

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 359 – December 25<sup>th</sup> – Revelation 16:1-21**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation**

Morris, Leon	<i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969
Mounce, Robert H	<i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977
Peterson, Eugene H	<i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991
Witherington, Ben	<i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003

**Chapter 16**

Chapter 16 describes the final series of plagues. "The parallels between this series of judgements and the trumpet plagues (chaps 8-11) are readily apparent. In each series the first four plagues are visited upon the earth, sea, inland waters, and heavenly bodies respectively. The fifth involves darkness and pain (cf. 16:10 with 9:2, 5-6), and the sixth, enemy hordes from the vicinity of the Euphrates (cf. 16:12 with 9:14 ff). Both series draw heavily for their symbolism from the ten Egyptian plagues. The turning of water into blood (8:8; 16:3,4) parallels the first Egyptian plague in which Moses struck the waters of the Nile, turning them to blood (Ex 7:20). The darkening of the sun (8:12; cf. 16:10) has as its counterpart the ninth Egyptian plague in which thick darkness prevailed over the land for three days (Ex 10:21-22)." Mounce. Here, however, the effect of the plagues is not limited but universal: it is no longer a call to repentance but a pouring out of wrath.

**Verse 1**

Καὶ ἤκουσα μεγάλης φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ λεγούσης τοῖς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοις· Ὑπάγετε καὶ ἐκχέετε τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν.

Cf. Is 66:6.

ὑπαγω go  
ἐκχω pour out

**Verse 2**

Καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ ἐγένετο ἔλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς ἔχοντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνούντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ.

πρῶτος, η, ον first  
ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι  
ἔλκος, ους n sore, boil  
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, harm  
πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

Cf. Ex 9:9-11.

χάραγμα, τος n mark  
θηριον, ου n see 15:2  
προσκυνεω see 15:4  
εἰκων, ονος f see 15:2

**Verse 3**

Καὶ ὁ δεῦτερος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ, καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ ζωῆς ἀπέθανεν τὰ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ.

δευτερος, α, ον second  
θαλασσα, ης f sea  
αἷμα, ατος f blood

Cf Ex 7:20-21; Rev 8:8-9.

νεκρος, α, ον dead  
ψυχη, ης f life, 'soul', living being  
ζωη, ης f life  
ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνησκω  
die

I.e. 'all sea life died'

**Verse 4**

Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς ποταμοὺς καὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα.

τρίτος, η, ον third  
ποταμος, ου m river, stream  
πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well  
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Cf 8:10-11. Witherington comments, "The turning of the seas and springs into blood divides a single Egyptian plague into two parts, thus showing the author is not attempting to follow slavishly the literary pattern."

**Verse 5**

καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ ἀγγέλου τῶν ὑδάτων λέγοντος· Δίκαιος εἶ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὁ ὅσιος, ὅτι ταῦτα ἔκρινας,

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

όσιος, α, ον holy  
κρινω judge

Cf 15:2-4. "The judgement of God is neither vengeful nor capricious. It is an expression of his just and righteous nature." Mounce.

### Verse 6

ὅτι αἷμα ἁγίων καὶ προφητῶν ἐξέχεαν, καὶ αἷμα αὐτοῖς δέδωκας πίνειν· ἄξιοι εἰσιν.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy  
προφητης, ου m prophet  
δέδωκας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s διδωμι  
πίνειν Verb, aor act infin πινω drink

The judgment fits the crime. The NRSV translates ἄξιοι εἰσιν 'It is what they deserve.'

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting

### Verse 7

καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λέγοντος· Naί, κύριε, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις σου.

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

The voice "represents the corporate testimony of the martyrs in 6:9 and the prayers of the saints in 8:3-5." Mounce.

ναι yes, yes indeed, certainly  
παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty  
ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true  
κρίσεις Noun, nom pl κρίσις, εως f  
judgement, act of judgement

Cf. Ps 19:9.

### Verse 8

Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἥλιον· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ καυματίσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν πυρί.

τέταρτος, η, ον fourth  
ἥλιος, ου m the sun  
ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδωμι  
καυματιζω scorch, burn  
πυρ, ος n fire

Witherington comments, "John seems to be drawing on some other intertestamental Jewish ideas such as those found in Wisd. of Sol. 5:7 – God makes the whole creation a weapon to repel his enemies."

### Verse 9

καὶ ἐκαυματίστησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καῦμα μέγα· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τὰς πληγὰς ταύτας, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν δοῦναι αὐτῷ δόξαν.

ἐκαυματίστησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl  
καυματιζω  
καυμα, τος n heat  
βλασφημεω slander, insult, blaspheme

ἔχοντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s ἔχω  
ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power  
πληγη, ης f plague  
μετανοεω repent  
δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδωμι  
δοξα, ης f glory

"Following the great earthquake of 11:13 the nations were 'dazzled into homage and conversion' (Kiddle...) – a temporary condition at best – but now, knowing full well that it is God himself who controls the plagues, they refuse to repent but resort to blasphemy. Like Pharaoh, their hearts have become hardened and repentance is out of the question." Mounce.

### Verse 10

Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου· καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἔσκοτωμένη, καὶ ἔμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνου,

πεμπτος, η, ον fifth  
θρονος, ου m throne  
θηριον, ου n animal, beast  
ἐσκοτωμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s  
σκοτοομαι be or become darkened  
μασαομαι gnaw, bite  
γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language, utterance  
πονος, ου m pain, suffering; hard work

### Verse 11

καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔλκων αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

ἔλκος, ους n sore, boil

"Their blasphemy of God means that in their agony they clearly recognise the source of their punishments yet refuse to give up their idolatrous and rebellious ways." Reddish

### Verse 12

Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην· καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου.

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth  
ποταμος, ου m river  
ἐξηράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ξηραινω  
dry up  
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

"The Euphrates was an enormous river, and it never dried up under normal circumstances. Thus the divine source of this drying up as a judgment is emphasised (cf. Isa 50:2; Hos 13:15; Nah 1:4)." Witherington.

ἐτοιμασθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἐτοιμαζω  
prepare  
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road

βασιλευς, εως m king  
 ανατολη, ης f rising sun, dawn, east  
 ηλιος, ου m the sun

"The Euphrates marked the eastern boundary of the land given by covenant to Abraham and his seed (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7-8; Josh 1:3-4). It also separated the Roman Empire on the east from the much feared Parthians whose expert cavalry bowmen had conquered the entire territory from the Euphrates to the Indus." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "At 17:16 we will learn that these kings from the rising sun have as their goal the destruction of Babylon."

### Verse 13

και ειδον εκ του στοματος του δρακοντος και εκ του στοματος του θηριου και εκ του στοματος του ψευδοπροφητου πνευματα τρια ακαθαρτα ως βατραχοι:

στομα, τος n mouth  
 δρακων, οντος m dragon  
 ψευδοπροφητης, ου m false prophet

"The unclean spirits proceed from the *mouths* of the unholy triumvirate, suggesting the persuasive and deceptive propaganda which in the last days will lead men to an unconditional commitment to the cause of evil." Mounce.

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three  
 ακαθαρτος, ον unclean  
 βατραχος, ου m frog

"The reference to the three spirits as frogs emphasizes their uncleanness and perhaps their endless croaking." Mounce.  
 In the ancient world, frogs were generally viewed as unclean, ugly and vicious.

### Verse 14

εισιν γαρ πνευματα δαιμονιων ποιουντα σημεια, α εκπορευεται επι τους βασιλεις της οικουμενης ολης, συναγαγειν αυτοους εις τον πολεμον της ημερας της μεγαλης του θεου του παντοκρατορος –

δαιμονιον, ου n demon  
 σημειον, ου n miraculous sign  
 εκπορευομαι go or come out  
 βασιλευς, εως m king  
 οικουμενη, ης f world, inhabited earth  
 ολος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire  
 συναγαγειν Verb, aor infin συναγω gather, gather together  
 πολεμος, ου m war, battle  
 παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

Cf. Joel 3:2.

### Verse 15

Ίδου ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης. μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῆ καὶ βλέπωσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ –

κλεπτης, ου m thief  
 μακαριος, α, ον blessed, happy

The third of the seven beatitudes of Revelation.

γρηγορεω be or keep awake, be alert  
 τηρεω keep, maintain  
 ιματιον, ου n garment, clothing  
 γυμνος, η, ον naked  
 περιπατεω walk, walk about, live  
 βλεπω see

"The faithful are admonished to be on the alert for this great event – not taken by surprise as a soldier who, when the alarm is sounded, must run away naked because he has misplaced his clothing." Mounce.

ασχημοσυνη, ης f shame of nakedness

### Verse 16

και συνηγαγεν αυτοους εις τον τοπον τον καλουμενον Ἑβραϊστί Ἀρμαγεδών.

Witherington comments, "Though the evil trinity sends these spirits out, they serve God's purpose of bringing the nations together for God's final judgment. It is quite clear from Ezek 38-39; Zech 14 and 1 En 56, 90 that various early Jews believed that, in the last days, their enemies would gather to war against them but that God would intervene and save them. Here this tradition has been blended with the idea of hordes invading the Roman Empire."

συνηγαγεν Verb, aor act infin συναγω  
 τοπος, ου m place  
 Ἑβραϊστί in Hebrew or Aramaic

It is difficult to identify Ἀρμαγεδών, a difficulty which has given rise to a number of textual variants. "Magadon is normally connected with Megiddo, the ancient city lying on the north side of the Carmel ridge and commanding the strategic pass between the coastal plain and the valley of Esdraelon. It is one of history's famous battlefields, having witnessed major conflicts all the way 'from one fought by Tuthmosis III in 1468 B.C. to that of Lord Allenby of Megiddo in 1917' (NBD, p.505). 'By the waters of Megiddo' Barak and Deborah defeated the chariots of Sisera (Judg 4-5; cf. 5:19). Ahaziah, wounded by the arrows of Jehu, fled to Megiddo, and died there (II Kgs 9:27). Har-Magedon would mean 'the Mountain of Megiddo,' But here a difficulty arises: there is no Mt. Megiddo... Fortunately, geography is not the major concern. Wherever it takes place, Har-Magedon is symbolic of the final overthrow of all the forces of evil by the might and power of God. The great conflict between God and Satan, Christ and Antichrist, good and evil, which lies behind the perplexing course of history will in the end issue in a final struggle in which God will emerge victorious and take with him all who have placed their faith in him. This is Har-Magedon."

### Verse 17

Καὶ ὁ ἑβδομος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἀέρα – καὶ ἐξῆλθεν φωνὴ μεγάλη ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου λέγουσα· Γέγονεν –

ἑβδομος, η, ον seventh

ἄηρ, ερος m air

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

Cf. 15:1. Moffatt translates "All is over!"

### Verse 18

καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί, καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωποι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος σεισμός οὕτω μέγας,

ἀστραπη, ης f lightning

βροντη, ης f thunder

σεισμος, ου m earthquake

οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun such as

τηλικουτος, αυτη, ουτο so great, so large

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. formed from οὗτος thus

Cf. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19.

### Verse 19

καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη, καὶ αἱ πόλεις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔπεσαν· καὶ Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη ἐμνήσθη ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ δοῦναι αὐτῇ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ·

πολις, εως f city, town

Some take the great city as Jerusalem (cf. 11:8). Others think the reference is to Rome. Morris thinks it is a general picture of the complete destruction of "civilised man ... ordering his affairs apart from God."

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three  
μερος, ους n part, piece

"Perhaps because it is ruled by the unholy trinity, so that the punishment fits the crime." Witherington.

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall,  
fall down

ἐμνήσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

μνησκομαι remember, call to mind

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδομι

ποτηριον, ου n cup

οἶνος, ου m wine

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

### Verse 20

καὶ πᾶσα νῆσος ἔφυγεν, καὶ ὄρη οὐχ εὐρέθησαν.

νησος, ου f island

φευγω flee

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

εὕρισκω find

Cf. 6:12-14. Witherington comments, "This is, of course, metaphorical, but it draws on the OT notion that all of creation quakes when God comes down to visit, especially when he comes in judgment."

### Verse 21

καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη ὡς ταλαντιαία καταβαίνει ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τῆς χαλάζης, ὅτι μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφοδρᾶ.

χαλαζα, ης f hail

ταλαντιαιος, α, ον weighing a talent  
(perhaps about 90 pounds)

καταβαινω come down, descend

βλασφημεω cf. 16:9,11,21.

πληγη, ης f plague

σφοδρα very much, very, greatly

"This leads to no repentance, only a blasphemous scream complaining about the severe weather." Witherington.