



Revelation's Battle of Armageddon and the Seven Last Plagues

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What if you're comfortably settled in your favorite lounge chair to watch TV and the announcement blares across the screen: **"We interrupt this broadcast . . ."** Finally, the world's media are jolted from their narrow preoccupation with earth's local politics and forced to report events of cosmic significance. Network anchors ponder the meaning of an unprecedented series of worldwide catastrophes. Newspapers write headlines alerting Christians that the Great War has reached its final battle. Those who threw in their lot with Satan reap a harvest of intense suffering as they reel under the impact of serial plagues. But God miraculously protects and provides for His loyal followers in this time of trouble and terror.

Then, just as headline writers search their dictionaries for the spelling of "Armageddon," that battle is interrupted by what would be history's greatest headline—if anyone were around to read it! Some people have the mistaken idea that Jesus might come *at any moment*—something like Russian roulette. Jesus *is* coming soon, but specific events must take place *before* He returns. A big part of being ready for His Coming involves understanding what God's Word teaches about what will occur in the last days.

This sequence of events—this preview of Earth's final headlines—begins in **Revelation 14:9-10**: "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength. . . ."

So before Jesus comes, the mark of the beast will be enforced. **Revelation 13:15-17** says the mark of the beast will be forced upon all classes of people—rich and poor, small and great, free and bond. Only those with the mark will be allowed to buy and sell—all others face an economic boycott and death sentence. Before Jesus comes, the whole world will be TESTED on the question of LOYALTY. In Daniel's day, the test of loyalty for the three Hebrew worthies was the Second Commandment, forbidding the worship of graven images. When the three Hebrews would not bow down to the image and violate God's Law, they were condemned to death. In the last generation, the issue will be not the Second Commandment but the Fourth, worshiping the Creator on His true Sabbath. There'll be two classes of people—those who receive either the mark of the beast or the seal of God. Each person will be on one side or the other. After each makes a final, irrevocable decision, God's wrath will be poured out.

God's wrath will come in the form of the Seven Last Plagues, reserved for those who receive the mark of the beast. **Revelation 15:1 & 16:2**. Those who yield to human traditions and laws, selling out their devotion to Christ, will feel the unmitigated wrath of God. During this fearful time, God's children will be alive but protected by His grace. The plagues will fall all around them, but they won't be touched. The church will go through the tribulation and emerge triumphant.

Prior to the plagues' falling, Jesus solemnly announces: "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." **Revelation 22:11**. Then and only then will Christ's work as our High Priest in heaven be ended. Every case will have been decided for eternal life or eternal death. The door of God's mercy will close, ushering in the "time of trouble" spoken of in **Daniel 12:1**.

Revelation of Hope

No description of this period of earth's history cannot approach its reality as the wicked drink the cup of God's wrath unmixed with mercy. But let's look at the preview given in **Revelation 16**.

Plague One: The first plague to fall upon the wicked is "a foul and loathsome sore" (**verse 2**), possibly resembling the boils and blains suffered by the Egyptians during their sixth plague. **Exodus 9:9**. Many scholars believe them to have been a type of cancerous lesion. But whatever the diagnosis, we know the sores under the first plague will be painful, and they'll fall on all those who've chosen to follow the dictates of man above the commands of God. The impact of such a plague would close schools, factories, and stores. Hospitals would overflow with people seeking treatment, but most doctors and nurses would suffer the same affliction.

Plague Two: While people still suffer from their sores, another calamity strikes! "The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died" (**verse 3**). What a sight—and what a stench, as the creatures of the sea wash ashore. People will be stumbling over one another in their speedy exodus from the beaches.

Plague Three: In the third plague, the rivers and springs of water became blood (**verse 4**). Just think! One turns on the faucet—and instead of water, blood flows! Could anything be worse? But, ghastly and frightening as the plagues may be, God's justice is fully vindicated. The angel declares, "You are righteous, O Lord, . . . because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due" (**verses 5-6**). While the wicked perish of thirst with nothing to drink but blood, **Isaiah 33:16** promises the faithful that "Bread will be given him, his water will be sure." This promise may sound like poetry now, but then it will be worth more than the wealth of all the world's banks!

Plagues Four and Five: The fourth plague scorches men with fire and great heat, and the fifth spreads darkness throughout the land, while men continue to suffer from the earlier plagues, gnawing their tongues in pain. The text indicates the plagues are not all universal nor all immediately fatal, since those under the fifth plague are still suffering from the sores of the first. Apparently the plagues fall successively, not simultaneously, as their effects overlap; the accumulation of dreary trouble becomes unspeakable!

Plague Six: The sixth plague includes the great final battle, Armageddon. Three unclean spirits, symbolizing "spirits of demons," will "go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (**verses 13-14, 16**). The Battle of Armageddon involves the combined forces of rebel religious powers mobilized against God's people to destroy those loyal to God. All will be involved in the Battle of Armageddon. In Time's last moment, when it looks as if God's people will be annihilated, the final phase of the battle occurs: Christ returns in glory, accompanied by His angel armies, and the wicked are slain. This is Armageddon—an interrupted battle!

Plague Seven: Then the seventh plague brings "a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. . . . Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." This earthquake levels the cities as well as the mountains. Next comes a "great hail from heaven . . . each hailstone about the weight of a talent." Since a talent is about fifty-seven pounds, the devastation from such a hailstorm is beyond comprehension. **Revelation 16:17-18, 20-21**.

Psalms 91:4 promises: "He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge." And **Psalms 91:7-10** gives wonderful assurance: "No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling."

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“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Revelation 15:1, 6-8, 16:1	The Seven Last Plagues contain “the wrath of God.”
Revelation 14:9-10	Only those who worship the beast and receive his mark “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.”
Revelation 16:2	So the Seven Last Plagues are not suffered by God’s faithful people but are poured out only on those who “had the mark of the beast.”
Psalms 91:7-11	Even while the wicked are falling everywhere, God promises the righteous that no plague will touch them.
Exodus 7 – 11, 8:21-23, 9:4-7, 10:23	When God brought Ten Plagues upon Egypt, just the first three had a general effect—the Last Seven affected <i>only</i> the Egyptians, <i>not</i> God’s people!
Isaiah 33:16	God promises those who walk righteously that their bread and water will be sure.
Revelation 18:2-4	God urges His people to come out of Babylon and not partake of her sins—or receive of her plagues.
Isaiah 28:21	Acts of punishment and judgment are so foreign to God’s loving nature that the Bible calls them “strange.”
Revelation 16:9, 11, 21	The Plagues, which would wake up a sincere but misguided person, only confirm the wicked in their rebellion—instead of repenting, they blaspheme God!
Revelation 16:5 & 7	Even while the Plagues are falling, heavenly voices proclaim that God is righteous—His judgments are just.
Revelation 16:3-4, 6	When the rivers and springs of water become blood, an angel declares: “They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.”
Revelation 22:11-12	When the Plagues start to fall, mankind’s probation is already closed, for each one’s final decision has already been made.

Beautiful parallel: The Ten Plagues fell upon Egypt *just before God’s people were delivered* from that wicked country. The Seven Last Plagues will fall *just before God’s people are delivered* from this wicked world—so keep looking up!

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

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1. What awesome announcement does Jesus make indicating that salvation’s door is closing?

- A. Let the unjust stay unjust. (You may check *more than one* answer.)
- B. Let the holy stay holy..
- C. I’m coming to give every man his reward..
- D. All of the above.
- E. None of the above.

To check your answer, see Revelation 22:11-12.

2. How will God’s people escape death during the Seven Last Plagues?

- A. By the blood of the Lamb. (You may check *more than one* answer.)
- B. By the word of their testimony..
- C. By minding their own business..
- D. All of the above..
- E. None of the above..

To check your answer, see Revelation 12:11.

3. T F The Seven Last Plagues contain what the Bible calls “the WRATH of GOD.””

To check your answer, see Revelation 15:6-8, 16:1.

4. T F The Seven Last Plagues will fall only on those who receive the Mark of the Beast—not on God’s faithful people.

To check your answer, see Revelation 14:9-10 and 16:2.