

# THE BOOK OF REVELATION: VERSE BY VERSE

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## WEEK FOURTEEN

### I. THE INTERLUDE AND THE SEVEN BOWLS OF GOD'S WRATH (Rev 14:1 – 16:21)

#### A. The Interlude (14:1-20)

1. The Lamb and the 144,000... (14:1-5)
  - a. John revisits the symbol of those who were martyred (Revelation 7)...
  - i. ***"These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins..."***: this is likely a mixture of symbolic imagery tied to the ancient expectation of soldiers in a holy war and the linkage of idolatry with adultery...
2. The three angels... (14:6-13)
  - a. These angels are preparing us for the final round of seven judgments on the earth...
    - i. The first angel offers the final opportunity to experience God's grace...
    - ii. The second angel declares God's final judgment over the Satanic kingdom...
    - iii. The third angel declares the final outcome for those who give allegiance to the Satanic kingdom...
3. The grain harvest... (14:14-16)
  - a. It appears that these verses depict the final gathering of those who respond to the Gospel...
4. The trampling of the grapes... (14:17-20)
  - a. It appears that these verses depict the final judgment of those who reject the Gospel...
    - i. ***"1600 stadia"***: the traditional length of Palestine from top to bottom... It is also 40 times 40 (40 being the traditional number of sinful disobedience.) The final judgment is extensive.

#### B. The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath (15:1 – 16:21)

After an excursion that unpacked the content of the previous sevens (the seven seals and the seven trumpets), John now describes the final series of sevens... The intensity has increased with each cycle. This final round has the highest intensity. The previous cycles were for the purpose of bringing about repentance. This cycle represents God's wrath – His holiness in action, His strong and settled opposition to all that is evil. This final cycle is for the purpose of final judgment.

1. Those who were martyred by the beast now celebrate at the judgment of the beast... (15:1-4)
  - a. They ***"sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb"***: the final plagues echo the plagues against Pharaoh. The martyrs sing by the sea just as Israel sang by the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-21).
2. The angels prepare to unleash the seven bowls of wrath... (15:5-8)

### 3. The seven bowls are poured out... (16:1-21)

- a. The first bowl: sores upon those who worshipped the beast... (vv. 1-2)
- b. The second bowl: the sea turns to blood... (v. 3)
- c. The third bowl: the freshwater rivers and springs turn to blood... (vv. 4-7)
  - i. Recognizing the awfulness, the angel reminds us of the justice of this moment...
- d. The fourth bowl: the sun increases in intensity... (vv. 8-9)
  - i. The stubbornness of the people is evidenced in their refusal to repent.
- e. The fifth bowl: the throne of the beast is destroyed... (vv. 10-11)
  - i. The stubbornness of the people is evidenced once again in their refusal to repent.
- f. The sixth bowl: God sets the scene for a final, cataclysmic battle... (vv. 12-14)
  - i. The “unholy trinity” stirs up the people for the battle...
  - ii. This final battle is described later in chapters 17-19...

#### ***A Brief Interlude... (vv. 15-16)***

Following the same pattern he used with the seals and the trumpets, John has a brief interlude between the sixth and seventh in the sequence. He calls God’s people to remain watchful and ready. He then names the place of the upcoming final battle. The name “**Armageddon**” literally means “Mount Megiddo”. Strictly speaking, there is no such place. Opinions vary as to whether or not this is apocalyptic symbolism or if there is a literal final battle in a literal geographical place...

- g. The seventh bowl: into the air it is poured, causing worldwide catastrophes... (vv. 17-21)
  - i. Satan’s political and religious systems (Babylon the Great) and capital city is destroyed...
  - ii. The stubbornness of the people is again evidenced in their continued refusal to repent...