

## REVELATION 14:6-19:21

Most of these verses deal with God's judgment and removal of Babylon the great harlot and of Antichrist and his forces that are gathered to Armageddon. In these verses we learn of the seven bowls of God's wrath. Quite a few of these verses mention the glorified saints, who are with Christ as He carries out these judgments, and we also read of the victorious outcome for the saints who will live on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. A few of these verses also deal with God's ultimate salvation of the remnant of the nations.

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This paper was originally published January, 1999. The first part of the paper was done using a Smith-Corona word processor that didn't permit me to use italics, different fonts, etc. The second half of the paper was done using a PC, with Word 97, which gave me many more word processing features. I'm making some modifications at the time I put the paper into Word 2002 format to upload to the internet.

### INTRODUCTION

The book of Revelation is of key importance on God's end-time plans to save and to judge, and on His plans for the eternal state. The more I study this book, the more I'm impressed with it; it's a very special book of the Bible. I'll take a couple of pages to illustrate this point.

The book of Revelation shows that true Christians will be raptured from the earth just before the super-evil reign of Antichrist begins in the middle of Daniel's 70th week (cf. Rev. 3:10; 7:9-17; 11:11, 12; 12:5; 14:1-5; 17:14; and 19:14, 19). If we didn't have the book of Revelation, I would teach that the rapture will probably take place near the end of Daniel's 70th week (the end-of-the-week rapture), but because of this revelation, I'm confident of the mid-week rapture.

It's significant that the book of Revelation confirms that the rapture will take place right after the short great tribulation (Rev. 7:9-14), which we already knew from Matt. 24:21, 22, 29-31. In its teaching on the sixth trumpet, the book of Revelation gives us much insight regarding the timing of, and the content of, the short great tribulation (Rev. 9:13-21). The sixth trumpet will sound about a month before the seventh and last trumpet, which is the trumpet of the resurrection and rapture (Matt. 24:29-31; 1 Cor. 15:50-52 [note “at the last trumpet”]; and 1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Without the book of Revelation, we wouldn't know that the gospel will still be preached on the earth after Christ has returned and the rapture has taken place (Rev. 14:6, 7), and that many (including the remnant of the nation Israel) will submit to the gospel *after* the rapture (e.g., Rev. 12:17; 13:5, 7, 10; 14:12, 13; 15:2; and 20:4). The book of Revelation

confirms that the remnant of the nation Israel will be saved (cf., e.g., Rom. 11:25-27); they will submit to the gospel after the rapture (cf. Rev. 7:1-8; 10:7; 11:13, 19; 13:5, 7 [with Dan. 7:21, 25]; 14:20 [Jerusalem]; 15:2-4, especially 15:3 and “the song of Moses”; 16:12-16 [gathering to Har-Magedon/Israel]; and 16:19 [Jerusalem]).

Even though the Old Testament has much to say about God’s ultimate salvation plans for the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel), I couldn’t be sure that these prophecies are to be fulfilled in a literal sense if it weren’t for the confirmation of the book of Revelation. Apart from the book of Revelation, the New Testament has very little to say regarding God’s salvation plans for the nations. If it weren’t for the book of Revelation, I might have been persuaded by the idea of many Christians that such prophecies are to be interpreted in a non-literal sense, that these prophecies speak only of Gentiles receiving Christ during this present age (before Christ returns).

Without the book of Revelation, we wouldn’t know of the very important ministry of the two prophets (Rev. 11:1-13), and we wouldn’t have the important confirmation of the fact that the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1, 2). We wouldn’t know of the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:1-9:21; 10:7; and 11:15), and of the seven bowls of wrath (Rev. 15:1-16:21); and we wouldn’t know of God’s judgment of Babylon the great harlot. Many of the details regarding Antichrist we wouldn’t know, including knowing of his coming back from the dead; and we wouldn’t know of the false prophet, or of the image of the beast, or of the mark/number of the beast.

We could know something of an intermediate kingdom that will take place before the eternal kingdom/state from several Old Testament verses (e.g., Isa. 65:20-22; Dan. 7:12). We wouldn’t know enough, however, to understand the millennial kingdom without the book of Revelation. For one thing, this is the only book of the Bible that mentions the thousand year duration of this kingdom. We wouldn’t have known that the devil will be temporarily bound in the abyss throughout the millennium (Rev. 20:2, 3), and we certainly wouldn’t have anticipated a major revolt by a multitude from the nations at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7-9). And we wouldn’t have known that the resurrection of “the rest of the dead” (Rev. 20:5), which is the resurrection of the dead who aren’t part of true Israel, won’t take place until it’s time for the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:11-15).

The seven letters to the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2, 3 are very important. For one thing, several verses of key prophetic significance are included in these chapters (e.g., Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:10, and 21). But the most important feature—it’s a somewhat shocking feature—of these letters to the seven churches, which existed at that time (about AD 95), is the powerful call to repent, or else, by the Lord Jesus Christ to many of these Christians. Five of the seven churches are called to repentance, and in three of the five there was a call for very serious repentance on the part of all, or at least many/most, of the Christians there. He tells them that they are on the brink of ceasing to be His people—they must quickly repent.

The most shocking feature to me is that the first church Christ speaks to, the church at Ephesus, was doing so much right. But Christ told them that if they didn’t repent He would remove their lampstand; in other words, they would cease to be His church/people. The perspective of these chapters is very important with the resurrected, glorified Son of God Himself directly speaking to Christians living on the earth. It’s clear to me, and this is a widely accepted viewpoint, that Christ intended these words (both the positive and

negative words) for each Christian of each generation where the words fit. The words were apparently chosen to address many of the needs of the universal church throughout this entire age.

These two chapters of the book of Revelation (chapters 2, 3), taken seriously, will help bring some balance, some desperately needed balance, to many Christians of our day. Many are far from the Scriptural balance through errors like minimizing, or totally skipping, God's call to repent, both at the time of conversion, and afterward, when repentance is required (the word repent, and the concept of repenting, have seemingly disappeared from many churches; we don't want to offend anybody); errors like minimizing the call for Christians to be righteous and holy (by God's enabling grace in Christ/by the Holy Spirit); errors like overstating the Christian's right standing (no matter what they believe, or how they live), and errors like overstating God's unconditional love (while failing to take seriously all that the Bible says about His wrath) and the impossibility for Christians to ever fall away from Christ and be rejected by Him (no matter what they believe or how they live). Revelation chapters 2, 3 make it clear to me (as does much other Scripture) that Christ has different ideas on these topics than many Christians do. Guess who's right, and who will have the last word, and who had better change fast.

Yes, it's the will of God for Christians to be secure in Christ, and to know that they are, but we shouldn't feel secure while we are in obvious violation of our covenant with God—the fear of God the Bible (including the New Testament) frequently speaks of is more appropriate. We must make it top priority to get things straightened out (to repent) if we're in sin, by God's grace. It's a very positive thing (a blessing) if Christ is dealing with us to repent. Why does Christ call His people to repent? In Rev. 3:19 He says it's because He loves them. Of course forgiveness is provided for us in Christ, but the primary thing Christ demanded in these chapters was repentance, not asking for forgiveness. Those who are saying that God doesn't even see it when Christians sin because He looks at us through the blood of Christ, or that He doesn't take our sin seriously, had better read these two chapters again.

One spectacular feature of the book of Revelation is the prominent role of God the Father, God the Son (especially Him), and God the Holy Spirit. One thing they do is testify to the importance, authenticity, and truthfulness of this revelation; I'll demonstrate as we continue. Christ Himself appeared to John, as reported in chapter 1, directing him to write these things (Rev. 1:19). The revelation was given by God the Father to Christ to show to His bond-servants (Christians); it was sent by Christ through His angel to (the apostle) John (Rev. 1:1). In Rev. 1:3 a blessing is pronounced on “those who [read] and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it...”

Christ also came on the scene and spoke in the last chapter of this book, chapter 22 (but this time John apparently didn't see Him), which further established and confirmed the truthfulness and importance of this revelation. In Rev. 22:7 Christ said, “And behold I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.” Also see Rev. 22:12-16, where Christ also spoke. In 22:16 He mentioned that He had sent His angel to testify these things for the churches (which apparently includes testifying to the authenticity and truthfulness of this revelation). Then in 22:20 Christ is referred to as “He who testifies to these things.”

In Rev. 14:13b the Holy Spirit spoke, confirming a word that had just been spoken from

heaven in 14:13a. In Rev. 21:5 God the Father spoke, saying, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." In context He was apparently just referring to the words just spoken in 21:5a, but His words have the effect of confirming the entire revelation. He also spoke in 21:6-8. In Rev. 19:9 a mighty angel said, "These are true words of God." He was apparently referring to the revelation just given in Rev. 17:1-19:9a. In 22:6 a mighty angel said, (NIV) "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." He was apparently referring to the entire revelation of the book of Revelation. Also see 22:9.

Lastly, in closing this discussion on the spectacular nature of the book of Revelation, I'll mention the significance and the glory of the last two chapters, which give a glorious picture of the eternal state (with its new heaven and new earth and its new Jerusalem), which is prepared for God's people, both true Israel (the bride of Christ, the bond-servants of God, who will reign forever [Rev. 22:5]) and the elect of the nations [Rev. 21:3, 4; 21:24-22:3].

My book, *Mid-Week Rapture* (published in 1991) covers parts of the book of Revelation, especially Rev. 11:1-14:5, in a thorough, verse-by-verse manner. My last paper (dated November, 1998) covers Revelation chapters 20-22 in a thorough, verse-by-verse manner. (It also contains a thorough, verse-by-verse study of Matthew chapters 24, 25, and of 1 Corinthians chapter 15. That paper also contains a rather thorough discussion of God's salvation plans for the [elect of the] nations.) This present paper adds a thorough, verse-by-verse study of Revelation 14:6-19:20. The next paper, God willing, will complete the study of the book of Revelation by adding Revelation 1:1-10:11. These papers all supplement *Mid-Week Rapture*; they also refer the reader to discussions in that book.

Many of the verses we are studying in this paper deal with God's judgment of Babylon the great harlot: Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:18, 19; and 17:1-19:3. I find this topic quite interesting, quite important, and quite relevant for our daily lives. This topic, which includes defining Babylon, isn't easy, and the interpretations given by Christians vary greatly, but I believe we can understand the meaning of these verses, even if we're not sure of every little detail. It probably wasn't intended for us to understand every little detail of verses that are so full of figurative/symbolic language. The realities spoken of behind the figurative/symbolic language are extremely important.

All Scripture quotations are from the NASB (copyright 1977), unless otherwise noted. I didn't find out until some months ago that another revision of the NASB was published in 1995. I have a copy of the newer edition, but I haven't had much opportunity to use it yet. I assume that the revisions won't be very substantial. I plan to use the 1995 edition in my next paper.

In the middle of this paper, I switch over from this personal word processor (Smith Corona PWP 80), which has been a blessing, to a PC word processing program (Word 97), which contains many more features. Now I'll be able to use italics, small capitals, footnotes/endnotes (I'll start using them on the next paper), and many other features.

May God's will be accomplished through this paper, and His people be edified!

## REVELATION 14:6-20

Revelation 14:1-5 are discussed in chapter 23 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

**(6) And I saw another angel flying in midheaven** [Compare Rev. 8:13. From this location this angel can be seen (and heard) by all. (It specifically mentions that this angel and the third angel of 14:9 speak “with a loud voice.” The second angel of Rev. 14:8 probably also speaks with a loud voice.) The two following angels of Rev. 14:8 and 9 undoubtedly are in the same general location as the first angel. God apparently considers it important that all the people living on the earth hear the messages of these three angels. For one thing, all the messages contain strong warnings of imminent destruction, now that judgment day has come. But all isn’t negative; even though Christ has returned (right in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week) and judgment day has begun, there still is time (but a very limited time) for people to repent and respond to God and His Word.], **having an eternal gospel** [The NIV has “the eternal gospel”; the KJV and NKJV have “the everlasting gospel”; the definite article isn’t included in the Greek, but this doesn’t mean that the definite article shouldn’t be included in the English translation. We’ll discuss the meaning of the eternal/everlasting gospel as we continue.] **to preach to those who live on the earth, and** [It would be better to translate *kai* (Greek) as “even” here, instead of “and.” The NIV and NKJV just have a dash here, which is quite acceptable.] **to every nation and tribe and tongue and people** [Compare Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10. See on Matt. 24:14 in my last paper (dated November, 1998); the section on Matthew chapter 24 is on the internet.]; **(7) and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory** [On these words, starting with “Fear God,” see under Rev. 11:13 in *Mid-Week Rapture* (pages 288, 289).], **because the hour** [The word “hour” is sometimes used in the book of Revelation to cover the three and one-half years of the second half of Daniel’s 70th week. Especially see Rev. 17:12; 3:10. The word hour is apparently also used this way here in 14:7, and in 14:15; 18:10, 17, and 19.] **of His judgment has come** [cf. Rev. 6:17; 11:15-18; and 12:10]; **and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”** [I don’t believe this “eternal gospel” is substantially different than the gospel being preached in our day, but because of the time setting and circumstances, the message will have a certain urgent appeal and some special emphases appropriate for that time. The time setting of these verses is right after the mid-week return of Christ. The rapture has just taken place (Rev. 11:11, 12; 12:5; 14:1-5; and 7:9-17), and judgment day has just begun (“the hour of His judgment has come”).

Those who heed the call to “fear God, and give Him glory” and to “worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters” will repent and submit to the “eternal gospel” in faith. Those who submit to the gospel after the rapture can be called the end-time elect remnant of true Israel, which includes the end-time remnant of the nation Israel and (apparently) many Gentiles, even as the Christian church of our day includes Jews and Gentiles. Significantly, those who submit to the gospel after the rapture constitute the rest of the offspring/seed of true Israel spoken of in Rev. 12:17. (Those taken in the rapture were only “first fruits” [Rev. 14:4] of God’s end-time harvest.) I assume they will be Christians in the same sense we are Christians. The difference will be that they won’t be converted in time to be taken in the rapture.

Those who become Christians in that day/hour, which will cover the second half of Daniel's 70th week, will know much travail (e.g., Rev. 12:13-13:17), and there will be many martyrs (e.g., Rev. 20:4), but they will also know something of God's special provision and protection (Rev. 12:6, 14:16). I'm confident that those Christians who are converted after the rapture will have a special gratitude, knowing that they were saved at the last minute, in some ways even after the last minute in that judgment day will already have begun. Those believers will fear God with a reverent, obedient fear, and they will give Him glory by submitting to Him and His Word (as is required of all true believers), and by living for Him, even in difficult times. Revelation 14:12 shows that these believers will need perseverance. All true Christians know something of the need for perseverance, and of suffering for Christ (by His sufficient grace).

It seems that those people who will eventually be left to enter the millennial kingdom (the remnant of the nations, who are called "the nations" in Rev. 20:3) will not be ready to submit to God and worship Him until after His end-time judgments, which will continue to the end of Daniel's 70th week. (See Rev. 15:3, 4. Note that 15:4 includes the ideas of fearing God and giving Him glory [which are mentioned in Rev. 14:7].) They will, however, one way or another, refrain from worshiping Antichrist and taking his mark (cf. Rev. 14:9-11). At this point in the book of Revelation, it hasn't been clearly revealed yet that God has special plans for the salvation of the nations (as it is rather clearly revealed in Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:3; and 21:1-22:3.) **(8) And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great [Compare Rev. 18:2. These words build on Isa. 21:9; Jer. 51:8. Apparently this angel will speak these words in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, not long after the rapture. There's widespread agreement that they are spoken in anticipation of the judgment and removal of Babylon the great (during the second half of this seven-year period). An early aspect of the judgment of Babylon will have apparently already taken place during the one-month period that precedes the return of Christ. That early judgment (during that one month period that precedes the rapture) will greatly affect the nation Israel. (See under Rev. 16:17, 18, and 19 in this paper.)**

Knowing that Babylon is to be destroyed in the near future, God's people (true Israel) must flee from Babylon (cf. Rev. 18:4). The words of this angel (and the words of the next angel) are also spoken for the hearing of those who never will become part of true Israel, including those from the nations who will ultimately be left to enter the millennial kingdom. All mankind will be warned that Babylon is on the brink of total destruction (Rev. 14:8), and that all who worship Antichrist and take his mark are destined for eternal torment (Rev. 14:9-11). I assume Babylon will be progressively destroyed throughout the second half of Daniel's 70th week, but there probably will be something of a climactic end to her destruction too (see under Rev. 16:17, 18, and 19; and see Rev. 17:1-19:3).

This is the first mention of Babylon the great in the book of Revelation. The judgment and removal of Babylon constitutes a major part of God's end-time judgment of the world. Revelation 17:1-19:3 deal with Babylon, the great harlot, who has been seducing mankind from knowing, serving, and worshiping God. Revelation 14:14-16 apparently also deal with God's judgment of Babylon. Also see Rev. 16:18, 19.

For one thing, Babylon is a symbol for the world, whose god is the devil (2 Cor. 4:4). I'll quote from Leon Morris on the meaning of Babylon the great (*Revelation*, revised edition, [Inter-Varsity Press, 1987], under Rev. 14:8). "The first time the Bible mentions Babylon (Gen. 11:9; but cf. Gen. 10:10) we read that after the Flood people tried to scale

the heights of heaven by building a mighty tower. The name thus stands for the pride of mankind and for the heathen city-empire. For John, Babylon is the great city, the symbol of mankind in community opposed to the things of God. Sometimes in other writings Babylon means Rome (2 Bar. 11:1; Sib. Or. 5:143,159,434; possibly 1 Pet. 5:13). John does not go as far as this, though doubtless to first century people there was no better illustration of what Babylon means than contemporary Rome. John is looking forward to the overthrow of all the evil that Babylon stands for.”

God’s kingdom can’t come forth in any full sense until Babylon the harlot has been removed, along with Antichrist and his followers, and, most importantly, along with Satan and his hosts.], **she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.**” [Compare Rev. 17:2, 4; 18:3. We’ll discuss Babylon the great harlot as we discuss Rev. 16:17-19 and 17:1-19:3. To “drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality” apparently includes being seduced by Babylon (the devil is behind this seducing) in any of the many ways she seduces men from being faithful to God. This includes all false religion, including apostate Christianity, and all the other things (idols) men can be enticed with that take the place of God, including money, power, fame, sexual sins, occupations, arts, sports, and living in (excessive) luxury.] **(9) And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast** [Antichrist; cf. Rev. 13:1-18] **and his image** [cf. Rev. 13:14, 15], **and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand** [cf. Rev. 13:16-18], **(10) he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength** [it isn’t diluted] **in the cup of His anger** [Cf. Psalm 75:8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15-38; and Rev. 16:19. I’ll quote part of what George E. Ladd said regarding God’s wrath under Rev. 14:9, 10 (*Revelation of John* [Eerdmans, 1972]), “...God’s wrath is not a human emotion; it is the settled reaction of his holiness to man’s sinfulness and rebellion. Unless God in his wrath finally purges the world of all evil and rebellion, his Kingdom cannot come. Therefore, in the largest sense of God’s redemptive purpose for men, his wrath is a necessary correlative to his love and mercy. Two of the main themes of the Revelation are the recalcitrance of men against God’s salvation, manifested in their subservience to the beast; and the judgment of God which must fall upon them. In Revelation John emphasizes God’s wrath as does no other book in the New Testament.... Yet it is no inconsequential matter that his [John’s] Gospel, which more than any other expresses the love of God, also insists, ‘He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him’ (John 3:36).”]; **and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone** [cf. Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8; Gen. 19:24; Psalm 11:6; and Ezek. 38:22] **in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. (11) And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever** [cf. Isa. 34:9, 10; Rev. 18:9, 18; and 19:3]; **and they have no rest day and night** [Contrast the unending rest for the persecuted saints mentioned in Rev. 14:13.], **those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.**” [This powerful warning of the third angel (Rev. 14:9) is given about the same time that Antichrist begins his three and one-half year super-evil reign in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (e.g., Rev. 13:1-18). It seems clear enough that those who worship Antichrist and take his mark have sealed their destiny. These verses clearly teach eternal torment for the wicked, not annihilation, and they certainly aren’t compatible with universalism. It seems that Rev. 14:17-20 build on Rev. 14:9-11 and deal with God’s judgment of Antichrist and his followers at the end of Daniel’s 70th week (cf. Rev. 19:19-21). It also seems that Rev. 14:14-16 build on Rev.

14:8 and deal with the judgment and destruction of Babylon, the great harlot.] **(12) Here is the perseverance** [The NIV has “patient endurance.”] **of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.** [Compare Rev. 12:17; 13:10. It will require substantial perseverance on the part of the saints (Christians) living on the earth during the second half of Daniel’s 70th week not to submit to Antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:1-18), but God’s grace always is sufficient.] **(13) And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit** [cf. Rev. 22:17], **“that they may rest from their labors [cf. Heb. 4:9-11], for their deeds [works] follow with them.”** [These words were written for the benefit and encouragement of those saints who will live on the earth during the very difficult days of the second half of Daniel’s 70th week. It’s also true that the message of this verse has much application for Christians of all generations. It always is a blessing, not a curse, for a Christian to die as a martyr for Christ when it’s the will of God, by the grace of God—this will be especially true for those Christians who live on the earth during the three and one-half year reign of Antichrist. Although we know that there will be many martyrs during that period, the words of this verse also apply to those who die (but not as martyrs) in Christ. The more difficult the times, the more of a blessing it is to escape to the rest of heaven. Their righteous deeds/works, which come through faith and the grace/Spirit of God, will follow them, and they will be ready to stand before God to be judged according to their works.] **(14) And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand.** [Christ will come in glory with the clouds of heaven at His mid-week return (cf. Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9-11; and Rev. 1:7. The saints will be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet Him in the air at the time of His return (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 11:12). I assume that the time-setting for the scene pictured here in Rev. 14:14 is the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, not long after the rapture. The “one like a son of man,” which builds on Dan. 7:13, refers first and foremost to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 16:27; 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; John 5:27; and Rev. 1:13), but we can probably also say that the raptured saints are included with Him under this terminology. (For a detailed discussion on the one like a son of man, see *Mid-Week Rapture* under Dan. 7:13, 14 on pages 75-83.) Even if the glorified saints aren’t included in what is meant by the words “one like a son of man” here in Rev. 14:14, it’s clear that they will be with Him in the clouds of heaven (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17), and that they will be reigning with Him from the time of the rapture (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14, 18, 22, and 27; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21; 12:5; 14:1-5; 17:14; and 19:14). The “golden crown” goes with the reigning (cf. Rev. 6:2). The “sharp sickle” is used for the reaping mentioned in the next two verses.] **(15) And another angel came out of the temple** [This angel apparently gives directions that come from God the Father. On the temple in heaven, cf. Rev. 11:19; 14:17; 15:5-8; and 16:17.], **crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.”** [Many understand this to be a positive reaping of the earth, the reaping of the saints at the time of the rapture; others see both a positive and negative reaping here; I agree with the widespread viewpoint that this is a negative reaping, a reaping of judgment. The “sharp sickle” of Rev. 14:14-16 is used for judgment, even as the “sharp sickle” of Rev. 14:17-20 is used for judgment. I believe Rev. 14:14-16 build on Rev. 14:8 and speak of the judgment and removal of Babylon the great, which will apparently be progressively

destroyed throughout the second half of Daniel's 70th week. (We'll discuss this point as we discuss the judgment of Babylon under Rev. 16:17-19; 17:1-19:3.) See Jer. 51:33; Joel 3:13. Joel 3:13 says, "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great." Revelation 14:14-16 probably build on the first sentence of Joel 3:13, and Rev. 14:17-20 probably build on the rest of Joel 3:13. With the words "the hour to reap has come" (Rev. 14:15), compare the words of Rev. 14:7, "the hour of His judgment has come." (On the use of the word *hour*, see under Rev. 14:7.)] **(16) And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.** [First Christ judges and removes Babylon the great harlot through Antichrist and his supporters (Rev. 17:12-18), then He judges and removes Antichrist and his forces after gathering them to Armageddon at the end of Daniel's 70th week (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:19-21). I believe these next verses (14:17-20) deal with this judgment of Antichrist and his forces. The *gathering* of the grapes of the vine of the earth corresponds with the *gathering* of Antichrist and his forces to Armageddon. The treading of the grapes in the winepress of the wrath of God corresponds with Christ's judgment and destruction of Antichrist and his forces pictured in Rev. 19:17-21.] **(17) And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.** [This sharp sickle is used in the judging of God's enemies, as is the sharp sickle of 14:14-16.] **(18) And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar** [Revelation 8:5 shows that the altar in heaven has fire on it (apparently speaking of the sacrificial altar, not the golden altar before the throne [cf. Rev. 8:3-5; 6:9, 10; and 16:7]). The fire goes with the judgment of God (cf., e.g., Dan. 7:9-11; Rev. 8:5; 2 Thess. 1:7; Heb. 10:27; and 12:29).]; **and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth** [This "vine of the earth" can be contrasted with the vine of God/heaven, which embraces God's people (cf. John 15:1). On the gathering of Rev. 14:18, 19, see under 14:16, 20.], **because her grapes are ripe." (19) And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.** [On God's end-time judgment being pictured as treading grapes in a wine press, see above under Rev. 14:15; see on Rev. 19:15 in this paper (with the cross-reference to *Mid-Week Rapture* noted at Rev. 19:11); and see Jer. 25:30.] **(20) And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.** ["The city" is Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is probably used here in a symbolic, fuller sense than just the literal city (even as Babylon is used in a symbolic, fuller sense in the book of Revelation). The cities of Jerusalem and Babylon, and the kingdoms that go with these capital cities, are contrasted in the book of Revelation. Every person must make a choice for one city/kingdom, or the other. Outside of Jerusalem God's judgment will fall. On being "outside" the city of Jerusalem, compare Rev. 22:15.

"Two hundred miles" could be understood in a literal sense, but it probably is a symbolic number; this is a common view in the commentaries. On symbolic numbers in the book of Revelation, see the section at the beginning of the discussion of Revelation Chapter 21 on the internet, and see under Rev. 21:16, 17 in that paper. As in Rev. 21:16, 17, the translation of the NASB here in 14:20 obscures the symbolic number by its translation. In the margin the NASB has, "lit[erally] sixteen hundred stadia; a stadion was approx[imately] 600 feet." The NIV has, "for a distance of 1,600 stadia"; the NKJV has, "for one thousand

six hundred furlongs.” The number four can function as a symbol for the world/worldwide (cf., e.g., the four corners of the earth [Rev. 7:1; 20:8] and the four winds [Dan. 7:2; 8:8; 11:4; Jer. 49:36; Matt. 24:31; and Mark 13:27]). Four times four multiplied by a hundred is probably used here in a symbolic sense that speaks of the worldwide judgment of God outside of Jerusalem. For one thing, we could think of the judgment and removal of every person living on the earth who has worshiped Antichrist and taken his mark.

I’ll quote from Philip E. Hughes (*Book of Revelation* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1990], page 167), “[The sixteen hundred stadia] should certainly be regarded as a number of symbolical significance, four times four times a hundred, signifying judgment that is worldwide and thorough and complete.” I’ll also quote from H. B. Swete (*Commentary On Revelation* [Kregel, 1977, reprint of the 1911 edition], page 192), “...it is more in accordance with Apocalyptic arithmetic to regard 1600 (equals 4 times 4 times 100) as symbolical of completeness; except within the walls of the City, the deluge of blood was everywhere; or as Victorinus [bishop of Petau; martyred in AD 304] explains, followed by Primasius and the later Latin commentators, it spread ‘through all the four parts of the world; ... [Swete has this quotation from Victorinus in Latin].’ The point to be illustrated is the finality of the blow dealt to the enemies of the Israel of God...”

The *gathering* of Rev. 14:18, 19 apparently corresponds with the significant *gathering* that takes place under the sixth bowl of wrath, which is described in Rev. 16:12-16. These verses speak of the gathering (in the plan of God) of the enemies of God to Armageddon “for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty” (Rev. 16:14). They are gathered by Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, and three unclean spirits like frogs working with them. They (including Antichrist and the false prophet) are gathered by God for their destruction, which is pictured in Rev. 19:19-21. Christ Himself (accompanied by His armies, which includes the raptured saints) destroys those who are gathered to Armageddon.]

## REVELATION CHAPTER 15

**And I saw another sign in heaven [cf. Rev. 12:1, 3], great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.** [This verse serves as an introduction for chapters 15 and 16. In 15:5-8 we learn more about these seven angels with the seven last plagues; the seven last plagues equate with the “seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God” (15:7). In chapter 16 the seven bowls of wrath are poured out. Revelation 17:1 and 21:9 both mention “one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls”; these two verses aren’t necessarily referring to the same angel.

God’s end-time wrath “is finished” in these seven last plagues/bowls of wrath, but it doesn’t begin with them. The first bowl of wrath probably won’t be poured out until Antichrist’s three and one-half year, super-evil reign is well established (cf. Rev. 16:2, 5, 6); it could be poured out as late as a few months (or even a month) before the end of this reign. God’s end-time plagues/wrath will be manifested to some extent even before Christ returns, especially during the plagues associated with the sixth trumpet. (Christ will return at the time of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week.) Revelation 9:18, 20 (verses dealing with the sixth trumpet) use the same word plague used of the seven last plagues.

Revelation 6:16, 17 speak of the wrath of God the Father and the Lamb that is associated with the end-time day of judgment. This “great day of their wrath” (Rev. 6:17) will begin in a very significant sense when Christ returns, but as I mentioned, something of God’s wrath/plagues is manifested under the sixth trumpet, which will sound about the time of the abomination of desolation, about a month before Christ returns and the rapture takes place. God’s wrath is also mentioned in Rev. 11:18, a verse that includes all the wrath of judgment day and is not to be limited to the wrath of the seven last bowls of wrath.

Revelation 16:19 speaks of God’s end-time wrath being directed against Babylon the great. Revelation 18:4 and 8 speak of the plagues that are to come against Babylon the great. As we’ll discuss, it doesn’t seem that the seven last plagues/bowls of wrath have much, if anything, to do with God’s end-time judgment and removal of Babylon the great. It’s possible that a climactic end could come to Babylon the great under the seventh plague/bowl of wrath, after the gathering of forces under the sixth plague. For more on Babylon the great and her destruction, see under Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:17-19; and 17:1-19:3 in this paper.

The seven last bowls of wrath will be directed, for the most part at least, at Antichrist and his followers (cf. Rev. 16:2, 4-7, 10-16). Babylon will be judged and destroyed by God through Antichrist and his associates (Rev. 17:16, 17). Antichrist and his associates will apparently be against Babylon the great from the time Antichrist begins his super-evil reign in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (cf. Rev. 13:1-18; 17:12, 13). Antichrist apparently won’t tolerate competition/opposition from that time on (whether from religious or governmental authorities, leaders of commerce, etc.; all must submit to him), and Babylon will apparently be progressively destroyed during his reign. Also, even though Antichrist won’t have his full authority at the relatively early time of the abomination of desolation (about a month before the middle of Daniel’s 70th week), he will begin some of

his anti-God, anti-religion, anti-all-competition/opposition activities at that time.

On Antichrist's destructive activities that will be used by God as part of His end-time judgment, see Dan. 8:19, 23-25; 11:36-44; and Zech. 11:1-17. The sequence of Rev. 14:8 (a verse that deals with the judgment of Babylon the great) and 14:14-16 (verses that apparently also deal with the judgment of Babylon), followed by Rev. 14:17-20 (verses that deal with God's judgment of Antichrist and his followers) confirms that Babylon will be judged first. Revelation 14:14-20 suggest that Babylon will be destroyed before Antichrist's forces are gathered to Armageddon (which will come to pass under the sixth bowl of wrath). This gathering is apparently pictured in Rev. 14:17-19 as the gathering of the clusters of grapes.

How Far Does the Seventh Plague/Bowl of Wrath Extend? There are some solid reasons for saying that the seventh bowl of wrath extends to include God's casting the rest of His unrepentant enemies (including Satan and his angelic, demonic host) into the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15). Quite a few commentators understand the seventh bowl in this full sense, and I favored this viewpoint in *Mid-Week Rapture*. It's clear that God's wrath won't be finished in the full and final sense until after the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium. Also, the fact that it is "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues" (Rev. 21:9) that showed John the holy city, new Jerusalem, after the millennium and the great-white-throne judgment fits the idea that the seventh bowl of wrath extends to the end of the millennium.

Now, however, after further consideration, I believe it was intended by the Author that we see the seventh plague/bowl of wrath just extending to the judgment and removal of Antichrist, the false prophet, and those who were gathered to Armageddon under the sixth plague/bowl of wrath. (This seventh plague may well be against all who have taken the mark of the beast, whether they are gathered to Armageddon, or not.) In other words, the seventh plague/bowl of wrath deals with the intense judgment pictured in Rev. 14:20 and 19:19-21; and we probably also see this same judgment pictured in the plague of huge hailstones of Rev. 16:21. The language of 16:21 probably has a strong symbolic component, if it isn't entirely symbolic.

The word plague fits better with this more limited view of the extent of the seventh plague/bowl of wrath. For another thing, this view fits much better with Rev. 15:8. (The idea that God the Father will be preoccupied with judgment throughout the millennium and will be unapproachable in the temple until after the millennium seems untenable.) This more limited view also fits better with Rev. 15:2-4, verses that deal with things that will come to pass at the end of Daniel's 70th week, apparently after God's end-time wrath has been finished in the seven bowls of wrath. Revelation 15:2-4 have a strong tie to the seven bowls of wrath because of their setting between Rev. 15:1 and 15:5-8, verses that deal with the seven bowls of wrath. The scene of the saints who came off victorious over Antichrist pictured in heaven in 15:2, and the statement of 15:4 that (the remnant of) the nations will now come to worship God, both fit the idea that God's wrath manifested in judging (and in saving His people), which is finished with the seven last bowls of wrath, will not extend beyond the end of Daniel's 70th week.] **(2) 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.** [I agree with the widespread viewpoint that this is the same "sea of glass" that was seen before the throne of God in Rev. 4:6. The "fire" here probably represents the refining fire

these now-glorified saints just came through, as they lived for God during the very difficult days of the super-evil reign of Antichrist, during the second half of Daniel's 70th week. On this refining fire for the end-time elect remnant of (true) Israel, see Zech. 13:9; Dan. 12:7, 10-12. They had "come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name" by staying faithful to God and rejecting the worship demanded by Antichrist (e.g., Rev. 13:1-18). These victorious, now-glorified saints are pictured in heaven.

The time setting of the scene pictured in Rev. 15:2-4 is about the end of Daniel's 70th week, after the "wrath of God is finished" (Rev. 15:1), but we are shown this scene, with its very positive outcome for these saints, before the seven bowls of wrath are poured out. (This is comparable with the scene of the just-raptured saints in heaven [who will be raptured at the seventh trumpet] in Rev. 7:9-17 being presented just before the seven trumpets are introduced and then sounded, starting with Rev. 8:2. Although the seven trumpets aren't introduced until Rev. 8:2, the last verses of chapter 6 [12-17] speak of the arrival of the day of God's wrath.) These verses (Rev. 15:2-4) show the glorious outcome for those members of true Israel who will be converted after the rapture and stay faithful to God; they will undoubtedly encourage those saints who will live on the earth during those very difficult three and one-half years. Revelation 15:3, 4 also go on to speak of the ultimate conversion of the remnant of the nations after His end-time judgments.

Many teach that these glorified saints in Rev. 15:2 are all martyrs. There is nothing said in this verse, however, that indicates that these saints are martyrs, though it's clear that some of them are (cf., e.g., Rev. 20:4). I believe this multitude in heaven includes those members of God's true Israel who stay faithful to Him and are still alive at the end of Daniel's 70th week. (Revelation 12:6, 14-16 show how it will be possible for some saints to stay alive during this period. Compare 13:10 in the NIV. Also see Psalm 110; Mic. 5:3-6; Zech. 12:1-14; and 14:3-15; these passages are discussed in chapters 19, 17, and 15 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.) Assuming this viewpoint is correct, it's clear (from Rev. 15:2-4) that these non-martyred saints (along with the martyred saints) will be glorified and enter heaven/the heavenly dimension about the time of the end of Daniel's 70th week. (Many teach that those saints still alive at the end of Daniel's 70th week will enter the millennial kingdom in their natural [non-glorified] bodies.) Isaiah 66:8 is an important cross-reference; it helps confirm that all the members of true Israel, including those still alive at the end of Daniel's 70th week, will be glorified at that time. Isaiah 66:8 is discussed on pages 243, 244 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. We can apparently say that all the members of God's true Israel, who are represented by the woman of Revelation chapter 12 and by the bride of Christ spoken of in Rev. 19:7-9, will be glorified in time to function as priests and to reign throughout the millennial kingdom.

The fact that these saints are "holding harps of God" and sing before God (Rev. 15:3, 4) has some important correspondence with Rev. 14:2, 3. In those verses the members of true Israel, who were raptured in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, sang a new song before the throne of God. Revelation 14:2, 3 didn't mention that they were holding harps of God, but it did say that John heard a voice "like the sound of harpists playing on their harps." (Revelation 14:2, 3 are discussed in chapter 23 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.) Now, in Rev. 15:2-4, we see the rest of the members of true Israel (those converted after the rapture) join their raptured, glorified brethren in the presence of God, in glory, to begin their eternal reign with Him.] **(3) And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song**

**of the Lamb** [It seems there's only one song here, not two. The last words confirm that these glorified saints are Christians. The words "the song of Moses" help confirm that these saints constitute the end-time elect remnant of (true) Israel. (This remnant centers in the remnant of the nation Israel [cf. Rom. 11:25-27].) I believe these words (the song of Moses) build on Deut. 31:14-32:52; these verses in Deuteronomy speak of the song God gave Moses just before he died to teach to the sons of Israel. This song included, for one thing, the message that God would save the repentant end-time elect remnant of (true) Israel. I'll refer to this song from Deuteronomy further as we continue. I also refer the reader to the discussion on the "the song of Moses" on page 246 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

Some commentators agree with this reference to Deuteronomy chapters 31, 32, but the majority refer to the song of Exodus chapter 15, where Moses and Israel sang beside the sea after God had destroyed their enemies in the waters. The translation of the NIV in Rev. 15:2 ("standing beside the sea") fits this understanding of the song of Moses, and this view is certainly reasonable, but it seems to me that the reference to Deuteronomy chapters 31, 32 is weightier. Also, the translation "[standing] on the sea of glass" of the NASB, KJV, and the NKJV seems more probable. ], **saying, "Great and marvelous are Thy works** [Compare Deut. 32:3, 4. God's works of saving His people and of judging His enemies are spoken of here. In this song of Rev. 15:3, 4, with its setting between verses dealing with God's seven plagues/bowls of wrath, the emphasis is on God's works of judging, but this judging goes with the saving of His people. Note that the words "great and marvelous" were also used in 15:1 with reference to the seven angels with the seven last plagues.], **O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are thy ways** [cf. Deut. 32:4; Rev. 16:4-7; and 19:2], **Thou King of the nations.** [God is the Creator and Judge of all the peoples of all the nations. This will become evident when He judges the nations, and when He saves the elect remnant of the nations. Jeremiah 10:7 says, "Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Thy due...."] **(4) Who will not fear, O Lord** [This speaks of a proper, reverential fear of God, which the remnant of the nations will manifest after God's end-time judgments, about the time of the end of Daniel's 70th week. Significantly, Deut. 32:43, which is part of the song God gave Moses, shows that the nations (that is, the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations) will have cause to rejoice with (true) Israel after God's end-time judgment of the nations.], **and glorify Thy name?** [The remnant of the nations will glorify God's name by humbling themselves before Him and worshiping Him. Sections 1 and 2 of the Appendix of my last paper (November, 1998) list many passages that confirm this teaching regarding the conversion of (the remnant of) the nations after God's end-time judgment. That Appendix is included on my internet site under the heading "More Regarding God's Salvation Plans for the Nations."] **For Thou alone art holy** [The God of the Bible is the only real God, and the only One holy and worthy of worship.]; **FOR ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE** [Psalm 86:9 says, "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; And they shall glorify Thy name." Cf., e.g., Psalms 22:27, 28; 47; and Isa. 66:23.], **For Thy righteous acts have been revealed.** [As I mentioned, His righteous acts of saving and judging will have been revealed.] **(5) After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened** [See Rev. 11:19. Exodus 38:21 and Num. 1:50 speak of "the tabernacle of the testimony" (cf., e.g., Num. 17:7; 18:2); it was called the tabernacle of the testimony because "the testimony" was placed in the tabernacle. Many verses speak of the ark of the covenant as

“the ark of the testimony”; it was called “the ark of the testimony” because into the ark was placed “the testimony” (cf., e.g., Ex. 25:16, 21). “The testimony” refers to the two tablets on which were written the ten commandments (cf., e.g., Ex. 31:18; 32:15; and 34:28, 29). The ten commandments were the heart and foundation of the covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. All the promises God made in the old covenant, including those contained in the song God gave to Moses, will ultimately be fulfilled. The words of this verse about the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven being opened (also for Rev. 11:19) include the idea that God will now bring to pass His covenant promises that deal with His end-time works of saving and judging. Along this line, also see Rev. 10:7. I should also mention that the tabernacle built under the leadership of Moses, which also served as the pattern for the later earthly temple(s), was built after the pattern of the heavenly temple (Ex. 25:9, 40; Acts 7:44; and Heb. 8:5).], **(6) 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 [cf. Rev. 1:13]. (7) And one of the four living creatures [cf. Rev. 4:6-9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7] gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. (8) 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.** [On not being able to enter the temple because of the glory of God, cf. Ex. 40:34, 35; 1 Kings 8:10, 11; and 2 Chron. 5:13, 14. As I mentioned, this last verse rather strongly supports the idea that the seventh plague/bowl of wrath will be finished by the end of Daniel’s 70th week. It doesn’t seem tenable that this scene pictured in Rev. 15:8, with its great intensity, could extend throughout the millennium.]

## REVELATION CHAPTER 16

**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.”** [Compare Psalm 79:6, 7; Jer. 10:25; Zeph. 3:8-10; and Rev. 15:1, 5-8.] **(2) 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.** [Compare Ex. 9:8-11; Rev. 16:11. On the mark of the beast and the worship of his image, see Rev. 13:14-18; 14:9-11. Note that the contents of the first bowl of wrath just fall upon those who worship Antichrist. Also, it is specifically mentioned that “the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast [Antichrist],” and the sixth bowl is concerned with those who are gathered to Har-Magedon by Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, and the “three unclean spirits like frogs,” who came out of their mouths (16:12-16). And, as we’ll discuss, the apparent purpose of the seventh bowl of wrath is to destroy all those gathered to Har-Magedon under the sixth bowl (very much including Antichrist and the false prophet). (See under Rev. 16:12, 13, 16, 17, 21; and 19:19-21.)

We can probably say that all seven bowls of wrath are directed against Antichrist and his followers. Antichrist’s super-evil reign (which involves the “ten horns/kings” [17:12-14, 16, 17] and the false prophet [Rev. 13:11-18; 16:13; 19:20]) will constitute the dominant center of evil on the earth from the middle of Daniel’s 70th week. For example, Antichrist will kill the two prophets/witnesses (11:7) in the middle of this seven-year period; the devil will give Antichrist “his power and his throne and great authority” (13:2) in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week; Antichrist will blaspheme God (13:6); he will make war with the saints and (in some ways) overcome them (13:7); he will have authority over, and be worshiped by, all but the elect (13:3-8, 12-18); he, with the ten horns, will hate the great harlot and make her desolate (Rev. 17:16, 17); and we can probably say that he is the one behind the pouring out at least most of “the blood of saints and prophets” mentioned in 16:6 (see under 16:6), which would confirm that the third bowl of wrath (16:4-7) is also directed against Antichrist and his followers.] **(3) 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.** [Compare Ex. 7:17-21; Rev. 8:8, 9 (the second trumpet); and 11:6. There’s some correspondence with the second trumpet of Revelation, but there (Rev. 8:8, 9), only a third of the sea became blood, and only a third of the living things in the sea died. What is meant by “the sea” is a major question. I can’t be dogmatic, but I assume the Mediterranean Sea is referred to with the second bowl, and with the second trumpet.] **(4) And the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood.** [Cf. Ex. 7:17-25; Psalm 78:44; Rev. 8:10, 11; and 11:6.] **(5) And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast [Cf. Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8; and 11:17. It should be noted that the last part of God’s name from Rev. 1:4, 8; and 4:8 (the words “and who is to come”) have been dropped in Rev. 11:17, and here in 16:5, because He comes at the sounding of the seventh trumpet of the book of Revelation (in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week).], O Holy One [cf. Rev. 15:4], because Thou didst judge these things [cf. Rev. 6:10]; (6) for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets** [Compare Rev. 11:7, 8; 13:7, 10, 15; 14:12, 13; 17:6; 18:20, 24; and 20:4. The references from chapters 17 and 18 refer to Babylon the great, not Antichrist and

his followers. Most of the blood of the saints shed on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70th week will be shed by Antichrist and his followers (also see Rev. 13:2-5; 17:12-14, 16, and 17), not by Babylon the great. Most of the blood of the saints shed by Babylon is shed before Antichrist takes over in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, throughout the history of man on the earth. Throughout the history of the Bible, until the time of the split between Antichrist (who is the last of the leaders of the world kingdoms of the Bible) and Babylon the great harlot, the two (the leaders of the world kingdoms with their kingdoms and Babylon) are typically united (cf. Rev. 17:3, 7, 9), with both being motivated by the god of this world (cf., e.g., Rev. 12:3; 13:2, 4, 11; 17:5, 6; 18:3, 23, 24). The split comes, as Rev. 17:16, 17 show, because God has planned to use Antichrist and his followers to judge and destroy Babylon. (In the book of Revelation, God uses the devil, evil angels, demons, Antichrist, and the false prophet along with His righteous forces in His end-time judgment of the world.), **and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it.** (7) **And I heard the altar** [cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 14:18] **saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments** [cf. Rev. 15:3, 4; 19:2]." (8) **And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun** [cf. Rev. 8:12 (the fourth trumpet)]; **and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.** (9) **And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God** [cf. 13:5, 6; 16:11, 21] **who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent** [cf. Rev. 9:20, 21; 16:11], **so as to give Him glory** [cf. Rev. 11:13; 14:7]. (10) **And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened** [cf. Ex. 10:21-23 (the ninth of the ten plagues at the time of the exodus from Egypt); Rev. 8:12; and 9:2]; **and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, (11) and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores** [cf. Rev. 16:2]; **and they did not repent of their deeds.** (12) **And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates** [cf. Rev. 9:14]; **and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.** [These "kings from the east" will cross the Euphrates River on their way to Har-Magedon, as the following verses show. It may prove to be relevant that Turkey has built a dam that would enable drying up the Euphrates.] (13) **And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon** [Satan (cf. Rev. 12:9)] **and out of the mouth of the beast** [Antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:1-8)] **and out of the mouth of the false prophet** [cf. Rev. 13:11-17; 19:20], **three unclean spirits like frogs; (14) for they are spirits of demons, performing signs** [cf. Rev. 13:13-15; 19:20; and 2 Thess. 2:8-12], **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.** [Compare 1 Kings 22:19-23; Rev. 19:19; and see the references in the third paragraph under Rev. 16:16.] (15) **("Behold, I am coming like a thief** [cf. Rev. 3:3]. **Blessed** [cf. Luke 12:37] **is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame** [cf. Rev. 3:18].") [On the need for Christians to always be awake, alert, ready, and watchful, and living in the truth and righteousness of God, so that Christ will have no need to come against them in judgment as a thief, see under Matt. 24:42-51 in my last paper. These words are apparently directed at those saints who will be living on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70th week, but they are applicable to all Christians of all generations.] (16) **And they gathered them together** [cf. Rev. 19:19] **to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.** [In the margin the NASB says, "Some ancient authorities read Armageddon." The KJV, NKJV, NIV, and the Amplified Bible all have Armageddon. In Hebrew "Har" means mountain, and the

“place” being spoken of apparently is Mount Megiddo. This causes something of a problem in that the ancient city of Megiddo was on the edge of a large plain [cf. 2 Chron. 35:22], the plain of Esdraelon; not on a mountain. The site of the ancient city is, however, located on a hill/mound some seventy feet high. Many excavations have been done at the site this century. The site is about fifty-five miles north of Jerusalem.

There is widespread agreement that the territory around Megiddo probably is the place referred to in Rev. 16:16. One primary reason is that the plain of Esdraelon, which is some twenty miles long and some fourteen miles wide at its widest point, would be a good place to gather forces. In ancient times, and in modern times, there have been many battles fought in the area around Megiddo. The battle where Deborah and Barak, by the intervention of God, defeated a large Caananite army with chariots (Judges 4:1-5:31; note 5:19), is probably the most important battle at that location mentioned in the Old Testament.

There are quite a few verses in the Old Testament that speak of God’s end-time gathering of the armies of the nations to Israel in order to destroy them in judgment (cf., e.g., Isa. 66:18; Joel 3:2, 9-17; Mic. 4:11-13; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:2-9; and 14:2-4, 12-15). The references in Zechariah show that Jerusalem will be attacked in the last days. The forces that gather at Har-Magedon won’t necessarily be destroyed there (at that particular location).

What motivates Antichrist and his followers to gather at Har-Magedon? Ultimately it traces back to the plan of God to judge His enemies. It’s clear that Antichrist and his followers are motivated by a hatred of God/Christ and His people throughout his three and one-half year super-evil reign (cf. Rev. 13:5-7, 10, 15-17; 15:2; 16:6, 9, 11; 17:14; and 19:19). Revelation 17:14 speaks of Antichrist and the ten horns/kings “[waging] war against the Lamb.” This verse apparently speaks of their waging war throughout their three and one-half year reign (cf. Rev. 17:12, 13). Revelation 19:19 is the most important verse to show what the primary motivation is behind the gathering to Har-Magedon. It says, “And I saw the beast [Antichrist] and the kings of the earth assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse [the Lord Jesus Christ] and His army.” It would be far better to translate “gathered,” or “gathered together” instead of “assembled” in Rev. 19:19 to show the tie to the gathering of Rev. 16:16. (In the Greek the same verb is used in Rev. 16:16 [also 16:14] and 19:19. The NIV, KJV, and NKJV have “gathered together” in Rev. 19:19 and in 16:16.)

It will apparently be clear that Christ will be associated with the city of Jerusalem, and with the people of Jerusalem, from the time of His mid-week return. For some details on this topic, see the section titled “The Lord Jesus Christ Will Claim Jerusalem as His City” on page 70 of *Mid-Week Rapture* and the Biblical references cited there (which are all discussed in that book). I’m speaking of Christ claiming Jerusalem as His city from the time of His mid-week return.

In conclusion, it seems clear that Antichrist and his followers are gathering to attack the followers of Christ in Jerusalem/Israel, and Christ Himself, and ultimately God the Father. To gather gigantic armies to fight opponents like this will undoubtedly require some extra motivation, like that provided by the three demon spirits of Rev. 16:13, 14. Apparently the primary motivation traces back to Satan’s hatred of God, which he also imparts to his followers, including Antichrist. God, however, will have the last word. For one thing, Rev. 11:18 (which builds on Psalm 2) shows that the end-time rage of the nations (being led by

Antichrist) will be countered and silenced by the wrath of God.] **(17) 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.”** [When the events associated with the seventh plague/bowl of wrath are completed, “the wrath of God [will be] finished” (Rev. 15:1). All the judgments associated with the day of judgment, which begins when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, at the time of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation, is included in the seventh trumpet, including the judgments associated with the seven bowls of wrath. See Rev. 10:6, 7 (discussed in *Mid-Week Rapture* on pages 169, 170, including endnote 7).

But what is included in the seventh bowl? For a start, see the lengthy discussion under Rev. 15:1. Commentators typically include the judgment and removal of Babylon the great in this bowl; Rev. 16:18, 19 (which speak of the destruction of Babylon), coming right after 16:17, fit this viewpoint well. The more I study the details, however, the more I’m convinced that the seventh bowl doesn’t include God’s destruction of Babylon. (It’s possible that there could be a climactic end to the destruction of Babylon under the seventh bowl.) We’ll get into more details under 16:18-21, and in the following chapters that deal with the judgment of Babylon, but I’ll mention here two key reasons for my viewpoint. I believe (in agreement with quite a few commentators) that “the great city” spoken of in Rev. 16:19 is Jerusalem, the capital city of the nation of Israel. It seems that most of God’s end-time judgment/shaking of the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel (which will leave a substantial remnant of God’s elect members of true Israel) will take place during the one-month period between the abomination of desolation and the mid-week return of Christ, too early to be a judgment/shaking associated with the seventh bowl of wrath. And, second, as I mentioned under Rev. 15:1, Antichrist’s attacks against Babylon the great (which apparently embraces all false religion, along with the other things the devil uses to seduce men from God) will start early, not near the end of Daniel’s 70th week. The viewpoint of the book of Revelation seems to be that Babylon has already been destroyed before the seventh bowl is poured out. It probably is destroyed (at least for the most part) before any of the seven last bowls are poured out.

First God uses Antichrist and the ten horns to destroy Babylon (Rev. 17:16, 17), then He destroys Antichrist and his followers. Three other passages which show that God will use Antichrist in His end-time judgment of the earth (much of this judgment will fall on Babylon) are Dan. 8:19, 23-25; 11:36-45; and Zechariah chapter 11, especially verses 15-17. (See chapters 7, 9, and 14 of *Mid-Week Rapture* on these passages.)

It seems to me, as I mentioned, that the seventh bowl is probably limited to the destruction of Antichrist and his forces that have been gathered to Armageddon. This fits perfectly with the first six of the seven last bowls of wrath, which are aimed (at least for the most part) at Antichrist and his followers. (See under Rev. 16:2, 6.) After the gathering to Armageddon in the sixth bowl, we expect the judgment of the gathered forces, and that’s (apparently) just what the seventh bowl contains. I assume that we see the results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath *upon the air* (where hailstones come from) of Rev. 16:17 in the plague of huge hailstones pictured in Rev. 16:21. Note that the outpoured bowls typically affect the objects on which they are poured out: The second bowl “into the sea” (16:3); the third bowl “into the rivers and the springs of waters” (16:4); the fourth bowl “upon the sun” (16:8); the fifth bowl “upon the throne of

the beast” (16:10); and the sixth bowl “upon the great river, the Euphrates” (16:11).

The gathered forces are judged and (apparently) totally destroyed by “the plague of the hail” (Rev. 16:21), which is the seventh plague of the seven last plagues spoken of in Rev. 15:1-8. Although literal huge hailstones may well be falling during the seventh last plague, this language (like the language of the great earthquake/shaking that destroyed Babylon the great of Rev. 16:19) probably symbolizes God’s judgment going forth against Antichrist and his gathered followers. The same judgment and removal of these enemies of God is pictured with very different, but equally graphic and powerful, symbolic language in Rev. 14:20 and in Rev. 19:20, 21. (Revelation 14:20 speaks of the judgment of the enemies of God, undoubtedly referring to Antichrist and his followers, as gathered grapes being trodden in the wine press of the wrath of God. Revelation 19:20 speaks of Antichrist and the false prophet being seized and thrown into the lake of fire, and 19:21 says “the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.” Also, whereas Rev. 16:18, 19 speak of Babylon the great being destroyed by a great earthquake/shaking [cf. Rev. 14:8], Rev. 17:16, 17 speak of her being burned up with fire [compare “the smoke of her burning” (Rev. 18:9, 18); and “her smoke rises up forever” (19:3)]. And Rev. 14:14-16 apparently speak of the judgment of Babylon as a reaping with a sharp sickle.) See under 16:21 for more details.

After mentioning here in 16:17 that God’s end-time wrath is finished with the seventh bowl of wrath (“It is done”), the book of Revelation apparently goes on in 16:18-21 to give a brief summarizing account of God’s end-time day of judgment (not just of the judgment associated with the seventh bowl of wrath). The two primary judgments of the day of wrath are the destruction and removal of Babylon the great harlot (Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:18, 19; and 17:1-19:3) and the destruction and removal of Antichrist and his followers under the judgment of the seven bowls of wrath, especially under the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:21; 19:19-21; and 14:17-20; cf. 14:9-11). When these judgments are finished (about the end of Daniel’s 70th week), we are able to see the end result of God’s end-time judgments—His enemies have been totally destroyed and removed: “It is done.”

Revelation 11:19 is a very important cross-reference for Rev. 16:17-21; it says, “And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple [These words have much correspondence with Rev. 15:5-8]; and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder [These same manifestations of God’s power going forth are mentioned in Rev. 16:18] and an earthquake [or, shaking. This earthquake/shaking corresponds, at least to some significant extent, with the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18, 19] and a great hailstorm [which undoubtedly equates with the great hailstorm of Rev. 16:21].” Revelation 11:19, which is tied to the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:15), apparently pictures, in symbolic language, all the judgments of the day of judgment (which starts at the sounding of the seventh trumpet) going forth. (The seventh trumpet includes all the judgments of the day of judgment, including the judgments of the seven last bowls of wrath.) Two other passages that have some correspondence with Rev. 11:19 and 16:17-21 are Rev. 6:12-17 and 8:5.] **(18) And there were flashes of lightning and sounds** [The BAGD Greek Lexicon shows that we could think, for example, of the sounds/noise of “the roar of the storm.”] **and peals of thunder** [cf. Rev. 4:5; 8:5; and 11:19]; **and there was a great earthquake** [or, shaking], **such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an**

**earthquake** [or, shaking] **was it, and so mighty.** [Revelation 6:12 and 11:13 also mention a great earthquake/shaking, and Rev. 8:5 and 11:19 mention an earthquake/shaking. All these earthquakes/shakings (not that they are all separate and distinct from one another) can probably be considered part of the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18. It seems clear that the purpose of the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18 is to totally bring down Babylon the great.

We must understand that there is more being spoken of here than literal earthquakes, though it's clear there will be literal earthquakes in the last days (e.g., Zech 14:4, 5, which apparently correlates with the great earthquake at Jerusalem mentioned in Rev. 11:13). God's end-time judgment can be symbolized by His shakings (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:19, 21; 13:13; 24:1, 19, 20; Hag. 2:6, 7, 21; and Heb. 12:26-29). Revelation 17:16, 17, verses that also use language that has a strong symbolic component, speak of Babylon being burned up with fire (cf. Rev. 18:9, 18; 19:3).

I believe the "great earthquake [shaking]" of Rev. 6:12, which is spoken of just before mentioning that "the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood," at least includes the short great tribulation, that time of very intense warfare (the warfare of the sixth trumpet) that will take place in the one-month period just preceding the mid-week return of Christ. The shaking of the short great tribulation is important here in the context of Rev. 16:17-21 because, for one thing, it is (apparently) during this shaking that "the great city [will be] split into three parts" (Rev. 16:19). We'll discuss this point as we continue.

If the shaking of the short great tribulation is included in the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18, as I assume it is, this serves as a strong confirmation that the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18 can't be limited to events associated with the seventh bowl of wrath, which will be poured out near the end of Daniel's 70th week. As I mentioned, I don't believe this great earthquake/shaking of 16:18 (God's judgment/shaking of Babylon the great) is even included in the seventh bowl of wrath. (On the great tribulation of Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; and Mark 13:19, see number 8 on page 14 of *Mid-Week Rapture*, see under Dan. 12:1 in that book (pages 149-155), and see under Matt. 24:21, 22 in my November 1998 paper.)] **(19) And the great city was split into three parts** [Most commentators say these words refer to Babylon the great, which is called the "great city" in Rev. 17:18; 18:16, 18, 19, and 21. I agree with those (and there are quite a few) who say the "great city" here is Jerusalem. Jerusalem is called "the great city" in Rev. 11:8. The city of Jerusalem (and the nation of Israel) will experience intense judgment/shaking in the last days, but, unlike the cities of the nations, it won't be totally destroyed.

Zechariah 13:8 apparently enables us to understand what is meant by Jerusalem's being split into three parts: This verse shows that "two parts in it [apparently referring to the land of Israel] will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it." Apparently two thirds of the people of Israel will be cut off (by death or by exile [cf. Zech. 14:2]) through God's judgment in the last days. This two thirds cut off can probably be considered part of, or at least closely aligned with, Babylon the great. The one third are part of God's elect, part of God's true Israel; they will be left as a remnant to receive Christ, starting at the time of His mid-week return (cf., e.g., Zech. 13:8, 9; 12:10-13:1; and 14:1-8). The time during which the two thirds will be cut off (at least for the most part) will be during the one-month period between the abomination of desolation and the mid-week return of Christ. In other

words, it will take place during the days of the short great tribulation, which we just discussed under Rev. 16:18. This serves as a strong confirmation that the earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18 includes the shaking of the great tribulation], **and the cities of the nations fell.** [Unlike Jerusalem, the cities of the nations, which are pictured as being part of, or at least closely aligned with, Babylon the great, totally fall in God's end-time judgment. God's end-time judgment starts in earnest by the time of the shaking/judgment of the sixth trumpet (under which the short great tribulation takes place). I think of the day of judgment officially beginning when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, at the time of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation. I'll quote a few sentences from G. K. Beale under Rev. 16:19 (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999]): "That 'the cities of the nations fell' describes the universal extent of the last judgment. It is not just Rome or some later great capital of evil that is decimated but all the world's cultural, political, economic, and sociological centers. They fall because they are part of the Babylonian world system." ] **And Babylon the great was remembered before God** [cf. Rev. 18:5], **to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.** [The judgment of Babylon has already been mentioned in Rev. 14:8 and (apparently) in 14:14-16. Revelation 17:1-19:3 tell us a lot about who/what Babylon the great is, and about her judgment. Babylon is a symbol for the world, whose god is the devil (2 Cor. 4:4). When Babylon is understood in the fullest sense, it includes all the cities of the nations, including that part of Jerusalem (and that part of the Christian church) which is unfaithful to God and aligned with His enemy. On "the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath," cf. Rev. 14:10; 19:15 (on Rev. 19:15 see pages 28, 29 of *Mid-Week Rapture*). Revelation 18:4 and 8 mention "plagues" associated with God's wrath falling on Babylon the great, but they (apparently) are separate from and come (at least for the most part) before the seventh and last plague. Furthermore, the "plagues" of Rev. 18:4, 8 aren't included (at least not for the most part) in the first six plagues/bowls of wrath of Rev. 16:2-16.] **(20) And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.** [Compare Rev. 6:14; 20:11; Ezek. 38:20; and Nah. 1:5. As Rev. 20:11 shows, the present earth must ultimately vanish to make way for the new earth.] **(21) 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.** [The word "men," used twice here in Rev. 16:21, apparently refers to the same people called "men" in 16:2, 8, and 9, the men who have taken the mark of Antichrist and worshiped his image (cf. Rev. 16:2). In all five of these uses of the word men, the definite article is included with the word in the Greek.

Compare Ex. 9:13-35. The seventh of the ten plagues against Egypt consisted, for the most part, of "a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now" (Ex. 9:18). I'm sure that this hail was nothing like the hail of Rev. 16:21. Exodus 9:19, however, says (speaking to Pharaoh), "Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them will die." I should also point out that the plague of hail in Egypt began when Moses, according to God's instructions, stretched out his hand/staff toward the sky.

As I mentioned, I believe this verse describes the results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath; the "huge hailstones" apparently result from the pouring out of the seventh bowl "upon the air" (Rev. 16:17). The word "plague," used twice in 16:21 serves

to confirm this interpretation: Note the word plagues in 15:1, 6, 8 and 16:9, referring to the seven last plagues/bowls of wrath. This plague of the seventh bowl will apparently totally destroy Antichrist and his followers, who are gathered to Armageddon under the sixth bowl. (We'll further discuss this idea of total destruction as we continue.) Based on Rev. 16:2, 5-7, 10, and especially 12-16, which deal with the gathering under the sixth bowl, we expect the seventh bowl to come against Antichrist and his gathered followers.

This is the same judgment of Antichrist and his followers pictured in Rev. 14:17-20 and in Rev. 19:17-21, but it is described in different figurative/symbolic language, but (apparently) with the same end result—the total destruction and complete removal of these enemies of God and of His people. These hailstones are extremely large. I assume we are to think of a total destruction of the gathered enemies of God in this plague, as in Rev. 14:17-20 and 19:17-21. Assuming it's true that the hail of 16:21 describes the results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath, we would expect this plague of hail to complete the destruction of Antichrist and his followers. The plague of hail can be pictured totally destroying Antichrist and his followers just as easily as an earthquake/shaking can be pictured totally destroying Babylon the great.

It's clear in Rev. 14:20 and in 19:20, 21, even if it's not clear here in 16:21, that all those gathered will be killed and removed by judgment. Revelation 16:21 doesn't specifically mention that all will be killed, but it doesn't necessarily deny this either. If we think of this gathered multitude being in an open space, where there's little protection from the huge hailstones, it's easy to think of them all being killed by the hail (cf. Ex. 9:19; quoted above). The blaspheming (cf. Rev. 16:9, 11), which is an important feature of this verse (Rev. 16:21) that demonstrates hatred for God and an unrepentant heart to the end, can be pictured as going on during the plague of the hail but ending with the death of all those being bombarded with the hail. We need not necessarily think, and we probably should not think, of some of these people being left alive to blaspheme after the plague of hail is over. For one thing, the Greek verb translated "came down" could just as well be translated "were coming down," which would fit better with the picture of men blaspheming during the time the hail was coming down, before they had all been destroyed by it. (The Greek verb is in the present tense, which would normally be translated "comes down" or "is coming down." The *Twentieth Century New Testament* has, "Great hailstones are falling upon men from the heavens." The asterisk in the NASB beside this verb [came down] demonstrates that the Greek present tense has been translated with an English past tense to better conform to modern English usage.)

I'll quote part of what G. K. Beale (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999], page 845) said here under 16:21, "The people suffering the judgment 'blasphemed' God up to the bitter end because it came from his hand, though, possibly, the scene in verses 17-21 depicts the beginning of the last judgment, as does 6:12-17. This does not necessarily mean that some were left after the judgment of hail but that they were blaspheming during the onslaught of the woe.... Verses 17-21 could be viewed as the beginning of the last judgment in history, with chapters 17-19 giving subsequent chronological developments of that judgment. But it is best to view the following chapters as synchronously supplemental perspectives on the last judgment, which is described already in 16:17-21."

There may well be literal hailstones used by God in the judgment of the seventh bowl of wrath (on God's judgments by hail, cf. Ex. 9:18-26; Josh. 10:11; Job 38:22, 23; Isa. 28:2, 17; Ezek. 13:11-13; 38:22; and Rev. 8:7 [at least most of these references refer

to literal hail falling from the sky]), but I assume this judgment by hail also has a large symbolic component (even as the earthquake/shaking of 16:18, 19 has a large symbolic component): The huge hailstones probably symbolize God's very intense judgment going forth; Antichrist and his followers will be totally destroyed and removed by God's judgment. It's possible that Rev. 16:21 doesn't picture the entire results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath upon the air (Rev. 16:17), but I assume that's what was intended.]