

INTRODUCTION:

Part-7 consisted of seven visions or scenes depicting a series of events or declarations associated with the end; preparations for the punishment which is about to be completed. We were shown a glimpse of the Lamb, and 144,000 who follow Him gathered at Mount Zion in heaven. We heard an angel proclaim the gospel to all nations and warn of impending judgment. We heard proclaimed the fall of Babylon, the proclamation that those who follow the beast will suffer God's wrath, and a blessing for those who die in Christ. And finally, we witnessed the harvest of the elect and gathering of the wicked for punishment. Part-7 covered only one chapter, Revelation 14.

Part-8 will comprise chapters 15 and 16. Chapter 15 sets the stage and introduces us to the final set of plagues—the six bowls of wrath. The first expressions of God's punishment began with the seven seals (6:1-17). Out of the seventh seal came the seven trumpets (8:1-13; 9:1-21; and 11:15-19). Out of the seventh trumpet follows the last seven bowls of God's wrath (15:1; 16:1-21). Bowls are used because the contents can be poured out quickly. We should be reminded of Revelation 1:1 where we learned that coming "soon" did not mean a short time from now, but "quickly" as in when the end begins it will happen over a very short length of time. The tribulation of seven years is finished when the pouring of the seven bowls of wrath is completed, but this will not mark the end of Revelation. The pouring of the seven bowls of wrath will be the fiercest expression of God's anger. These seven judgments will include: (1) the bowl of loathsome and malignant sores covering the bodies of those who received the mark of the beast; (2) the sea of blood, which causes everything in the sea to die; (3) the rivers of blood, which will render rivers and springs undrinkable; (4) the scorching heat of the sun; (5) the darkness that causes pain; (6) the drying up of the river Euphrates allowing an army to march on Israel; and, (7) the air is affected in such a way that the face of the earth is changed, and huge hailstones fall from the sky. Again we will witness a brief pause between the sixth and seventh bowl. This will be the gathering for the final great battle of Armageddon. Many of these final plagues seem to have parallels in the previous seals, especially in the trumpets. Some scholars believe the seals, trumpets and bowls are a three-fold expression of the same punishments, but there are differences. Perhaps they better represent God's deepening warning to repent or face eternal judgment.

CHAPTER 15:

In this chapter, we are provided an introduction to the seven last plagues of God's wrath. But this is more than an introduction because it also provides assurance that those who have remained faithful will not suffer God's wrath. We even hear a celebration of praise and thanksgiving for God's righteousness and justice.

Revelation 15:1, states: ***“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.”*** Again we are shown a scene in heaven, a view of things happening that we cannot see on earth. The scene is “great and marvelous” for it depicts the greatest and fiercest of all the punishments, but it is also reassuring that this will be the finish of God's wrath. If God's wrath is finished then it must be satisfied, and therefore, justice for the wicked complete. Regarding the seven angels, we do not know if they are the same seven that were mentioned in 8:1 and 6, who blew the seven trumpets. Again, seven is a number of completeness. While we heard seven angels blow seven trumpets, in many places in Scripture we are told only that the end will come with the blowing of the “great” or “last” trumpet. We are now about to have seven angels pour out seven bowls of wrath, but this can be seen as the “great” and “final” punishment.

Revelation 15:2, states: ***“And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.”*** Revelation 4:6 described a “sea of glass” which was part of the first “scene in heaven” we were shown. This was the first time we were shown God on His throne surrounded by four living creatures and twenty-four elders. This time the sea of glass is mixed with fire. Any sea that looks like glass can be said to be calm, without turbulence, and peaceful. The “mixed with fire” may be a reference to the refining fire that those who have come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name have endured. They have passed through fire to a place of peace. Isaiah 43:2-3a, describes those redeemed by God as having endured passing through flood and fire, saying, ***“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”***

These who are victorious now stand “on” the sea of glass, which indicates that they are above and present in heaven. In 5:8 we were told that each of the twenty-four elders around the throne of God was given a harp. Now we are told that all those who stand on the sea are holding harps of God. They have glorified God through their faith in remaining faithful, and thus becoming victorious over the beast. Now they will glorify God as instruments singing His praise.

Revelation 15:3-4, states: ***“And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying,***

***“Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty;
righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations.
Who will not fear O Lord, and glorify Thy name?
For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship
before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed.”***

The song of Moses is in Exodus 15 and was sang by Moses and the Hebrew people after God rescued them by allowing them to safely cross the Red Sea on dry land, and then causing the sea to return and drown Pharaoh and the Egyptian soldiers. When the people saw that God had delivered them through His mighty power they sang Him praise. The same applies here. The words are not the same as in the original song of Moses, but the meaning and intent are the same. They express glory to God for the victory He has provided. It is perhaps important to note that the term “righteous acts” at the end of verse 4 above can also be translated as “judgments.” Therefore what is being revealed is that God is now about to pass “judgment” upon the wicked, which is considered a “righteous act” because those to be judged deserve the punishment they are about to receive.

Revelation 15:5-6, states: ***“After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their breasts with golden girdles.”*** Previously, when the seventh trumpet was blown, heralding the beginning of the reign of Christ, we were told that ***“the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple”*** (Revelation 11:19). Now we are told again that the temple in heaven is opened. We are also given a new description, saying, ***“the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was***

opened.” The “tabernacle of testimony” is mentioned several times in the Old Testament as part of the tent tabernacle that housed the Ark of the Covenant, and items used for the worship of God. Essentially, the tabernacle functioned as God’s house or dwelling place. The Ark of the Covenant was viewed as God’s seat, and was placed in the “holy of holies” inside the tabernacle. Within the Ark were placed the Ten Commandments and a jar of manna as a testimony. In Exodus 40:21 the Ark is referred to as the “Ark of Testimony.” The Ark of Testimony resided in the tabernacle of testimony. The Ark of the Testimony was always kept concealed in the holy of holies, and it was only accessed once a year on the Day of Atonement by the high priest. The Greek word translated as “testimony” literally means “witness, evidence or proof.” Therefore, what is happening in this scene is that God’s tabernacle (dwelling place) is being opened so that the testimony (evidence and proof) can be witnessed.

The seven angels have an appearance similar to that described of Christ in Revelation 1:13, which described Him as “girded across His breast with a golden girdle.” The angels are also said to be “clothed in linen, clean and bright,” which is a description normally associated with purity and righteousness. We can glean from this entire description that the angels act for Christ, and the punishment about to be poured out is righteous and just.

Revelation 15:7, states: ***“And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.”*** We already know that the four living creatures constantly serve and worship God. Previous descriptions seem to place them closest to God’s throne. It may seem an oversimplification, but perhaps from this we can surmise that the bowls of wrath given to the angels come directly from God by means of one of the four living creatures.

Revelation 15:8, states: ***“And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.”*** In Exodus 40:34-35 we are told that when the cloud of God rested on the tabernacle, it was filled with smoke and power and glory of God. During that time, Moses could not enter the tabernacle. Above the tabernacle God would appear as a column of smoke by day and a column of fire by night. Only when God lifted up and no longer rested and filled the tabernacle could it be entered.

This earthly event seems a foreshadowing of this heavenly scene. The tabernacle in heaven cannot be entered by man or angel until the seven angels have finished pouring out God's wrath upon the wicked.

CHAPTER 16:

In this chapter we will hear described the final seven punishments of God through the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath. We will discover the descriptions to have similarities to both some of the plagues that fell upon Egypt when God delivered His people, and the punishments described in the breaking of the seven seals, and especially the sounding of the seven trumpets. Some scholars believe the seals, trumpets and bowls of wrath depict the same events, while others see them as a series of escalating punishments. Because of the distinct differences and obvious partial nature of the punishments found in the seals and trumpets, it seems more likely that these events reflect separate, escalating punishments. One thing is certain, the punishments depicted in the bowls of wrath are extremely severe and the most complete. Let us now examine in detail the final punishments in the seven bowls of the wrath of God.

Revelation 16:1, states: *“And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.”* In 15:8 we were told that the temple was *“filled with the smoke from the glory of God and from His power and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.”* This means no one but God Himself is in the temple, therefore the voice coming from the temple is the voice of God. The seven bowls of wrath have come from God and it is God who commands they be poured into the earth. The NASB translates the Greek preposition as “into” but based on context it could equally be translated as “in, on, upon, or onto.” There is no hidden meaning implied here. The NASB likely uses “into” because the bowls' contents will be poured out, and the earth will receive them. There is a sense that they will not be spilled beyond those who are destined to receive them, therefore, they are poured “into” the wicked on earth.

First Bowl: Plague of Ulcers

Revelation 16:2, states: *“And the first angel went and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.”* This plague seems partial fulfillment of the angel’s warning in 14:9-10, that those with the mark of the beast will drink of the wine of the wrath of God. The description of the affliction closely resembles that described in Exodus 9:8-12, which depicts the fifth plague that God brought upon the Egyptians through Moses in order to force them to release His people. This was the plague of “boils breaking out as sores” (Exodus 9:9). This first plague is intended to cause misery but not death. This is also reminiscent to the “sore boils” that Satan inflicted Job with in an attempt to induce him to curse God, but Job remained faithful even in his suffering. This will not be the case for the wicked of the earth.

Second Bowl: Sea Turned to Blood

Revelation 16:3, states: *“And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.”* The second bowl plague, like the second trumpet (8:8-9), causes the sea to turn to blood. The second trumpet only affected a third of the sea, but this time all the sea will die. The water is turned into blood “like that of a dead man,” which would be foul and coagulated. The trumpet sounded a warning and only a partial punishment, allowing room and providing encouragement for repentance. This time death is total and complete. The sea will no longer yield its fruit for man.

Third Bowl: Rivers and Springs Turned to Blood

Revelation 16:4, states: *“And the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water; and they became blood.”* All life in the sea, the salt waters of the world, died with the pouring out of the second bowl. The third bowl makes all the drinking water in rivers and springs undrinkable. Through the blood of Jesus Christ the righteous have been saved, but the wicked have shed the blood of the saints, martyred because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus called the wine at the Last Supper, His blood of the new covenant. It is the cup of salvation, and the blood that washes away sin. The first plague upon Egypt was when the Nile River was turned to blood along with all the

springs of the land (Exodus 7:14:25). Likewise, as the second trumpet killed a third of the sea, the third trumpet rendered a third of the rivers and springs bitter and undrinkable (8:10-11). Again, unlike the partial warning of the trumpet, the wicked of the earth are deprived all fresh water and forced to drink the blood of God's wrath.

Revelation 16:5-6, states: ***“And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it.”*** We have seen that there were four angels of the wind (7:1), and an angel over fire (14:18), so there apparently is an angel over the waters. Though the waters are turned from fresh to blood, the angel declares this to be righteous. Seemingly echoing the song of Moses sung by the bond-servants of God in 15:3-4, the angel proclaims the judgment of God to be righteous and the wicked to be deserving of the punishments they now receive.

Revelation 16:7, states: ***“And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.”*** With the breaking of the fifth seal the martyrs under the altar cried out with a loud voice asking God to judge the wicked, avenging their blood. It seems fitting that the altar, or those under the altar, now cry out as God's judgment is poured out and the blood of the martyrs is avenged. This voice confirms the words of the angel, that God's judgments are righteous and just.

Fourth Bowl: Scorching Heat of the Sun

Revelation 16:8-9, states: ***“And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory.”*** We continue to see somewhat of a parallel between the trumpets and the bowls. Just as the second and third trumpets affected a third of the sea and rivers, as the second and third bowls affected all of the sea and rivers, so also the fourth trumpet and fourth bowl affect the sun. The fourth trumpet brought darkness to the sun as a warning (8:12). The fourth bowl affects the sun by increasing its heat and scorching the earth. Peter warns of an “intense heat” coming with the Day of the Lord, saying, ***“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the***

heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). It is not certain that this is the same heat that Peter speaks of because this heat inflicts great misery but does not kill. Instead, it causes the wicked to blaspheme the name of God who has power over the plagues. It would appear that even now God leaves room for repentance because we are told *“they did not repent, so as to give Him Glory.”* It would seem that even to the end, the wicked would rather suffer than change their ways and acknowledge God as Lord. What is interesting is scientist claim that the sun is getting hotter, especially over the past 60 years, which would roughly correlate to begin about the time Israel was reborn as a nation. While the debate continues if global warming is the product of greenhouse gasses or due to increasing heat from the sun, we should take note that things are getting warmer on the earth. It is changing our seasons and causing damage. Let us heed the warning!

Fifth Bowl: Darkness of the Beast’s Kingdom

Revelation 16:10-11, states: *“And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.”* Again there is a strong correlation between the fifth seal and the fifth bowl of wrath. The fifth seal caused an opening in the bottomless pit, resulting in smoke coming out and darkening the earth (9:1-2). Also out of the pit came forth demon locust that hidden in the darkness afflicted pain on the wicked, but were not allowed to touch those sealed by God (9:3-6). There is also a strong parallel in the second to the last plague upon Egypt. God commanded Moses, saying *“Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt”* (Exodus 10:21). The darkness was a terror to the Egyptians, but God allowed light in the dwellings of the sons of Israel. There are a number of modern visionaries who claim that God has shown them visions of the end. They consistently describe a period of three days of darkness when demons roam the earth tormenting and perhaps killing the wicked, while the faithful take refuge in their homes in prayer, and with candles that do not burn out during the three days of darkness. Also, the prophet Joel speaks of the darkness that will come on the Day of the Lord,

describing it as: *“A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness”* (Joel 2:2a). With the fifth bowl we are told darkness will be poured out on the *“throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened.”* In the letter to the church at Pergamum (2:12-17) we are told they dwell where “Satan’s throne is” (2:13). I don’t think this refers to just a specific location but a specific condition. This church suffered because it dwelled in a place of self-indulgence and idolatry, which is consistent with what we have learned to be the influence of the beast, or Satan. We can surmise that the content of the fifth bowl will be a darkness that can be felt, which will cause those who hold to self-indulgence and idolatry to suffer greatly. They will suffer to the point of blaspheming the God of heaven for the pain they suffer, but they will not acknowledge that their pain is the result of their own sin, and therefore continue unrepentant.

Sixth Bowl: Kings of the East Assemble for Armageddon

Revelation 16:12, states: *“And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.”* A strong correlation with the trumpets continues. The sixth trumpet *“released the four angels who were bound at the great river Euphrates”* (9:14). The release of the angels will result in an army of two hundred million killing a third of mankind with fire, brimstone and smoke (9:15-18). Many scholars identify this event with a great and terrible final battle or war. The verses which follow (16:13-14 & 16) make reference the great and final battle known as Armageddon. The Euphrates River runs from near the Black Sea to the Gulf of Arabia, separating Israel from the eastern and Communist bloc countries of Russia and China. According to Ezekiel, the great forces which will come against Israel at the end will be led by Russia and a number of Middle Eastern nation allies, which include those currently in conflict with Israel. What is extremely interesting is that the great Euphrates River is drying up. Turkey is primarily being blamed for hoarding waters and not allowing them to flow on to Iraq, causing crop failures. The problem according to scientist and conservationist is much larger. It seems that all of the nations along the Euphrates are overusing the waters, and combined with several years of draught in the region, the river is literally drying up. Many site this as a sign of the end times.

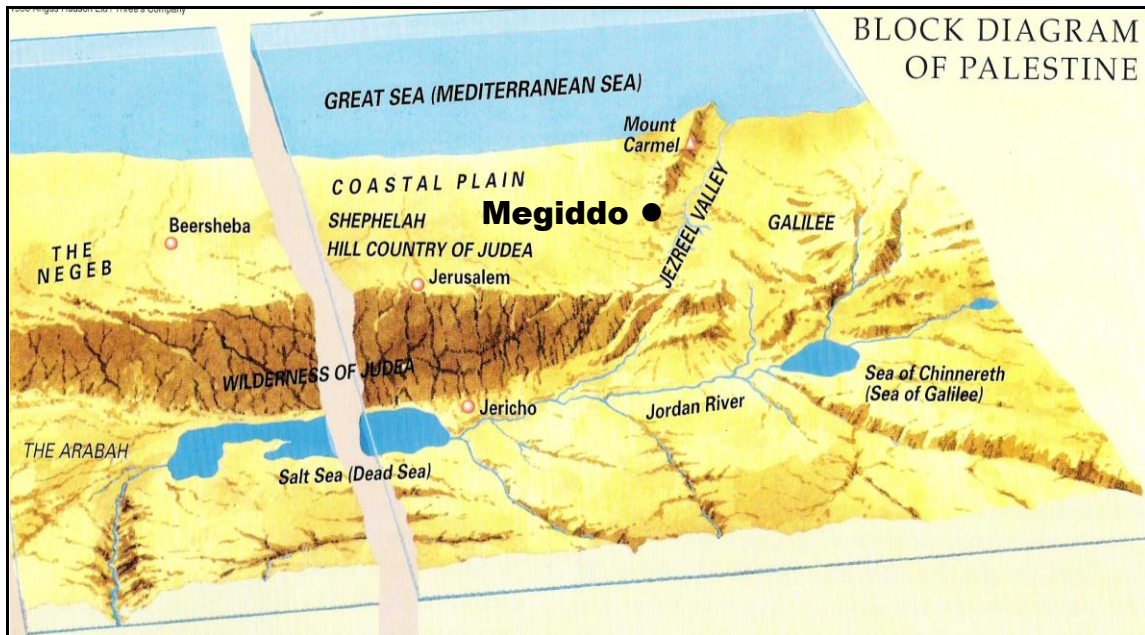
Revelation 16:13-14, states: ***“And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the almighty.”*** The second plague upon the land of Egypt was the plague of frogs (Exodus 8:1-15). Pharaoh’s magicians did the same with their secret arts, also making frogs come upon the land in an attempt to duplicate and negate God’s power. Here we find “unclean spirits like frogs” which are “demons” coming out of the “mouths” of Satan’s unholy trinity, consisting of the dragon, beast and false prophet. Their coming out of the “mouth” may indicate they will take the form of deceptive “words” to persuade the kings or leaders of the earth to gather to make war. This will be the great battle of Armageddon, which will take place near Jerusalem in Israel.

Revelation 16:15, states: ***“(“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.”)*** This insertion seems out of place and a sudden intrusion, or perhaps a declaration to remind us that the signs of the end will not be so clear that we easily identify the Lord’s return. Jesus warns us in Matthew 24:43-44 that we need to always be on the alert and ready for His return, saying, ***“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will”*** (Matthew 24:43-44). A thief can only break in and steal if we are unaware of his presence, and unprepared for his coming. Jesus is not a thief for it is the devil that would have you distracted and unprepared so that he may steal your soul. Christians know that they must always be doing what is right, and ready for the Lord’s return so that He does not overtake them “like” a thief. Paul essentially warns of this in 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6, saying, ***“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.”*** In the letter to the church of Sardis, Jesus also warns that if we are asleep we need to wake up, saying, ***“Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and***

keep it, and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you” (Revelation 3:3). Regarding the reference to being “naked,” it refers to being unprepared, as in not being clothed in Christ but clothed in shame. In the letter to the church in Laodicea, Jesus said: **“Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see”** (Revelation 3:17-18). Just as we saw between the sixth and seventh seals, and between the sixth and seventh trumpets, this verse provides a brief interlude before the final punishment.

Revelation 16:16, states: ***And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.*** Armageddon is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew “Har-Magedon.” It has come to be seen as the final battle, the last great confrontation between good and evil arrayed at ***“the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”*** The Hebrew prefix *har* means mountain or city, and many scholars believe that Har-Magedon refers to “the mountain of Megiddo,” or the “city of Megiddo.” Megiddo was a fortress city located in central Palestine, northwest of Jerusalem. Throughout history this area had been a primary thoroughfare into Jerusalem for invading armies. The hills that stood overlooking the plains protected the city and had often been a “last stand” battle position for the Hebrew armies. If there were any kind of final, cataclysmic battle that involved Palestine and Jerusalem, Armageddon would be seen, especially by the Jews, as the classic, timeless battleground. The map on the next page illustrates that the area around the ancient site of Megiddo is the only approach for an invading army coming against Israel and Jerusalem. Mountains running north and south along the Jordan River valley would make a direct assault from the east impossible. The Jezreel Valley lies in front of Megiddo, and one must wonder if this will be the valley of judgment spoken of by the prophet Joel. Joel speaks of judgment coming after the nation of Israel is restored, saying: ***“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with***

them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land” (Joel 3:1-2).



Regarding “when” the nations will gather and the battle of Armageddon will take place, according to Joel 3:1-2, it will take place sometime after the “fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem” are restored. Judah was the son of Israel and the nation of Israel was reborn in one day on May 14, 1948. This fulfilled the prophecy found in Isaiah 66:8, which declared: *“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.”* Then, in 1967 during the Six-Days war, eastern Jerusalem and the temple mount were captured by Israel. Thus, Israel became a nation in one day and became complete in seven.

Regarding “why” the nations will gather around and against Israel, Psalm 83 provides insight. Here we read that at some point the nations of the world will conspire against God and His people Israel, and gather in an attempt to destroy Israel. We must remember Revelation 12:17, when after being cast out of heaven, the dragon (Satan) *“went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”* We know that the offspring of the woman is first the Jews, and also includes all Christians. Regarding God’s chosen people, Israel, Psalm 83:1-4 states: *“O God, do not remain quiet; do not be silent and, O God, do not*

be still. For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar; and those who hate Thee have exalted themselves. They make shrewd plans against Thy people, and conspire together against Thy treasured ones. They have said, "Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more."” Certainly we see the Islamic nations surrounding Israel conspiring against Israel, and some have openly expressed their desire and pledge to wipe out the nation of Israel.

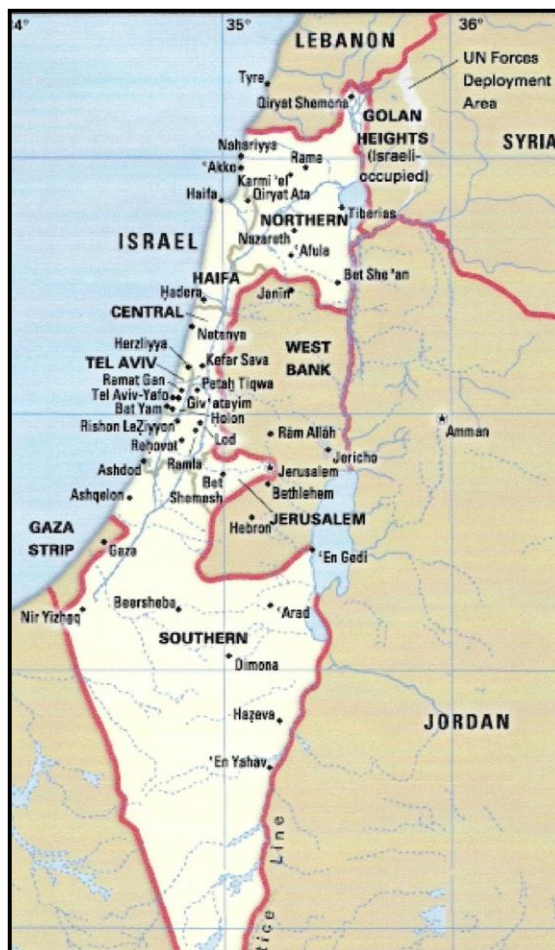
Regarding “which” nations will conspire against Israel, we need but continue forward reading Psalm 83:5-8, which states: *“For they have conspired together with one mind; against Thee do they make a covenant: The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab, and the Hagrites; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them; they have become a help to the children of Lot.”* Most of these names are of ancient peoples that settled in specific places. The descendent of these peoples still exist and continue to live in the places of their ancestors, but many of the place names have changed. The map below locates these peoples using modern place names. You will recognize that all are enemies of Israel.

Gebal (North of Beirut)

Tyre (Lebanon)

Philistia (Gaza Strip)

Amalek (South Israel)



Assyria (Syria)

Ammon
(North Jordan)

Moab
(Middle Jordan)

Edom
(South Jordan)

Hagrites
(Arabia)

Regarding the power behind the invasion of Israel, God speaks to this through the prophet Ezekiel, saying: ***“Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Mesheck, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Mesheck, and Tubal... Persia, Ethiopia, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.””*** (Ezekiel 38:2-3, 5-6). What is very interesting is that “Rosh” is the ancient name for “Russia.” Historians have also tracked the migration of the sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Mesheck, Tubal and Togarmah to the region today know as Russia. And finally, the Hebrew name “Mesheck” is the source of the city name “Moscow.” The nations that are listed to be “with them” (with Russia) are also interesting. Persia is today modern Iran. Ethiopia in Hebrew is Kush or Cush, and is continually mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with Egypt. And Put is known today as Libya. All of these nations have received arms from Russia, and all have a history of being in opposition to Israel. It would seem the stage is very much set today for the fulfillment of Armageddon.

Seventh Bowl: Impending Destruction of Babylon

Revelation 16:17, states: ***“And the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.””*** Again, from 15:8 we know that God alone is currently in the temple, so the voice from the throne is that of God. With the pouring out of the seventh bowl God’s punishments are complete, finished—“It is done.” The punishment will now be described in the verses to follow as catastrophic and swift.

Revelation 16:18, states: ***“And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.”*** The description of this verse is the same as that found in 8:5 when the seventh seal was broken, and in 11:19 when the seventh trumpet was blown. Each time there was lightning, thunder and a great earthquake. This leads many scholars to think that the seals, trumpets and bowls are three descriptions of the same thing. But while there are

great similarities between the seals, trumpets and bowls, there are also very specific differences and an obvious escalation in their intensity as they progress. With the seals and trumpets, destruction was measured and served as both punishment and warning. With the pouring of the bowls, destruction is complete and final.

Revelation 16:19, states: ***“And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”*** The “great city” we are told is split into three parts, but what is the great city? In the Old Testament only Nineveh is referred to as “the great city” built by Nimrod in Assyria (Genesis 10:8-12). This great city is best known as the city the prophet Jonah is sent to and repents when Jonah proclaims God’s judgment against it. But Nineveh today is little more than a mound of ruins having fallen long ago. The city’s ancient site is located about 250 miles north of Bagdad in Iraq. Revelation 11:8 is probably our best clue to the identity of the city, referring to it as ***“the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.”*** We may identify this place as Jerusalem where the “Lord was crucified,” but it is also “mystically” called “Sodom and Egypt,” which may mean it is not simply a place but also a “condition.” Sodom was a place of great sin, and Egypt a place of great persecution. Sodom and Egypt probably here represent the characteristics of the evil “great city” which is actually the world which crucified Christ and continues to persecute and kill His followers. This is reinforced by our understanding that “Babylon the great” is also not simply a reference to the ancient city or empires that bear the name, but a symbol for all that causes people to place themselves above God as lord of their lives. In Revelation 14:8, Babylon the great is described as one who ***“made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”*** Now she will be given to drink of ***“the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”***

Regarding the great city being split into three parts, this could simply mean that Jerusalem will be split into three parts, or in the case of the mystical interpretation of the great city as a condition rather than a physical place, it could mean that the evil influence will be divided into three parts. We know that Satan has been revealed as an unholy trinity, consisting of the dragon, beast and false prophet. Their evil influence has been joined to separate people from God by causing them to worship themselves, the image of

the beast. Perhaps that evil and unholy trinity is what will be divided with the pouring of the seventh bowl prior to their destruction in the lake of fire.

Regarding the scale of destruction that will come with the pouring of the seventh bowl, we are told that the cities of all the nations will fall. Cities are often seen as symbolic for the power and strength of nations. Perhaps this is a physical destruction of all cities, or perhaps this represents the fall of all national power.

Revelation 16:20, states: ***“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”*** When the sixth seal was broken we were told that ***“every mountain and island were moved out of their places”*** (6:14). This may be further evidence that the seals, trumpets and bowls are parallel depictions of God’s punishments, or 6:14 could be a smaller scale foreshadowing of a final ultimate destruction. In 6:14 the mountains and islands were ***“moved out of their place,”*** while in 16:20 ***“every island fled away”*** and the ***“mountains were not found.”*** Similarly, between the sixth and seventh trumpets we are told that there was a ***“great earthquake”*** and a ***“tenth of the city fell”*** (11:13). Is this still more evidence that the seals, trumpets and bowls are parallel, or is the fact that the destruction of the city was only partial before distinguish it as different from the destruction caused by the pouring out of the seventh bowl? Again, both the apparent differences and escalating intensity of the destruction seems to indicate that the seals, trumpets and bowls are similar but different events.

Revelation 16:21, states: ***“And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.”*** With the sounding of the last and seventh trumpet we were told that ***“hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth”*** (8:7). That hail storm burned up a third of the earth, including a third of the trees and all the green grass. Fire is not mentioned with the hail storm that follows the pouring of the seventh bowl, but instead, this hail is said to be very large and very severe. Exodus 9:18-35 describes a hail storm with ***“heavy hail mixed with fire”*** as one of the ten plagues that God cast upon Egypt to force Pharaoh to release His people. Similarly, God rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:24, destroying these cities for their wickedness. Again, we cannot know for certain if the hail storm described with the seventh trumpet is the same as the one experienced when the

seventh bowl of wrath is poured out. What is consistent is that God punishes the wicked for their sin. When and in what form it comes may be debated, but God will ultimately punish the wicked. We must note again that the hail storm does not destroy mankind, for men continue to blaspheme God because of the plague of hail. Life on earth seems to continue although for the wicked it has become a living hell. Yet the wicked do not repent.

One final note regarding the seventh bowl of wrath should be explored. Revelation 16:17 said that the bowl was poured out upon the “air.” The description of lightning, thunder and giant hail stones could easily be identified with the “air,” but also associated with the seventh bowl are a great earthquake that levels cities, causes islands to flee and mountains not to be found. These seem clearly earthly destructions. Perhaps a clue can be derived from Ephesians 2:2, which speaks of those who walk in sin as being ***“according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”*** Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” and it is his “spirit that works in the sons of disobedience.” The prior bowls of wrath were poured out on the earth, sea, rivers, sun, throne of the beast, and great river, Euphrates. All that remained was the “air,” perhaps symbolic for the very “spirit” of all that is evil and wicked. There will be no place that God’s punishment will not reach. There is no hiding or escaping the judgment God will administer at the end.

(End of Part-8)