IT IS DONE!

Revelation 16:12-21

Key Verse: 16:17

“The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’”

In the last lesson we thought of the first five bowl judgments: ugly and painful sores breaking out on the people, Christ-rejecters, the dying of every living thing in the sea, no drinking water, the burning sun scorching people, and the kingdom of the beast, that is the whole world, being engulfed into darkness. These are unbearable judgments of God’s wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth to somehow save them from the eternal punishment. But, the people of the world remain unrepentant, even cursing God. Yet, however they respond, God’s judgments are true and just, for the eternal holy God judges and the judgment is as they deserve. In today’s passage two more dreadful judgments are coming, the two final plagues of the seven last plagues in the final wrath of God before the return of Christ Jesus. They are the worst of all, frightening, more terrifying than anything that’s ever happened in the history of the world. Let’s study this passage with the title, “It is done!”

**First, the sixth bowl judgment (12-16).** Verses 12-14 say, “The 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. Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are the spirit of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.” The sixth bowl judgment is very interesting and peculiar. It is to gather the kings of the whole world for a battle to a specific place on a certain day. Let’s see how it happens. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. It is 2,800 km long, running from north to south. We remember this river. In Genesis the river Euphrates was flowing through the Garden of Eden along with the Tigris (Ge. 2:14). In this Old Testament the river Euphrates was the eastern boundary of Israel’s territory, while the western boundary was Mediterranean Sea according to God’s promise ([Genesis 15:18](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Gen%2015.18), [Deuteronomy 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Deut%201.7), [Joshua 1:4](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Josh%201.4), [Deuteronomy 11:24](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Deut%2011.24)). This river was called the great river Euphrates. In Revelation, in chapter 9 when the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God said to the angel, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates” (9:15). Then the four angles were released to kill a third of mankind through two hundred million troops of demons. Now here at the sixth angel’s pouring out his bowl the water of this river was dried up. This was really unpredicted. When we think of the situation, it was almost impossible. For at the fourth bowl judgment, the sun was burning with fire. That would melt the snows on Mount Ararat (snow-capped all year long), which was the water source of the great river Euphrates. So the river was supposed to be flooded. But it was dried up at the outpouring of the sixth bowl. Definitely, it was a miraculous and instantaneous act of God, which no one could expect. Yet, it was prophesied in Isiah 11:15, “The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals.” This is a statement by Isaiah that God is going to dry up the Euphrates River.

Then it says, “its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.” What a description! What’s going on? It says continually, “Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” Frogs were detestable, unclean things, according to Leviticus chapter 11. We remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 12:34, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” It is stressed that the three evil spirits came out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. The counterfeit Trinity, this unholy trinity of Satan, Antichrist, and the false prophet, collaborate for the work of evil spirits. Then what do the evil spirits do? Verse 14 says, “They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”

Why do the kings of the whole world gather together? Particularly, why are the kings from the east all going to march over to Palestine in the scorching sun and the dark with no water? It doesn’t make any sense. But they do it, because they have been demonically deceived. Through performing miraculous signs – magic, trickery, deception, and perhaps sometimes even supernatural, the spirits of demons gather the kings of the whole world for a battle. Here we clearly see that spirits of demons control the kings of the world, letting them move, probably using various kinds of transportation. There is a story about an evil king Ahab in 1 King 22. In going to a battle Ahab king of Israel listened to a false prophet in whom a lying spirit entered rejecting the warning of a truthful prophet. He went to battle only to be killed. Now the spirits of demons control the kings of the whole world. It is to lead them to cross the great river the Euphrates. Why? Seemingly to invade Israel to kill the remaining Jews. Or to gain control Palestine for the development of each nation’s economy. However, according to the Bible description it is for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. Not knowing what they are doing, they go into the battle to fight against God. It is further written in verse 16, “Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.” Aramageddon is in other translations “Har-Magedon.” This is Megiddo. It is an incredible place. It is about 100 km north of Jerusalem. Up the Jordan Valley is a mount called Mount Megiddo. At the foot of that mount to the west is the Plain of Mediddo. At the foot of that mount to the east is what is known as the Plain of Esdraelon, actually northeast. It flows northeast and west. it is a massive plain and it has been throughout the history of the land of Israel a battlefield. Over two hundred battles have been fought there. Napoleon saw it, called it the greatest battlefield he had ever seen. There, Barak fought the Canaanites in Judges 4. There, Gideon fought, Judges 7. There, Saul and Josiah’s death occurred. There have been some amazing and astounding wars in that place. It is a battlefield of all battlefields. And the great war gathering the kings of the whole world is going to be there.

The further description of the actual battle is written in 19:11-20. They were all killed by the returning Christ and his army. The flesh of their bodies became the food of all the birds flying in midair. According to the description of Revelation 14:20, “They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ brides for a distance of 1,600 stadia (300 km).” It encompasses the whole land of Palestine. It is also prophesied in Joel 3:9-13, “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, ‘I am strong!’ Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD! ‘Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!” It is a fierce and inconceivable, horrifying, frightening battle ended by the return of Christ. This is the worst human calamity in the history of the world. It is the most complete and devastating catastrophe the earth will ever experience. This parts well shows that God is the Sovereign Ruler over history. He fulfills his purpose even bringing the kings of the world to come to the battle and end the human history.

**Second, stay awake (15).** Amid the sixth bowl judgments suddenly Christ Jesus speaks in verse 15. He says, “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.” This is an interlude between the sixth bowl being poured out and the seventh. We remember that there was an interlude of chapter 7 between the sixth seal opening and the seventh seal opening, and an interlude of chapter 10 and 11:1-13 between the sixth trumpet sound and the seventh trumpet sound. These interludes give a kind of respite to the readers. The interlude between the sixth bowl judgment and the seventh is very short, just one verse, in a rapid-fire situation. Yet, it is very significant. He said “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.” This is one single message Jesus spoke during the time of the tribulation. We know that the first message of Revelation is written in 1:7, “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him…” Then Christ himself says of his coming seven times in Revelation. He spoke his coming to the three churches, “Only hold on to what you have until I come” to the church of Thyatira (2:25), “But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you” to the church of Saris (3:3), and “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown” to Philadelphia church (3:11). Here Jesus said, “Behold, I come like a thief!” Then in chapter 22 at the epilogue, he said of his coming three times, in verse 7, “Behold, I am coming!” (22:7), in verse 12, “Behold, I am coming soon!”, and in verse 20, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Let’s think about these words of Jesus, “Behold, I come like a thief!” Nobody knows when a thief comes. He does not set a definite time of his coming. In the same way no one knows when Jesus is coming, but he is sure to come at the time people do not expect. This is one clear message of the whole Bible, particularly in Revelation. How important it is to truly believe Jesus’ returning to the earth! In 14:1 we could think of the vision of Christ Jesus the Lamb’s standing on Mount Zion, and with 144,000. The lifestyle of those who wait for his coming is different from that of those who do not. Those who have no waiting for Jesus’ coming are engrossed with the things and concerns of this world. Jesus said in Luke 21:34-36, “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will be close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” When Jesus comes, many things we considered precious and preserved will turn out really nothing.

Here Jesus said, “Blessed is he who stays awake and keep his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.” This is one of the seven blessedness in Revelation, the third blessedness, after the blessedness of reading and hearing and taking to heart the words of this book and the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord (1:3; 14:13). People want to live a happy life. Here is the life of blessedness and happiness Jesus teaches: “Blessed is he who stays awake and keep his clothes with him…” “Stay awake” and “keep your clothes with you” are military terms for soldiers on a duty. Jesus used these words in the context of the battle on the great day of God Almighty. Soldiers are to stay awake to guard and fight. They cannot take off their clothes. Jesus said to the church of Sardis, “You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!” (Rev. 3:1-2). Jesus said this in the historical background of the city of Sardis that the city fell two times when they failed in guarding despite of their natural impregnability of being like a giant watch tower. Jesus spoke to the church of Laodicea, who were complacent in their material abundance and in their mistaken thought of spiritual riches though in fact they were in their spiritual bankruptcy, “…you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (3:17). Then we remember the words of Apostle Paul in Romans 13:11-14, “And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissention and jealousy. Rather clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” According to 1 Corinthians 1:30, Jesus is our righteousness, holiness and redemption. May we deeply believe Jesus’ coming and stay awake keeping our clothes of Jesus, who is our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

**Third, the seventh bowl judgment (17-21).** It is notable thatbefore the battle ends, the seventh plague hits. Verse 17 says, “The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’” With the seventh angel’s pouring out his bowl, the last of the last seven plagues, God’s judgment of his wrath is completed. The voice of God said, “It is done!” We remember the declaration of a mighty angel in chapter 10:6-7, “There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished.” We see how the mystery of God is accomplished with the outpouring of the seventh bowl. The voice of God, “It is done!” remind us of Jesus’ last words on the cross, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:39). When Jesus said, “It is finished”, it means all the required work for the salvation of mankind was finished. God did not need to do anything more to save souls from the eternal damnation. He completed the work for the salvation of mankind. In this complete work of salvation all that sinners have to do is to repent and believe. The required work was the sacrifice of his own Son. This was an atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. So when the Son was crucified and died in the cross, it was completed. At the very moment of his death on the cross, Jesus said, “It is finished.”

We clearly see two completions. Both are the completion and finish of God’s wrath. One was poured out on his Son, the other is to be poured out on the people of the earth. We can say that the sixth and the seventh bowl judgment are connected, which resulted in the death of all those who rejected Christ the Lamb, particularly in the battle at Armageddon, with their blood rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 300 km. The blood of the Lamb shed on Mount Calvary and the blood of those who rejected the Lamb shed on Megiddo make a sharp contrast. The one provided forgiveness and grace for sinners; the other provides destruction and damnation for sinners. On Mount Calvary, Jesus Christ died for sinners for their eternal life. On Mount Megiddo, sinners die themselves for their eternal destruction. Now still each individual can choose between the two. There is no other option. Each one’s choice will be crucial now and forever. In light of much blood-shedding battle at Megiddo, what a marvelous grace it is that God poured out his wrath on the Son at Mount Calvary and we can take refuge in him, his cross and shed blood.

Verse 17 says that the seventh bowl judgment was poured into the air or the atmosphere. Why into the air? What we can infer is that according to Ephesians 2:2 Satan is called the ruler of the kingdom of the air. We know that in Revelation 12 All the demons in the air were hurled down to the earth when Satan and his angels lost their place in heaven by being defeated by Michael and his angels. Probably the seventh bowl judgment was cleansing the domain where Satan last ruled. But also probably the air is indicated because there are cataclysmic changes in the atmosphere. What else is going to produce huge hailstones of a hundred pounds each coming out of the sky? Certainly not any kind of weather pattern that humanity has ever known in the heavens that now exist. We can infer that there is a massive alteration of the atmosphere. We will think more about it later.

Now in verse 18 it says, “Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake.” The expression, “flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder” is written four times in Revelation. In 4:5, “From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.” In this, the heaven is ready to pour out God’s judgments of three series of seal, trumpet and bowl on the earth. When the seven seal judgments were completed through the opening of the seventh seal, which triggered the seven trumpet judgments, it is written in 8:5, “Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lighting and an earthquake.” When the seven trumpet judgments were completed through the sound of the seventh trumpet, which triggered the seven bowl judgments, it is written in 11:19, “And there came flashes of lighting, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.” Now when the seven bowl judgments were executed, then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a sever earthquake.” These repeated expressions assure that these judgements are from the throne of God. Interestingly, at each time, an earthquake is added. Now the earthquake at the seventh bowl judgment is incomparable.

Verses 18b says, “No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.” Particularly it says, “So tremendous was the quake.” This severe great earthquake is truly quaking the earth. It is the greatest shaking ever. It is worldwide. In Genesis 6, when the earth was split open, the fountains of the deep could gush forward and form the continents and the oceans. Since then there has been earthquakes. The tectonic plates were formed in the Great Flood, it is their moving that creates the earthquakes. And we’ve always had them somewhere in the world all the time. The earth we have is an unstable. It never was designed to be the way it is. God created it perfectly and it didn’t shake. It stayed still until sin caused it to be broken up. The prophet Haggai said in 2:6, “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.” God shook once in the curse, and the flood was part of that. Once more he is going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land and also shake all nations. We see this great shaking here in Revelation that the prophet talked about. This planet must be restored because it is cursed. Even the solar system and the environment around the earth is cursed, and it too has to be cleansed. We remember that through the book of Revelation all kinds of things have been catapulting loose out of heaven as the solar system has been breaking up. Huge massive chunks of the solar system crashed into the earth. And this cursed tottering imbalanced unstable shaking earth is set for a final shaking. And the final shaking is to put it back the way it was before the curse, the Fall, and the Flood.

The effect of this earthquake is written very concisely in verse 19, “The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed.” This great city is Jerusalem according to 11:8. In chapter 11 what happened was that after two powerful witnesses’ finishing their testimony and death and resurrection and ascension, there was a sever earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. This was the description of the Israelites returning to God. Now here this city split into three parts. Zechariah 14 says that when the Lord comes, he will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split. If the Mount of Olives is going to be split, that certainly meant the split of the city Jerusalem. And then Zechariah describes an incredible thing in verse 8, “On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea (the Dead Sea) and half to the western sea (the Mediterranean), in summer and in winter.” This earthquake isn’t going to judge Jerusalem, it’s going to enhance it, because Jerusalem has already been converted. It could be the signal of the renewal of the earth for the Christ’s reigning on the earth. And then the topography of the whole earth is altered drastically. How interesting it is that in God’s judgement includes the renewal of the earth and collapse of other cities of the nations. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. This is the destruction of Babylon the Great, which is written in detail in chapters 17 and 18.

Verse 20 says, “Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.” Islands are mountains in the sea. All became flat through the earthquake. It would be like the pre-flood state, preparation for his millennium kingdom. In verse 21, “From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.” Sinners curse God to the end, heading toward eternal punishment of the fiery lake of burning sulfur. God could renew the earth from the destruction, which surely was not that difficult to God Almighty, probably in a day or less than that, but the renewal of people certainly was not easy at all to him. It requires each sinner’s repentance. God could not forcefully renew them. The renewal of sinners can be done only through the gospel. When they reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, they curse God to the end amid God’s terrifying and unbearable judgments. Anyway, we see that to save sinners to the end he went through the seven years of tribulation time.

Thank God that he is the God of completion. The voice of God said, “It is done.” We could recall our Lord Jesus’ last word on the cross, “It is finished.” In the marvelous grace of our Lord Jesus on whom God’s wrath was poured out and whose blood was spilt on Calvary, may we be clothed with him and stay awake, firmly believing and waiting for his coming like a thief and participating in work of the renewing sinners.