

Message #41**Revelation 16:17-21**

When Jesus Christ returns to earth, the whole world will know it. This will not be a quiet Bethlehem arrival. This will be a majestic display of power and authority of Almighty God because He is coming back to take over the world.

THE FINAL BOWL JUDGMENT AND THE FINAL WOE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION WILL BE A COSMOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION THE LIKES OF WHICH THIS WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN IN ITS ENTIRE HISTORY.

As we analyze this passage, we may make key observations:

OBSERVATION #1 – The seventh angel will pour out his wrath bowl upon the air. **16:17a**

God has been using His angels in many different ways in the Great Tribulation. Their assignments have varied. This is the finale of the wrath of God and once again, God will use one of His elect angels.

Now the fact that this angel pours this out “upon the air” is an indication that this judgment will be hitting every place on earth that has air. This will be a major “atmospheric plague” that will hit everyone in the world.

During the Great Tribulation, God will target areas for judgment. For example, we know some of the judgments were aimed at 1/4th of the world - Rev. 6:8. By virtue of the fact that this angel releases this in the air, it will hit everywhere in the world where there is air.

Now a judgment on the air would cause difficulty of breathing for everyone in the world. Most people don't realize how dependent upon God they actually are in being able to breathe air.

We suspect that when this judgment hits, people will be gasping for breath, coughing and trying to breath.

OBSERVATION #2 – A loud voice coming from the Temple will announce “it is done.”
16:17b

As we have pointed out, these ferocious judgments have come from the Throne of God. This is punishment coming from an angry God.

This is the voice of God announcing it is done. Only God knows when the wrath meets His standard of wrath. Only God could make this statement. God knows when enough is enough and when this point is reached in the Great Tribulation, God makes that determination.

We believe that many of these loud voice announcements will be heard on earth. God will use a megaphone voice.

OBSERVATION #3 – There will be flashes of lightning. **16:18a**

Most people do not realize that lightning flashes are directly from God, who controls the pattern of the lightning and controls where lightning hits.

Usually when we watch the weather people on TV, they attribute lightning to “mother nature.” There is no such thing as mother nature. It is God who controls the weather.

Now this lightning and thunder certainly does indicate the presence of God in this judgment. This was the same kind of thing that signaled His awesome presence on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:16-19).

Job 36:30 - “Behold He spreads His lightning about Him.”

Job 36:32 - “He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark.”

Job 37:3 - “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, and His lightning to the ends of the earth.”

Psalms 18:14 - “He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance.”

Psalms 148:8 - “Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word.”

God is going to put on a lightning show like this world has never seen and it all speaks of His sovereign judgment and power and wrath.

OBSERVATION #4 – There will be “sounds.” **16:18b**

The noun “sounds” is literally the noun voices (fwnai). This word is used to refer to some kind of speech or language. Apparently as this lightning flashing is taking place, people will hear voice sounds coming out of heaven. The text does not tell us what they are saying. We may assume from the context it has to do with the finale of the wrath of God.

Keep in mind that people will be trying to breathe and as they are gasping for air, they will hear these voice sounds that are coming out of heaven.

OBSERVATION #5 – There will be “thunders.” **16:18c**

The phrase “peals of thunder” suggests this will be a major roaring of thunder the likes of which this world has never heard before. I am not sure why the translators used the word “peals” because it is not in the Greek text. We may assume that it is based on the plural noun “thunders.” The word “thunder” is plural, which indicates there will be multiple thunderous roars that will occur—hence peals of thunder. The English word “peal” refers to a loud reverberating, ringing sound. This thunder will roar and reverberate all over the world and it will be intense.

Roaring thunder is often associated with God and His wrath. The themes of lightning and thunder in the Bible reveal the sovereignty of God and the anger and judgment of God. Don't ever forget this when you hear thunder roar and see lightning flash.

OBSERVATION #6 – There will be the greatest earthquake in the history of the world. **16:18d**

The most powerful earthquake that has ever been recorded in history to this point was an earthquake called the “Great Chilean Earthquake” that occurred in 1960. It lasted about 10 minutes. It registered 9.5. That earthquake injured 3,000 people and it has been estimated that it killed between 1,000-6,000 people.

The top ten registered most potent earthquakes of the world to hit thus far are these:

- 1) Chile (1960) - 9.5
- 2) Great Alaska Earthquake (1964) - 9.2
- 3) Sumatra Earthquake (2004) - 9:1
- 4) Tohoku Earthquake (2001) - 9:1
- 5) Kamchatka Russian Earthquake (1952) - 9.0
- 6) Chile Earthquake (2010) - 8.8
- 7) Ecuador-Columbia Earthquake (1906) - 8.8
- 8) Rat Islands Earthquake (1965) - 8.7
- 9) Assam-Tibet Earthquake (1950) - 8.6
- 10) Sumatra Earthquake (2012) - 8.6

Earthquakes typically do four things:

- 1) They destroy property.
- 2) They terrify people.
- 3) They injure people.
- 4) They bring death to people.

This earthquake here in Revelation will make all those other earthquakes look like nothing. This will be the most devastating earthquake in the history of the world.

This earthquake will do every bit of this.

OBSERVATION #7 – The great city Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8) will be split into three parts.
16:19a

We learn from Ezekiel 5:1-10 that God said He would divide the city into thirds as a sign of His anger and discipline for the sins of His own people. Ezekiel also predicts in Ezekiel 38:17-23 that God will send a great earthquake to the land of Israel as a sign of His fury and will destroy the warring nations who have come to the land.

In Zechariah 14:4 we read these words: “In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”

So our conclusion is that Jerusalem is split into three parts for three reasons:

- 1) To show God is angry with the sins that have been committed by His people in this city.
- 2) To show God is angry with nations who have arrogantly gone to war against Israel.
- 3) To display that His Son is coming back to the Mount of Olives to take over the world.

At this point in the Tribulation, there will be major topographical splitting of Jerusalem.

There will be physical changes right at the city of Jerusalem. Undoubtedly this earthquake will be critical to this occurring.

OBSERVATION #8 – The cities of the nations will fall. **16:19b**

In the Greek text, both nouns “cities” and “nations” are plural. So the great cities of the nations will come down with this one worldwide earthquake. This is quite staggering to consider.

There is an article “the” before the noun “cities” and another article “the” before the noun nations. So we could say this is a reference to specific cities in specific nations. All major cities of the world will come down at this point.

Think of the great cities of all the nations of the world—Paris, Hong Kong, Tokyo, London, New York, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, and Detroit. There is Miami. Then there is Istanbul and Sydney all coming down.

OBSERVATION #9 – God will remember Babylon and pour out His fierce wrath. **16:19c**

When we read the words “fierce wrath” they are not good. We don’t even know what that actually means, but it indicates wrath is at a completely new level.

Babylon is remembered by God, but not with fond memories. God is remembering her to give her all of the wrath that she deserves.

Now the specific details of this wrath against Babylon will be given in the next two chapters of Revelation. But what is stated here about it is that God remembers this city and He is targeting this city to receive the full brunt of His fierce wrath.

If we take into consideration the fact that God has kept the record against Babylon for centuries, what we learn here is that He does not forget and He does not overlook. Wise are the people who face their sin and deal with their sin before they get before God.

OBSERVATION #10 – Every island will flee away. **16:20a**

Now the difference between what happens here at this judgment and what happened in Seal judgment #6 in Revelation 6:14 is that in that judgment, the islands and mountains were relocated. In this judgment they are annihilated.

The image of all “islands” fleeing is intriguing. The Greek verb (feugw) literally does mean to flee from something or take flight from someone (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 468).

The point of the language seems to be that the islands would take flight away from people so that no one could catch them and hide out in them.

OBSERVATION #11 – Every mountain will be gone. **16:20b**

Again the text states the mountains were not found. So people on earth looking for some escape to the mountains will not be able to find the mountains.

The great mountain ranges of the world will be gone.

OBSERVATION #12 – Huge hailstones each weighing 100 pounds will fall on men. **16:21a**

These hail stones are coming directly out of heaven and their target is men. A 100 pound hailstone that comes out of heaven and hits a human will splatter them instantly.

God is going to fire 100 pound hail stones at humans on earth. This will be no game of dodge ball. Men will have to dodge 100 pound hailstones or they will be crushed. Most won't be able to do it.

When a man free-falls as a skydiver, he can reach speeds of 200 miles per hour and that is in an atmosphere that has wind and air resistance. God is going to sling these 100 pound hail stones out of heaven and whatever it hits, it will hit with such velocity that it will crush and completely destroy everything.

OBSERVATION #13 – Men will blaspheme God because of the hail judgment. **16:21b**

Rather than men turning to God and crying out for His mercy, they blaspheme God. What is interesting here is that all people of the world do know God controls the weather and He controls the planet.

Stupid man has been trying to get people to believe they control it. They do not. They do not control air. They do not control weather. They do not control thunder and lightning. They do not control earthquakes. They do not control hurricanes or tornadoes. They do not control hail. God controls it all. Men will admit this at this point in the Tribulation, but it will be too late.