cast were the weight of a talent [100 lbs], and were carried two furlongs and farther. The blow they gave was no way to be sustained, not only by those that stood first in the way, but by

those that were beyond them for a great space. As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for it was of a white color, and could therefore not only be perceived by the great noise it made, but could be seen also before it came by its brightness; accordingly the watchmen that sat upon the towers gave them notice when the engines was let go, and the stone came from it, and cried out aloud in their own country language, "THE SON COMETH:" so those that were in its way stood off, and threw themselves, the down upon the ground; by which means, and by their thus guarding themselves, the stone fell down and did them no harm. But the Romans contrived how to prevent that by blacking the stone, who then could aim at them with success, when the stone was not discerned beforehand, as it had been till then; and so they destroyed many of them at one blow."

- **Stone:** In Hebrew, the word for stone is *eben* (אבן).
- **Son:** The word for son is *ben* (בן).
- **The Warning:** The watchmen likely yelled *ha-eben ba* ("the stone is coming"). Because of the phonetic similarity—and perhaps spoken in a hurried, panicked, or humorous manner—it sounded like *ha-ben ba* ("the son is coming"). A reference to the Messiah? And his coming?

Judgment on the Harlot

Revelation 17



Revelation 17:1-6 - The Great Prostitute

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

Though the fall of Babylon was announced in Revelation 14:8 and described in Revelation 16:19, another whole section is required to tell the story more thoroughly (ch. 17-19).

Babylon is portrayed as the the great prostitute, the harlot, the adulterer. The bride, the church, is the chaste, and holy one. A stark contrast to the great harlot.

NOTE: John, in earlier visions, is carried away into heaven. Here he is carried by the Spirit "into a wilderness" (v. 3).

Who is Babylon? (cont.)

6. The Babylon of ch. 17 is the same city in 14:8, “Another angel, a second, followed, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.’”
7. The woman is “seated on many waters” (v. 1) and “sitting on a scarlet beast/Rome...” (v. 3). Thus, the woman cannot be Rome.
8. The “great city” (v. 1, 5, 18) is said to be Jerusalem (11:8).
9. The title “the harlot” is an established label for Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:21; 57:8; Jer 2:2, 20). It cannot refer to Rome (or any Gentile city) since they have never been in a covenant relationship with God.
10. No city other than Jerusalem can be charged with the blood of the prophets (17:6; 18:20, 24).

#6. The language is clearly the same as Revelation 17.

#7. She is “seated on many waters” (the seas or waters have been used to refer to Gentile nations).

She is setting a a beast full of blasphemous names with seven heads and ten horns (a reference to the Roman empire; Rev 17:9-11).

#9. She is dressed like a harlot/prostitute. An image used of Israel in the OT when it forsook the true God for false idols.

#10. Finally, she is drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (this is Jerusalem’s sins).

#11. In chapter 14, the winepress was trodden “outside the city” (14:20), which almost all understand to refer to Jerusalem, yet the only “city” named earlier in that chapter is Babylon (14:8), hence, Babylon equals Jerusalem;

Thomas Nelson. Revelation: Four Views, Revised and Updated (p. 460).

Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

Shedding the Blood of Saints and Prophets

“The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy” (2 Chronicles 36:15-16).

“Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!” (Luke 13:33-34).

Shedding the Blood of Saints and Prophets

“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered” (Acts 7:52).

“Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!’” (Matt 23:34-37).

Revelation 17:7-11

When I saw her, I marveled greatly. ⁷ But the angel said to me, “Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. ⁹ This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; ¹⁰ they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. ¹¹ As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.

What is going on here?

Let's start from what we know and move to what we do not know.

#1. The beast. We've already identified the beast in Revelation 13 as Rome. Sometimes it refers to the Roman empire, othertimes to the emperor himself. Nearly all interpreters of Revelation understand that the beast is Rome.

#2. The beast has seven heads and ten horns. The ten horns (as we've already seen, refers to its power). The seven heads are seven mountains (v. 9). These are the famed 7 hills of Rome. They are also said to be seven kings (v. 10).

5 of these kings have fallen (died). One is (currently reigning). The other (#7) has not yet come, but when he does, his reign will be short (v. 10).

The identity of these kings is likely referring to the Caesars. The famous leaders of the Roman empire. The Caesar's in order are:

Julius Caesar

Augustus Caesar

Tiberius Caesar

Caligula

Claudius (Jews were expelled from Rome during his reign in 49AD because of

unrest in Rome over Christ. That's why Priscilla and Aquilla were in Corinth). Nero (he is the sixth, the one who is. This is fitting since the number 666 or 616 is also a gamatria of his name. Caesar Nero.) Galba came after Nero's suicide, but there was unrest in the empire and he reigned only seven months.

This also fits with John writing in the days of Nero before the destruction of Jerusalem.

#3. Verses 8 and 11 are more difficult.

After the death of Nero, Galba, then Otho, then Vitellius ruled in the span of seven months during a civil war that seemed to be the undoing of the empire. This time of upheaval also caused the Roman armies (led by Vespasian) to leave the siege of Jerusalem, granting reprieve.

It wasn't until in 69AD when Vespasian returned to brought stability to the empire. This stability to Rome, meant the siege of Jerusalem could continue, and Vespasian's son Titus returned and destroyed the temple and the city.

Therefore, I believe verse 8 is referring to this time of great upheaval in Rome before it rises and goes to destruction. Not its own destruction, but the destruction of the woman riding on it.

People will marvel to see the beast recover.

I believe the same meaning is in verse 11. After the seven there is another, Vespasian, who belongs to the line of Caesars, and he will lead Rome when the woman is destroyed.

The Symbols of Revelation 17:7-11

1. The beast was identified in ch. 13 as Rome or the Roman Empire.
2. The ten horns will be identified in v. 12.
3. The seven heads are said to be:
 - a. Seven mountains/hills (v. 9), the famed 7 hills of Rome.
 - b. Seven kings (v. 10).
4. The Caesars are: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba... (5 fallen, one who is [Nero], and one who reigns for a short while [Galba])
5. Verse 8 & 11 allude to the civil war in Rome, with 4 emperors in one year, ending with Vespasian assuming the throne. It is at this point that the woman (Jerusalem) is destroyed by the beast (Rome).

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Revelation 17:12-18

¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” ¹⁵ And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, ¹⁷ for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

What is happening here? Again, starting from what we know.

#1. The woman, we've already identified as a reference to Jerusalem. That "great city" is so called in Revelation 11:8. There it is called Sodom and Egypt, here the prostitute or harlot, Babylon.

But in what sense does Jerusalem have dominion over the kings of the earth? (v. 18). This could be a reference, not to the earth, but to the land. The sea are the Gentiles. The land is the Jews. Jerusalem is the leading or ruling city over the rulers of the land.

Acts 4:26-28, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—

27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place."

#2. The waters upon which the woman is seated represents the nations (v. 15). How could this be a reference to Jerusalem? The Jews were all over the

empire, not just in Jerusalem. There were synagogues in every major Roman center, all over the empire. She, Jerusalem, sat among the nations.

And it will be the nations who turn on the woman and destroy her (v. 16). They will destroy her through the beast (v. 17). But this will be God's design. He put it in their hearts (v. 17) and he has spoken it in his word (v. 17).

I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure . . . I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them . . . They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare. . . . They shall burn your houses with fire . . . and I will make you cease playing the harlot. (Ezek. 16:37-41)

#3. The ten horns (v. 12) are likely the "kings of the earth" from verse 18. They receive power or authority (assuming from God) for one hour (or a short time).

They hand their power and authority to the beast (v. 13). Which is what the Jews did. Made a deal with Rome to gain their own autonomy, at least for a time.

These Jewish rulers made war on Christ. They crucified him and persecuted his messengers, but the lam will conquer them.

The Symbols of Revelation 17:12-18

1. The woman was previously identified as Jerusalem. The “great city” of verse 18 refers back to Revelation 11:8.
2. How does Jerusalem have dominion over the kings of the earth (v. 18)?
 - a. The Greek word (ges) means land/earth and could refer to Judea.
 - b. Acts 4:26-28 uses “kings of the earth” to refer to Herod and Pontius Pilate. That is, rulers in Judea.
3. The ten horns, the kings of Judea, received temporary authority from God (v. 12) and gave their power to the beast/Rome (v. 13). At the same time, they used their power to persecute Christ and his apostles.
4. The waters under the woman represent the nations (v. 15). The Jews had a synagogue in every Roman city. But they will all hate her and destroy her (Ezek 16:37-41).

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I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure . . . I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them . . . They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare. . . . They shall burn your houses with fire . . . and I will make you cease playing the harlot. (Ezek. 16:37–41)

Significance of Revelation 16-17

1. The symbols of Revelation can be difficult, but through repetition, the message becomes clear. The predictions of Jesus are coming to pass.
2. Jerusalem, the great harlot, breaking covenant with God and whoring among the nations is ruined by the nations she abandoned God for.
3. God remains in control, granting authority for short periods of persecution, but his judgment comes decisively in the end.
4. The power of kings, emperors, and empires are insignificant compared to the Lamb who is the Lord of lords and King of kings (v. 14).
5. It is a fearful things to fall into the hands of the living God.