

Rejoice That You Have Christ

LHC: Message Thirty-Six (980809AM)

Week 36: Rejoice That You Have Christ

(Revelation 16)

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you rejoice that you have Christ!

SUNDAY: Life Without Jesus

*“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘**Depart from Me, you cursed**, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ”*

—Matthew 25:41, emphasis added

Have you ever wondered what the world would be like without Jesus? Perhaps you yourself are seeking, but haven’t found. You are considering, but haven’t decided. You are looking, but haven’t placed your heart’s desire on Jesus Christ and willfully chosen to follow Him. If that is your situation, pay close attention to the sixteenth chapter of Revelation, which shows what life without Jesus Christ would be like. It is the most graphic, vivid, powerful description in the Scriptures of what hell will be like. Life apart from Jesus Christ is nothing less than a living hell.

In the twenty-one dramatic verses of Revelation 16, John sees and records what happens when mankind joins the fallen angels in living without God. He wants us to see that the seven bowls of His wrath are the coming results for a world that rejects what Jesus alone can give them.

First Bowl: Human bodies will ooze malignant sores as all the evil within starts to come out—a sign of humanity’s inward corruption apart from Christ’s power.

Second Bowl: Earth’s oceans will become death washing up on every shore. The waters of the sea filled with life will become a stench of dead blood—a sign of man’s hopelessness apart from God.

Third Bowl: All water will have the stench of corruption rising from every river, stream, well, and faucet on the planet. All waters on earth will be poisoned—a sign of absolute desperation because water is as imperative as Jesus is.

Fourth Bowl: People’s bodies will burn from a solar fire pouring down from the skies. The sun that keeps life sustained on earth will flare up to blaze and burn the planet—a sign of false worship that started with sun worship which is now powerless before the Creator.

Fifth Bowl: There will be an instantaneous impenetrable darkness. This bowl will go from the brightness of a fiercely blazing sun to absolute blackness in the realm of the beast—a sign of the spiritual darkness that Satan brings.

Sixth Bowl: The water of the great dividing Euphrates River will dry up. A demon trio will round up Antichrist's army to head for Armageddon. All the earth dwellers will seethe with rage toward God and hatred of their Creator—a sign that mankind will always fight against God unless the Holy Spirit brings them to a place of submission before the Father in heaven.

Seventh Bowl: As the earth dwellers gather, God unleashes the greatest earthquake of all time. More devastation occurs in that one earthquake than in all the others combined. All cities will be leveled; islands will sink, and hailstones weighing over sixty pounds will rain down upon planet Earth to obliterate all monuments and the men that built them. This is a sign of humanity's complete helplessness apart from God.

In the final days, mankind's unending fight with God will at last bring them the freedom they have always wanted—life without God. What does life become without God? That is what we will see as we go through the sixteenth chapter of Revelation. By this point in the Tribulation, the end has come. In a very brief span of time, the long-awaited moment has arrived. In seven swift strokes the desire of a world wanting no part of Jesus is granted. These seven bowls of plagues are for the lost; Revelation 16 is no less than a foretaste of hell. Think of how the earth dwellers will feel as they begin their inescapable plunge toward hell!

For the redeemed, however, the glory of Jesus shines from each plague. Jesus offers the ultimate security in contrast to the utter insecurity of the earth dwellers. Revelation 16 is an art gallery with seven divinely inspired portraits of Christ. Against the darkened screen of His wrath poured out upon sin are seven glowing pictures of Jesus:

1. **Jesus has sanctifying power (vv. 1–2).** He is the One who cleanses and keeps (Jude 23–24). Have you let Him sanctify and clean you from the inside out? I am not talking about just turning over a new leaf, making promises you can't keep, but letting Him thoroughly change you from the inside out. That is Christianity.
2. **Jesus has life-giving power (v. 3).** He is the One who gives abundant life (John 10:10).
3. **Jesus has satisfying power (vv. 4–7).** He is the One who promises that we will never thirst (John 7:37–39). Are you thirsting because of sin?
4. **Jesus has liberating power (vv. 8–9).** He is the One who sets us free (John 8:31–36).
5. **Jesus has enlightening power (vv. 10–11).** He is the One who gives us daily light and true spiritual sight (John 8:12; Acts 26:18).
6. **Jesus has conquering power (vv. 12–16).** He is the One who will always lead you into triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14).
7. **Jesus has securing power (vv. 17–21).** He is the One who gives you your ultimate eternal security (Romans 8:31–39; Hebrews 7).

Are you worshipping Jesus for His sanctifying and life-giving power? Have you been set free from sin? Do you let Jesus give you daily light in His Word? Are you

following Him? Have you received His security through faith? I hope that you can answer each of these probing questions with a resounding “Yes!”

My Prayer for You This Week: *Dear Father, as we think about the last moments of human history, we are amazed to see repeated blasphemy and hardened hearts. It is blatant during the Tribulation, but more subdued in our present world. But those who have heard the good news of Jesus, and yet have rejected and hardened their hearts, are actually blaspheming You in the same way as these at the end of the Tribulation will do. We thank You that You so loved that You gave, and You gave so much that You emptied the very treasure of heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ sent to earth for sinful mankind. May we not simply read the gory details of this chapter, but see the marvelous power and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the glory of what You are, and what You wish to accomplish in the lives of those who will respond to You, be very present in our hearts. Lord, we pray that we will see Your power and draw upon You by allowing Your Spirit to minister the power of Jesus in our lives. That is our heart’s desire. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

MONDAY: Jesus Has Sanctifying and Life-Giving Power

*Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” So **the first** went and **poured out his bowl** upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Then **the second** angel **poured out his bowl** on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.*

—Revelation 16:1–3, emphasis added

In this passage, we find that the world without Jesus is decaying and corrupting. Since Jesus is the One who cleanses and keeps, corruption and decay do not have to occur, for He is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24). As the first bowl is released, look at what happens to those who have spurned Christ.

The First Bowl—Malignant Sores: This judgment reveals the horrors of locked hearts. As someone once said, “Perhaps the most terrible situation in life, is when Almighty God is powerless to gain an entry into the citadel of the human heart . . . for God has given men the terrible responsibility of being able to lock their hearts against Him.”¹

In the first bowl, malignant sores will thus ooze out the unmitigated corruption, the filth of unrepentant souls (see also Exodus 15:26; 23:25; Deuteronomy 32:39). God will let everyone see on the outside what they are really like on the inside. This is the fulfillment of Moses’ prophecy of Deuteronomy 28:27, 35: *“The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. . . . The LORD will strike you . . . from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.”*

Einstein once said, “It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man.” Judgment will not produce repentance because only God’s kindness

does: “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).

Jesus has sanctifying power. What is the lesson for the Christian in Revelation 16:1–2? Only Jesus has the power to cleanse us on the inside and keep us. At the end of verse two, those who have the mark of the beast will ooze corruption. In contrast, out of those who have the seal of the Holy Spirit will flow love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23).

The Second Bowl—The Sea of Death: This sea of death in Revelation 6:3 will affect the world’s food chains and hydrological cycle. From time to time, off the coast of California and elsewhere, a phenomenon known as “the red tide” occurs. These red tides kill millions of fish and poison those who eat contaminated shellfish. In 1998, one of these red tides hit Hong Kong. First the water turned yellow, but by midsummer it was thick and viscous with countless billions of dinoflagellates, tiny one-celled organisms. Miles of stinking fish fouled the beaches. Much marine life was wiped out, even bait used by fishermen died upon the hooks. Eventually the red tide subsided, only to appear again the following year. Eating fish contaminated by the tide produced severe symptoms caused by a potent nerve poison. An unchecked population explosion of toxic dinoflagellates would kill all the fish in the sea. The phenomenon is well known, but scientists do not know what causes the proliferation of these creatures or what normally limits it. This may not fully explain what will happen when the second vial is outpoured, but it certainly illustrates it.²

Right now, even without God’s intervention, the mechanism is present on earth to kill everything in the oceans.

Jesus has life-giving power. As the Creator, He is the One who has the power to say, “Fear not!” Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, says in John 10:10: “*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” Christianity (being born again and receiving Jesus Christ) is no less than abundant life. It is an utter internal transformation from the inside out and produces life “*more abundantly*”— it just overflows.

In Revelation 16:3 we see that without Jesus there is death and hopelessness, but with Jesus we have life-giving power from the One who gives abundant life. Those who come to Christ live according to the power of an endless life. No death . . . no decay . . . no destruction . . . no lifelessness.

TUESDAY: Jesus Has Satisfying Power

*Then **the third angel poured out his bowl** on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”*

—Revelation 16:4–7, emphasis added

Have you ever given thought to how important water is, and what will happen when every drop of water on the planet turns to blood?

Water is the wonder fluid; for a brew that is colorless, tasteless, odorless, and calorie free, water packs a punch. It is the only substance necessary to all life. Many organisms can live without oxygen, but none we know of can live without water. Life, and life to come, can both be reduced to a simple common denominator: no known life-form on earth can exist without water. And no life-form will ever be able to exist in eternity without Jesus, the Water of Life.

Water comes closest to being the universal solvent. While you drink from a tumbler, the water is busily dissolving molecules from your glass. It travels upward in defiance of gravity. So strongly do water molecules adhere to one another that when one evaporates from the leaf of a tree, it pulls up those behind, like links of a chain. This molecular attraction forms the surface film on which water bugs race without wetting their feet, and which permits you to float a darning needle atop a glass of water. The average American uses eighty-seven gallons a day to drink, flush, and shower. One hundred twenty gallons are needed to produce one hen's egg, and thirty-five hundred gallons per steak. With these indirect uses, our daily need soars to some two thousand gallons each. Four trillion gallons of precipitation falls on the United States each day, yet we use a mere tenth of it. None is lost: the water that John used for baptizing Jesus still exists—its billions of molecules are now dispersed around the world.

God gives an unbelieving world a graphic picture. No water—no life. Why? To portray the spiritual truth that only Jesus satisfies; only He can give the Water of Life! To not thirst can only mean that we come to Him. For that reason, Revelation ends with a call—the last gospel invitation. The Bible begins with God seeking us and it ends the same way: *Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely* (Revelation 22:17).

The Third Bowl—Poisoned Waters: God is saying to a world that is plunging toward destruction: “Have you in your heart experienced the thirst that comes without Christ? Have you come to the place where you desire to have Him? Then take Christ, the Water of Life, freely!” And to the very end of the Scriptures God offers salvation. Yet, even in churches today, there are some who have never said yes to Jesus Christ and submitted to Him. They have not acknowledged that they are lost apart from Him and are thus without hope.

Hell is a place where people will have eternally unsatisfied desires for drugs, alcohol, and sex. However, those desires will be multiplied without the means to satisfy them. They will live forever in the blackness of darkness, in a bottomless pit, suffering fire with those desires just eating them up from the inside out. This is the unending consuming worm of hell—the lusts accumulated over a lifetime.

Only Jesus Christ can satisfy your righteous desires or take away the wrong ones to replace them with a spring of fresh water so that you no longer desire the saltwater of this world: *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God* (Psalm 42:2). Only Jesus can satisfy your soul; only God can quench your thirst.

Each day the sun evaporates a trillion tons of water from the oceans and continents and pumps it as vapor into the atmosphere—the greatest physical force at

work on earth. Each day the same amount of vapor condenses and falls as rain, snow, sleet, and hail, replenishing its sources. But this is no natural lack of water; we cause our own thirst by our sin.

Jesus has satisfying power. In Revelation 16:4–7 we see that life without Jesus is endless thirst, but Jesus has the power to satisfy us so that we will never thirst: *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, . . . out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”* (John 7:37–38).

I am reminded of the fastest-growing segment of cyberspace: the thirst-inducing segment. Did you know that lust and all the accompanying products that develop lust in human beings (as in pornography and all its deviances) is like a thirsting person in the desert drinking saltwater, hoping to stop his thirst? The more he drinks, the thirstier he becomes; it is a self-destructive pattern. Jesus says, “If you are not in Me, you will have nothing but endless thirst.” In Christ, we will be constantly satisfied by Jesus and never experience such endless thirst.

WEDNESDAY: Jesus Has Liberating Power

*Then **the fourth angel poured out his bowl** on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.*

—Revelation 16:8–9, emphasis added

The last words of the Old Testament pronounce a doom upon those who won’t allow Jesus to be their Sun of Righteousness: *“For behold, the day is coming, . . . and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”* says the LORD of hosts, *“that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings”* (Malachi 4:1–2).

Jesus is either the Sun of Righteousness who heals you or the One who will burn you to stubble. The choice is yours. What is your response to Jesus Christ? Have you come to Him to heal your sin-sick soul and to give you eternal life? Or are you turning away from Him and willingly hardening your heart by locking its door to keep Jesus out (Revelation 3:20)? He will consume you if you do, and you will experience a foretaste of it in the emptiness of life right now.

The Fourth Bowl—The Ultimate Sunburn: Every year, around a million people are diagnosed with skin cancer in America, most of which is caused from an overexposure to the sun’s rays. Yet people still lay out in the sun. Similarly, when God causes a solar fire to scorch all the earth dwellers, they will stubbornly face the sun’s heat rather than repent. So they will curse Almighty God instead.

Listen to what John Phillips has to say in Exploring Revelation about Revelation 16:8–9:

The sun, in its normal state, pours out a continuous stream of high-energy particles which race toward the Earth at a peak speed of three million miles an

hour. The earth is surrounded by a field of radiation, the magnetosphere, which protects it from full exposure to this deadly assault.

God who created the sun and the Lord Jesus who lit that solar furnace will turn the thermostat up during this time of the Tribulation. Everyone will find that the earth is a prison house and they are going to be trapped. This will be much like when irresponsible parents leave their child locked in the car and the heat inside builds up and incapacitates or even kills the child. God is going to let this planet become a locked prison house and it is going to get hotter and hotter until people are scorched.³

So Jesus, who can free men from doom and liberate them from damnation, will *still* be rejected. What a contrast of choices—to be burned up or blessed beyond description! Have you made your choice?

Jesus has liberating power. Without Jesus, life on earth is a burning prison house (Revelation 16:8–9). But He has the power to set the prisoner free, and “*if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed*” (John 8:36; see also 8:31–35). This is what is wonderful about Christ—He liberates us and breaks the power of sin. However, the world doesn’t want Jesus, and so they are imprisoned.

To all who look to Him, Jesus is liberator in three powerful ways: (1) He leads us in triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14); (2) He crucifies our flesh so that we can die daily to self (Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 15:31); and (3) He washes (KJV) and releases (NASB) us from our sins (Revelation 1:5). Are you in the triumphal procession? Are you dying daily to your flesh? When you fall, do you let Him wash you?

THURSDAY: Jesus Has Enlightening Power

*Then **the fifth angel poured out his bowl** on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.*

—Revelation 16:10–11, emphasis added

The next plague is strikingly similar to the ninth plague upon Egypt in Exodus 10:21–29. They will taste the blackness of hell forever. There is one thing that people don’t realize about hell: it is not only fire but also dark fire—it is blackness of darkness. Many times when I preached in the bar districts of southern mill towns, those men would tell me that they would be with their friends in hell. I told them that they would not see their friends there. It will be blackness of darkness: the ultimate loneliness, forever falling in the bottomless pit, with black fire consuming you on the inside and outside.

The Fifth Bowl—Utter Darkness: The bowls will be poured out over a very quick period of time, maybe a month or less. Here, people will still have their sores from the first bowl, and they can smell the dead fish and sea creatures from the oceans and waterways. When they run water to wash off their sores, they will find blood coming out of their faucets. And while they deal with that, the blazing heat will come. And now they will experience absolute darkness and pain.

According to Ray Stedman, the scope of this bowl of judgment is limited to the realm of the beast—or the revived Roman Empire of Western Europe. This judgment involves a great part of the earth, causing a sudden and unexplainable darkness to fall. Stedman writes:

This is not the first time such a phenomenon has occurred. In the middle of the day on May 19, 1780, the entire region of New England was covered by darkness—a day which has become fixed in New England history as The Dark Day. The mysterious blackout lasted for several hours.

In the early afternoon of March 19, 1886, a similar zone of darkness moved across central Wisconsin, causing the sky to turn from a bright cloud-dappled blue to midnight black in the space of about a minute. This darkness blanketed several villages and towns to the west of Lake Winnebago and lasted about ten minutes. Similar unexplained occurrences of sudden darkness have occurred in Memphis, Tennessee (December 1904), Louisville, Kentucky (March 1911), and other places and times in the United States and around the world. All of these events have two things in common: (1) no one was ever able to explain these events in terms of a known phenomenon such as an eclipse, and (2) most of the people who experienced these events were filled with terror, believing the end of the world had come.

The events in the sky or beyond the sky, which caused these midday nightfall's, might have been the same as that which caused three hours of darkness during the crucifixion of Christ.⁴

In all these earlier events of unexplained darkness, most of the people believed that the end of the world was upon them. They soon discovered that was not true, but when the fifth bowl is poured out, there will be no doubt in the minds of the earth dwellers that the end has indeed come—and yet they still will not repent. Note three penetrating truths:

1. **Closed hearts face judgment.** Those who would not embrace the true Light of the World will now face the horrors of absolute darkness. But those who would embrace the true Light of the World—trusting, embracing, and receiving Christ as the Light of Salvation—will never be in impenetrable darkness!
2. **The most horrible judgment is the blackness of darkness in hell.** Jesus stands in the way and only you can turn Him down or take Him in.
3. **Jesus is light and salvation.** Do you seek His light? Do you walk in His light?

I can't emphasize this enough: the most horrible judgment of all is associated with the hopelessness that the blackness of darkness brings. Egypt's plagues parallel the final judgment of God: the death angel came after the blackness (Exodus 10:21–29; see also Joel 2:2, 10; Amos 5:18, 20; Zephaniah 1:15). Jesus warned of the ultimate judgment, and that the plagues on Egypt (Exodus) and the day of the Lord (Revelation 6–19) were only a foretaste of the horrors to come (see Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:15; 24:29, 50; 25:30; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 13). Where is the hope in all this?

Jesus has enlightening power. Since closed hearts face judgment, hope is found by opening your heart to Christ. In Revelation 16:10–11, we see that Jesus has the

power to give daily light and true spiritual sight (John 8:12; Acts 26:18). Because judgment in hell is blackest darkness, you can choose to avoid it by meeting and embracing Jesus, who is light and salvation.

Without Jesus there is impenetrable darkness. Because *“men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil,”* God now lets the world experience what they want. The impenetrable darkness causes them to chew and gnaw on their own tongues. They are in such pain that they can do nothing but inflict more pain on themselves because of the horror.

With Jesus, there is endless enlightening power from the One who gives us daily light and true spiritual sight. In Acts 26:17–18, Jesus said in His appearance to Saul (Paul): *“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”* That is the power of Jesus!

In light of all this, and the terrifying results if you make the wrong choice, I exhort you to prayerfully examine yourself to see if you have really opened your heart’s door to Christ!

FRIDAY: Jesus Has Conquering Power

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

—Revelation 16:12–16, emphasis added

The Sixth Bowl—Called to Armageddon: The time has come for the fighting of that final war of the age, the name of which has become a byword among men since John first wrote it down—Armageddon! God has chosen the Holy Land as the stage upon which two crucial events take place, one on a mountain, and one on a plain. Mount Calvary and the Plain of Megiddo are the two altars of sacrifice that dominate the history of the world.⁵

What is the location of the battle? Dr. Herman Hoyt describes the location as follows:

The staggering dimensions of this conflict can scarcely be conceived by man. The battlefield will stretch from Megiddo on the north (Zech. 12:11; Revelation 16:16) to Edom on the south (Is. 34:5, 6; 63:1), a distance of sixteen hundred furlongs—approximately two hundred miles. It will reach from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the hills of Moab on the east, a distance of almost one hundred miles. It will include the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12) and the Plains of Esdraelon. At the center of the entire area will be the city of Jerusalem (Zech.

14:1, 2). Into this area the multiplied millions of men, doubtless approaching 400 million, will be crowded for the final holocaust of humanity. The kings with their armies will come from the north and the south, from the east and from the west. . . . In the most dramatic sense this will be the 'Valley of decision' for humanity (Joel 3:14) and the great winepress into which will be poured the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God (Revelation 19:15).⁶

What will draw all the nations of the world into the area of Armageddon? They will gather themselves there for perhaps various reasons. It would seem that the following are of the more important reasons.

The Sovereignty of God: In at least five distinct passages, we are told that God himself will gather the nations here: Isaiah 34:2; Joel 3:2; Zechariah 14:2; Zephaniah 3:8; and Revelation 16:16 (because of the deception of Satan [Revelation 16:13–14]).

Three special unclean spirits will trick the nations into gathering at Armageddon because of their devilish hatred of Christ (Psalm 2:1–3; Revelation 11:18). The nations, led by Antichrist, will doubtless realize the imminent return of Christ (Revelation 11:15; 12:12). They will also be aware of His touching down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:9–12). Thus, it is not unreasonable to assume that they will gather in that area to destroy Him at the moment of His return to earth!

The Destruction of Jerusalem: Their end is **inescapable**. Their defeat is **ultimate**. Our King is **unconquerable**. Perhaps the saddest event during the Tribulation will be the siege and destruction of the Holy City. This will be the forty-seventh and last takeover of the beloved city of David. Consider what Jesus said in Luke 21:20: *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near"* (see also Zechariah 12:2 and 14:2). Christ saw a near and far fulfillment in this verse. In A.D. 70 the early church remembered this verse and fled to Pella so that none were trapped in the city. But Matthew 24 shows that Christ's words stretch far beyond this to the final siege and attack of God's chosen people of promise—the Jews. When these two events transpire, both the angels in paradise and the demons in perdition will surely hold their breath.

Jesus has conquering power. In Revelation 16:12–16, we see that without Jesus there is only enslavement to demon masters because these demons trick and lure people. The Scriptures say that all idols are demons. I find it very interesting that there are not many world religions—only many facets of Satan's kingdom. Every false religion in the world has demons behind it. There is only ONE revelation of the truth of Jesus Christ: everything else (even the ones who smile on TV and are family friendly) are inspired by demons. Only Jesus has the conquering power to always lead us into triumph (2 Corinthians. 2:14). The way for someone to keep from getting the mark of the beast is to be sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Are you experiencing the triumph of Christ? When I take groups to the Holy Land and we go to the Plain of Megiddo, I always say the same thing: "Most of you who are here will probably never come back again on a bus. But all of you are going to come back on a horse." The Scriptures say that the whole world will converge there. The earth dwellers, following their demon masters, will surround Jerusalem from Megiddo all the way past Jerusalem down into the region below the Dead Sea. Those hundreds of

millions of people will try to fight against God; and at that climactic moment the sky will split and the King of Kings—Jesus Christ—will come on a white horse! And all of us will be coming behind Him flying through the air! You and I will have an aerial view, coming in behind the greatest leader of all time, the great tour guide, Jesus Christ himself, as He comes down to speak a word and incinerate that army of hundreds of millions.

Zechariah 12:10 tells us exactly what will happen: *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”*

Zechariah 14:12–13 says that He is coming through the air and, as He comes, He will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is the Second Coming proper. The mount then splits in two: *And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet [they start melting], their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues [speaking blasphemous things against God] shall dissolve in their mouths. It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the LORD will be among them.*

Christians, however, are more than conquerors! Remember: we are assured of victory in Jesus *“who always leads us in triumph in Christ”* (2 Corinthians 2:14). So in verses 12–16 of Revelation 16, Jesus has conquering power as the One who always leads us into triumph.

What kind of response should we have to this truth? We need to establish the right priorities—God’s! For God offers us an unshakable kingdom (Hebrews 12:25–29). So don’t put your treasures where they are going to be destroyed, because Jesus has called us to have an unwavering focus (2 Peter 3:10–18).

The end is coming. The world is going to fall apart. Mankind and life as we now know it will soon cease to exist. So what does God want now that we are listening to His Revelation? He wants us to worship His Son!

SATURDAY: Jesus Has Securing Power

*Then **the seventh angel poured out his bowl** into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.*

—Revelation 16:17–21, emphasis added

Against the rumble of the seventh bowl’s massive quake comes the final glorious portrait of Christ!

The Seventh Bowl—A Massive Earthquake: As we study this mega-quake, the “Big One” that has long been feared, allow yourself to hold on to the immense and powerful security we have in Christ.

The judgments of Revelation 16:17–21 I take to be literal. What is described here is very possible with today’s weapons. Other than the hail and lightning, the same effects would result from both hydrogen and plutonium bombs. Consider what Lehman Strauss has to say about this:

“It is done!” Here is the perfecting of the judgments, the consummation of God’s wrath, the final overthrow of all opposition. Once before our Lord uttered similar words from the cross when He cried, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and at the time there was an earthquake (Matthew 27:51). But then He was bearing the judgment for man’s sin. However, the next time He speaks of a finished work, it will be the consummation of judgment upon all who have rejected Him.

The seventh angel tips the seventh bowl of judgment in “the air,” the present headquarters of Satan (Ephesians 2:2), followed by thunders, lightning, and hailstones weighing upwards to one hundred pounds. This is the final destruction of every religious, political, and educational institution that man has built apart from God. It is the collapse of all man’s hopes and dreams. But with all of this, men still refuse to submit to God’s rule. All that men consider stable, they must watch crumble. Many people marvel at such descriptions of the severity of God. I marvel at the unconcern and wickedness of men’s hearts.⁷

Have you ever looked at a map of the fault lines of the earth? Like an egg, God has cracked the earth just right for this moment. Note where they run: from Alaska to Chile, from Siberia to New Zealand, from the southern Mediterranean fanning out across the Mideast and then across Asia and south to the heart of Africa. When those tectonic plates move in one quake, the power of 20,000 nuclear bombs is unleashed. On December 26, 2004, the resultant tsunami from just one quake killed 150,000-plus souls. And in Pakistan and India, over 70,000 lost their lives in a quake in the fall of 2005. With more far-reaching devastation than that ahead, our ultimate security can only be found in Jesus.

Jesus has securing power. In verses 17–21 of Revelation 16, we see that without Jesus there can only be hopeless destruction. As the world converges on Jerusalem in Satan’s last effort to destroy the Jews, God will convulse the earth and obliterate them with hailstones. But with Jesus there is securing power from the One who gives us our ultimate eternal security (Romans 8:31–39; Hebrews 7).

On Mount Calvary, grace redeemed the world by the sacrifice of God’s Son. On the plains of Megiddo vengeance offers up the armies of the world in a sacrifice of doom. Both are blood baths; both are the descent of wrath upon sin. And both are brought about by God’s bitterest foes who, in spite of themselves, work out God’s perfect and sovereign will. Across both Mount Calvary and the plains of Megiddo can be written the words of Peter: *“The Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done”* (Acts 4:27–28). From each of these bloodbaths proceeds a supper: one a feast of remembrance for the people of God, and the other a feast of retribution for the carrion.

Make a choice to live in hope: At Calvary there rang up to the gates of heaven a victorious cry, “*It is finished!*” And at Armageddon there rings down to earth an answering cry from the temple gates in glory, “*It is done!*”

Both events shake the earth—the quake of Matthew 27:51–54 at Christ’s Resurrection and here in Revelation 16:18, the greatest quake of all time. Both events attack and conquer Satan’s domain. At Christ’s death the graves opened and saints were raised from death (contrary to Satan’s power); in Revelation 16 the seven bowls will be poured out on the air—the present headquarters of Satan.

Both events represent a path: which are you on? One leads to the enduring hope of eternal bliss in the presence of your glorious Savior, Jesus Christ. The other leads to utter hopelessness and devastation with the ultimate destiny of eternal suffering in hell with the devil and his fallen angels—forever separated from the God who loved you and gave himself for you.

Jesus has sanctifying, life-giving, satisfying, liberating, enlightening, conquering, and securing power. Faith in this beautiful Jesus is the victory that overcomes the world! So rejoice if you have Christ—and sing this wonderful old song with joy in your heart to Him!

Faith Is the Victory

*Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers rise,
And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below, Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world.*

*His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith they, like a whirlwind’s breath, Swept on o’er every field;
The faith by which they conquered death Is still our shining shield.*

*To him who overcomes the foe White raiment shall be giv’n;
Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in heav’n.
Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with love aflame;
We’ll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus’ conqu’ring name.*

Refrain:

*Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory!
O glorious victory, That overcomes the world.*

—John H. Yates (1837–1900)

¹ William Barclay, *The Revelation of John: Chapters 6–22* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), pp. 151–52.

² More information can be accessed online at <http://www.hku.hk/civil/envhydraulics/home.htm>.

³ John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 202.

⁴ Ray Stedman, *God’s Final Word* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1991), p. 280.

⁵ Drawn from Herman Hoyt, *The End Times* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 163.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lehman Strauss, *The Book of Revelation: Outlined Studies* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964), in loc.