

Revelation Chapter 16 Edited

Chapter 15 is directly related to chapter 16. It would be helpful to consider the comments there before considering this chapter.

POURING OUT THE 7 LAST PLAGUES

In Rev. 15:1 we read:

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES; for in them is FILLED UP THE WRATH OF GOD.”

That these are the seven LAST PLAGUES clearly implies that there are earlier or, previous, plagues from God. In these 7 LAST PLAGUES the WRATH OF GOD IS FILLED UP, indicating that these will completely and forever destroy that which they are poured upon.

We can find the interpretation of what "Plagues" are right in the Revelation. Since we have read that these are the 7 LAST PLAGUES we expect to find PREVIOUS plagues.

In Rev. 11:3 and 6 we read, in part: **“I will give power to my two witnesses [the Old and New Testament] ... to smite the earth [religious society] with all plagues as often as they will.”** Yes, the Bible has always had the power to “plague” those in error by confronting them with plaguing truths.

Another example is depicted in the 7 TRUMPETS recorded in chapters 8 through 11.

The 7 TRUMPETS were given by God to 7 Angels (Rev. 8:2, 6). These 7 Angels or MESSENGERS are the same as the 7 MESSENGERS that were sent to the 7 Churches, which take place during seven successive periods of time during the Gospel Age.

These MESSENGERS are, in order, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John, Arius, Peter Waldo, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther and Br. Russell.

In our studies we have learned that it was the MESSAGE – THE WORDS OF TRUTH FROM GOD’S OWN HOLY WORD – that is the important point. We identify the Messengers to assist us in recognizing the MESSAGE THAT GOD AND JESUS intended for the brethren in each period of the Church to receive.

These trumpet blasts symbolize public and widespread messages of truth.

In Rev. 9:20 we read, **“and the rest of the men which were not killed by these PLAGUES yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should**

not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and brass and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk ...”

This verse is in the 6th Trumpet period. This period started in 1517 with the great Reformation and continued until 1873 AD. During the Trumpets, we are being shown how the Nominal Churches and nominal Christians are reacting to the Truth being trumpeted forth. The men who were symbolically “killed” represent those who converted, accepted God’s truths and “died” to their former condition of being a Roman Catholic! But we read that the remainder of men who were not killed, who did not repent of their various idolatries, are those who remain Roman Catholics. They are considered as still engaging in their sinful practices of Roman Catholic idol worship.

But the point we want to focus on is that these trumpet blasts of TRUTHS ARE CALLED “PLAGUES” by those who oppose the truth.

The LORD demonstrates another symbolic relationship between the 7 Trumpet blasts and the 7 Last Plagues. In both, they are said to affect the same symbol. For example, the first Trumpet blast affected the earth and likewise the first of the Last Plagues affects the earth. The second Trumpet affected the sea and so, also, the second of the Last Plagues will affect the sea, and so on, for all seven.

ANGEL/ MESSAGE	CHAPTER/VS	PLAGUES	CHAPTER/VS	TRUMPET BLASTS
1	REV 16:2	Earth	REV 8:7	Earth
2	REV 16:3	Sea	REV 8:8	Sea
3	REV 16:4	Rivers & Springs of Water	REV 8:10,11	Rivers & Springs of Water
4	REV 16:8	Sun	REV 8:12	Sun
5	REV 16:10	Darkness	REV 9:1,2	Darkness
6	REV 16:12	Great River Euphrates	REV 9:13,14	Great River Euphrates
7	REV 16:17	It is Done	REV 11:15	Lord/Bride Reigns

Now, to put this all together: Throughout the Gospel Age, God, through Jesus, and Jesus, through his Messengers, have put forth messages of truth from His Word to the true Church. These messages both encourage and admonish His people. These same Messengers were used to give symbolic Trumpet blasts of truth that would PLAGUE the nominal religions – first Judaism and then Paganism, and later, Papacy and Protestantism. However, with the Trumpet blasts, the religious leaders, and the people under their influence, did not have to accept these truths. In fact, we know that the vast majority did not. Even today, Papacy and Protestantism still number well over two billion adherents! As organizations

they still blaspheme God's name and misrepresent Him, His Son Jesus, and His Plan of the Ages.

However, the time is near at hand when out from these 7 Messages of truth will come the 7 LAST CONDENSED PLAGUING TRUTH MESSAGES – Poured out upon these same nominal church systems. When that takes place, they will not be able to avoid the consequences – to be totally and completely EXPOSED AS FRAUDULENT REPRESENTATIVES OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH AND KINGDOM.

We have a corresponding picture in Joshua the 6th chapter. The LORD instructed the Israelites to encircle the city of Jericho. For six days, seven priests with trumpets, along with the ark of the Covenant, marched around Jericho once each day and gave TRUMPET BLASTS. But, on the seventh day, they marched around the city 7 times and then the priests gave their TRUMPET BLASTS. ALL THE PEOPLE SHOUTED and the walls of the city fell down underneath themselves! Yes, it was trumpet blasts that brought Jericho down. The walls seemingly were undermined, like an earthquake, so that the walls fell down, allowing the Israelites to run straight forward into the city. This pictures how there were 6 previous Trumpet blasts of truths. Then, on the seventh Day (symbolizing the 7th 1,000 year Day of the Lord, starting in 1874 AD), there were 7 Trumpet blasts. The same symbolic trumpet blasts will lead the people to shout en masse, leading to the bringing down of the anti-typical city of Babylon the great.

Br. Russell suggests another very interesting picture – the 10 Plagues upon Egypt being a picture of the combined 3 Woes (trumpets) with the 7 last Plagues which he calls “7 last trumpets” (equaling 10 total).

Reprint 3994: “Noting that these ten plagues (of Egypt) prefigured the time of trouble in the end of this age ... portrayed in the Revelation ... the first three Plagues are called the woe trumpets and following them come the 'seven last trumpets.' The first three apparently affect all. The last seven are restricted to those who are in opposition to the Lord ...”

Here Br. Russell goes so far as to call the 7 Last Plagues the 7 Last Trumpets. This certainly lends itself to the 7 Last Plagues being 7 Truth Messages poured out.

From the 6th Volume, page 175: “... because these plagues upon Egypt were intended in some measure to foreshadow, to illustrate, the plagues with which this Gospel age will end – the first three [Woes or trumpets number 5, 6 and 7. See Rev. 8:13] and the 'the seven last plagues.' Rev. 15:1”

We read here that Br. Russell is equating the 3 Woes as the first three Plagues.

As God used Moses and Aaron to speak forth God's coming plagues upon Egypt, so also, God has and will use His people (the Feet members of the Body of Christ) to speak forth His judgments upon the Anti-Christ systems. As Pharoah and the Egyptians knew when they were being plagued by God, so also will nominal Christians. As Pharoah repented not when he was being plagued, we read in Rev. 16:9, 11 and 21 that those who will be plagued also do not repent.

In Revelation chapters 17 and 18 we are shown that these last plagues will come upon Babylon "suddenly," in "one day." We follow Br. Russell's suggestion that these 7 plagues come fast, building upon one another, because the same environment in the world from the first plague up to the last are overlapping one another. We are not to think that there are long periods of time between these 7 last plagues.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES:

1. What are they? They are condensed truths.
2. When are they poured out? In the future after the 144,000 are Sealed, some remaining in the flesh.
3. Upon who or what are they poured? The Nominal Church Systems, the bundled Tares.
4. Who will pour them out? All of the 144,000 and ONE. The Feet Members of the Body of Christ on this side of the Vail, while the remainder of The Christ in the spirit realm are working with them from beyond the Vail.

As Jesus told us – "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak, for it shall be given you in the same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh through you." Matthew 10:19, 20.

Rev. 16:1, 2: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, go your way, and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his Image."

This plaguing truth will be exposing the error of ECUMENICAL UNION BETWEEN PAPACY AND FEDERATED PROTESTANTISM. We can relate this to Rev. 13:15-18, a future event from now. This will be when the Protestants unite and cooperate with Roman Catholics in pressuring the civil authorities to enforce all to

embrace, or at least submit, to their claims of being the Kingdom of God, or at least His earthly authorities. This is depicted as receiving the Mark in the forehead or upon the hand.

Because this enforced marking has not happened yet, it implies that these Plagues are poured out in the future.

Here is an important point – in Rev. 13:15 it is after the Image of the beast is vitalized or is given life (by receiving so-called Apostolic succession) that it can pressure the civil authorities to **enforce** this marking upon all. This implies that at the time the first of the 7 Last Plagues is being poured out, there is a Church and Civil confederacy in operation. Even though we read of this in more detail in the sixth of the 7 Last Plagues – dragon, beast and False Prophet (the vitalized Image) – it does not mean that only at the time of the sixth plague is there a Church and Civil union. Rather, it is already in existence when the first plague is being poured out. These seven last plagues come quickly building upon each other. More on this later.

This first plague is the fulfillment of the warning that God has provided in Rev. 14:9, 10: **And the third angel followed them saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out undiluted into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb.”**

See notes on Rev. 14 for greater detail. Suffice it here to write that the angel is God’s message of warning to His people not to receive the mark. If someone does receive the mark, they will be forced to drink (ingest) the undiluted (strong) wine (truth doctrines) of God’s wrath (His judgments). This will give the recipient terrible mental anguish.

Rev. 16:3: **“And the second angel poured out his bowl upon the sea and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.”**

This plaguing truth demonstrates that EVERY HUMAN SOUL DIES. It will show there is no such thing as the human soul being immortal, living on somewhere. Yes, Adam and all his descendants are dead in sin, whether they are actually sleeping in death or are the so-called "walking dead." As Jesus said, "let the dead bury their dead."

Rev. 16:4-7 – corrected from the ancient manuscripts: **“And the third angel poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, thou art righteous which art and wast, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou hast given them blood to drink for they are worthy. And I heard the altar say, even so Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”**

The rivers and fountains of water represent theologians – Popes, Bishops, Cardinals, ministers, priests and all other teachers of religious errors. Their lies will be exposed for what they are – the means by which they had power over the people. Blood signifies death. Their embrace of a hell of eternal torment will be demonstrated not to be true!

It reminds us of Isaiah 28:14-18, in part: **“Because you have said, we have made a covenant with death and with hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through it shall not come unto us for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves ... Judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be annulled and your agreement with hell shall not stand, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through then you shall be trodden down by it.”**

Yes, when the Plagues of truth are forced upon them, the result will be the complete destruction of their false representation of God’s just and loving character! The thought of tormenting his creatures with literal fire NEVER ENTERED HIS HEART. Jeremiah 7:31

Rev. 16:8, 9: **“And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun and power was given unto it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God which hath power over these plagues and they repented not to give Him glory.”**

This Plaguing truth has several related aspects. Primarily it is the RANSOM FOR ALL WITH THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS. This includes THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RANSOM – A PERFECT HUMAN LIFE FOR A PERFECT HUMAN LIFE LOST. THIS DEMONSTRATES THAT GOD AND JESUS ARE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT – FOR GOD CANNOT DIE. It also demonstrates THAT THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL PEOPLE TO LEARN THE TRUTH AND MAKE A CHOICE FOR LIFE ETERNAL.

Yes, the sun represents the Gospel message, especially the ransom for all. This fundamental and most beautiful doctrine is HATED BY PEOPLE. It is so strange, but when we tell people this, most do not like it. These truths will indeed cause great heat or affliction of mind and heart when they are forced to hear it! Sadly, but not unexpectedly, most are Tares and not really in the right heart condition. Most do not yet repent of their errors but rather will continue to be tormented in their consciences.

The nominal Christians are tormented in their minds and hearts because they are forced to hear these truths and have no answer to it. The Feet Members will put forth the truth in such a reasonable way that it can't be argued against logically. The torment is that they "see" it but will not accept it. The reasons for not accepting it are pride, ego, superstition, and peer pressure, along with their total commitment to these earthly systems.

They "blaspheme the name of God" by their stubborn continuance in their God dishonoring doctrines. "They repent not." We read of this in verse 11 also. It is like Pharaoh of old, when God sent plagues upon the Egyptians, they repented not until the last one. Oh, the sinfulness of fallen mankind!

Rev. 16:10, 11: "And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast and his kingdom was full of darkness and they gnawed their tongues for pain and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and repented not."

These plaguing truths expose THE PAPACY, THE LINE OF POPES, AND ALL OF THEIR FALSE CLAIMS AND TITLES. THEIR COUNTERFEIT KINGDOM WILL BE FULLY REVEALED AS A GREAT DECEPTION. This further demonstrates that they would rather perish in their errors than to publicly accept the truth as it is being presented.

And like the fourth plague, people's hardheartedness keeps them from submissively yielding to God's truths for the truth's sake. It will take all seven of the Last Plagues, along with great hail (vs. 21), to finally cause all to abandon Babylon the Great. And consequently, they will then wreak their anger and outrage upon the systems that had deceived them for so long.

Rev. 16:12-16, in part: "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet ..."

This plaguing truth exposes the error of CHURCH AND STATE CONFEDERACY. The setting is unusual in that the Euphrates River brought financial support to Babylon. This suggests that in the future there will be a financial or economic crisis that will cause the Papacy (the Beast) and Federated Protestant Churches (the False Prophet) with the Governments (the Dragon) to cooperate together to try to keep the crisis from getting worse. It is a forced cooperative arrangement, each keeping their own identity, but publicly putting forth the same message that all true Christians and patriots need to submit to their restrictive rules because they are representing what God wants. Actually, this leads them to the great Armageddon crash which will be the result of the next and last Plague.

“...that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”

The symbology is unmistakable corresponding to Cyrus the king of Persia, and his strategy of having his men divert the river Euphrates upriver from the city of Babylon. When the time came, the water was diverted very quickly so his soldiers could enter the city, passing undetected underneath the gates that were usually lowered into the water. His army could thus enter Babylon by way of the dried river bed.

Persia was located east of Babylon. The picture is that of King Jesus and his Body members (who are “kings and priests” of God) with him. They are from the east, depicting that these kings start to intervene in the destruction of Churchianity along with the cooperating civil authority during the “morning time” of the dawning Millennial Day. Thus, their “way is prepared” for the full establishment of the peaceable Kingdom of God.

Returning to the three – Papacy, Federated Protestants and Civil authorities – they have **“...three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of their mouths...”**

Unclean spirits symbolize false doctrines, teachings, in fact demon-inspired teachings. (1 John 4:1: **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”** 1 Timothy 4:1 **“Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils..”**)

Frogs must puff themselves up in order to make their loud croaking sounds. This "puffing up" shows how the corrupt institutions present themselves as very big and important. Male frogs croak for several reasons. One is to attract a female mate. Another is to defend its territory. Both reasons seem appropriate to the time in which these Old heavens and Old earth systems are trying to present themselves as desirable and as defenders of the old order of supposed security.

Rev. 16:14: “For they are spirits of demons doing signs, which are to go forth upon the kings of the whole habitable earth; to gather them together unto the battle of the great day of God the Almighty.” (Rotherham)

These demonic teachings, doctrines or declarations deceive the leaders of the so-called Christian world into the prophesied “hour of power” (Rev. 17:12). This is the time of the enforced “marking” by the Beast and Vitalized Image of the Beast (Rev. 13:15-18).

They present themselves as God’s kingdom on earth. They point to their Christian morals (at least outwardly) and their agenda teaching that God has ordained a Christian government. They misapply Scriptures like Romans 13:1-7. To not receive their “mark in the forehead or in the right hand” is to be considered a heretic, a traitor and un-patriotic.

They are so successful (under Satan’s influence – consider Ephesians 6:12) that they, in effect, have gathered the world to the impending battle (conflict) of that great day (the 1,000 year Millennial Day, having started in 1874 A.D.) of God Almighty. This battle is symbolized in the next and last of the seven last plagues.

The so-called “signs” or “miracles” might include something supernatural. However, it would be “sign” or “miracle” enough to once more have a Church and State confederacy, similar to what had been in the past. This is what Br. Russell expected. Consider the references following verse 16.

Rev. 16:15: “(Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.)”

This verse 15 is a parenthetical thought, a warning, to the spirit-begotten living at the time of our Lord Jesus’ Parousia, presence. And more specifically, to those living at the time during which the Churches and Governments are cooperating, applying the test of whether one would receive the “mark.” Jesus warns us on two points. One, do not lose sight that he has returned as the true King. Secondly, do not give up on believing in him as our ransom. All the spirit-begotten have been given a “robe of righteousness” or a “garment.” We are told to keep it spotless and clean (Rev. 3:4, 18; Ephesians 5:26, 27; Isaiah 61:10; Psalm 45:13, 14). We also read of how the Great Company Class, living AFTER the Church is complete, will have to “wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:13, 14) In Jude 23 we read that some, through gross unfaithfulness, have spotted their robes. Jesus also warned through a parable that some would put off

the garment that had been provided for them and suffer the dire consequences (Matthew 22:10-13).

There is a peculiar incident recorded in Mark 14:50-52. It only appears in Mark's writings. A young man was in the garden of Gethsemane at the time of Jesus' arrest. When all fled, some young men grabbed his linen garment and he fled from them naked, leaving his only garment behind. As this experience was taking place during Jesus' arrest it might represent a small group who, under the pressure and persecution in the future, when the plagues are being poured out, might deny the Lord and the Truth, choosing to flee away.

So then, we know from Rev. 7 that the Great Company do keep their garments, but they need to wash them. This smaller group who abandons their garment represents the Second Death class. Hence this parenthetical verse is warning the Great Company to endure unto the end. This is not a warning for the Little Flock, for they have already been sealed and faithful, remaining in the flesh still, only to deliver the seven last plagues of truth.

Rev. 16:16: "And they (Sinaitic Manuscript) gathered them together unto the place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

"They" are the Church and State arrangement, shown as the Beast, False Prophet and Dragon. They gathered them – the "kings" of verse 14, the various powers including financial, political, military, societal and religious leaders. They are gathered to a "place." A place in the Bible represents a condition. The condition here is that symbolized by "Armageddon," an actual location of a number of very large and decisive battles fought in ancient Israel.

Perhaps their united, unclean message might be something like this:

"Listen to us. We are God's representative kingdom on earth. This is the true orthodox position. This is our last best hope of holding the economy together, the security of our Christian world values from the onslaught of all the various problems facing the world – moral decay, gender confusion, Islamic attacks, terrorism, ultra liberalism, Western culture. We must have united leadership and all those who oppose us are unorthodox Christians, agnostics and atheists. All those who do not cooperate with us (will not receive the mark) are heretics and traitors to our united cause."

This, or something similar, will gather the nations to the condition of the great battle which is portrayed in the 7th Plague – the greatest earthquake (revolution) that has ever been.

Br. Russell has written much on this subject – the symbolic battle of Armageddon. He even re-titled the 4th Volume of “Studies In The Scriptures” with this. Following will be some quotes, citations and extracts from his writings.

It is important to note that Br. Russell thought that the START of this final conflict would be in these so-called Christian countries but would continue to be waged even unto the final phase of the greatest time of trouble – in Jacob’s trouble. (Jeremiah 30) This final phase culminates with Gog’s literal invasion of natural Israel as written in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. More on this in Rev. 16:18.

Following are a few Harvest Message references regarding the battle of Armageddon.

Reprint 5735: “Our thought is that Armageddon itself will be the mighty “Earthquake” spoken of in Revelation. (Rev. 16:16-18) In this great revolution and in the succeeding anarchy, all earthly institutions will be swept away. The result of the anger, hatred, and strife, if permitted to continue indefinitely, would be so terrible that it would bring about the destruction of the race ...”

“The Battle of Armageddon,” page v, starting with the fifth paragraph, through to page xv in the 1912 Foreword. These pages treat Revelation 16:12-20 in great detail.

“The Battle of Armageddon,” page 2, starting with the second paragraph, through to page 3 of the 1916 Foreword.

“The Battle of Armageddon,” pages 551, 552.

“The Time Is At Hand,” page 263, paragraph 2, in part: “...It would not be surprising if a 'strong government,' a monarchy, would someday replace this present Great Republic; and it is entirely probable that one common standard of religious belief will be deemed expedient and will be promulgated, to teach outside of which will be treated and punished as a political offense ...”

“The Time is at Hand,” pages 360, 361. From page 361, in part: “Laws may be expected soon through which, gradually, personal liberty will be curtailed, under the plea of necessity and the public welfare; until, one step after another being taken, it will finally be necessary to formulate some 'simple law of religion'; and thus Church and State may be in a measure united, in governing the United States of America. These laws, simple as they can be made, to suit all so-called 'orthodox' (i.e. popular) religious views, will be calculated to repress and prevent further growth in grace, and in the knowledge now 'meat in due season'... ”there will be a severe hour of trial and testing of the truly consecrated Church, much as

it was in the days of Papacy's triumph; only now the methods of persecution will be more refined ...".

Rev. 16:17: "And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying - it is done."

This final Plague is the message that SATAN AND THE FALLEN ANGELS HAVE BEEN BEHIND ALL OF THESE GROSS FALSEHOODS AND DECEPTIVE ERRORS OF DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE, ALL DONE IN THE NAME OF GOD AND JESUS.

Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air" in Ephesians 2:2. As the scriptures have taught us, Satan and the fallen angels have been restrained in tartaroo – earth's atmosphere – since the time of the flood of Noah's day (2 Peter 2:4, 5; Jude 6, 7). So, we conclude that Satan, as the so-called god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), is the most powerful of the fallen angels. He is referred to as the "power of the air" or, as the Diaglott reads, "the ruler of the authority of the air." Likewise, we read in Ephesians 6:12; 2:2; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Timothy 4:1. We wrestle not with flesh and blood but with wicked spirits in exalted places!

The "great voice" symbolizes a proclamation. It is depicted as emanating from "the temple from the throne," which represents the Divine Plan of the Ages, God's great plan that continues to move forward in both time and purpose. The proclamation is profound, "it is done" or "it has come to pass." This means that a very important event has now been completed: The Christ (on both sides of the veil) has finished its work in declaring God's final, last judgment message which will set in motion the following unstoppable cataclysmic events.

And there may be another aspect to these symbols. That is, like Jesus' last words from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), the final Feet Members will have a sense of having completed their mission as well. Immediately, or at most, shortly, they will be joined in glory with their Master, their Head and the rest of the resurrected Saints.

Rev. 16:18, 19, 20: "And there were lightnings and voices and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the city (singular per the Sinaitic Manuscript and Reprint 511) of the Gentiles fell down; and Babylon the great was remembered before God, to have given her the cup of the wine of the indignation and of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

The symbols of “lightnings,” “voices” and “thunders” appear together in three other chapters. The first is in Rev. 4:5. Please see more detailed notes there. However, we find that only in Rev. 4:5 – the Great throne room scene (that is, in God’s holy presence) – there is no mention of the earthquake as here and in the other two places – Rev. 8:5 and Rev. 11:19. More on this point following.

Rev. 4:5 “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God.”

These are three things that God puts forth or directs to go forth.

Lightnings

These are flashes, startling and sudden, unexpected. Yet they are bright lights which reveal truths to many people, not just the spirit-begotten.

Psa. 97:4: “His lightnings enlightened the world, the earth saw and trembled.”

Psa. 77:18: “The *voice* of thy *thunder* was in the heaven, the *lightnings* lightened the world, the earth trembled and shook.”

When God directs that startling truths go out publicly, often it is frightening to the average person.

Thunderings

Again, these are loud, sudden, proclamation-like messages of truth that go out over a wide area of society, frightening some and galvanizing others to action. Often it results in controversies.

Voices

These voices are not quite as startling, but rather it represents a persistent expression of truths that are steadily going forth in society.

Rev. 8:5, “And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and cast it into the earth, and there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake.”

Here the context goes back to verse 2 through verse 6. These lightnings, thunderings and voices will create an earthquake (that is, a social/religious revolution). In context, we read that the 7 Trumpets are brought to our attention and then they follow on afterward to start their trumpeting. These

angels/messengers that trumpet are the same as the 7 messengers to the 7 stages of the Church's development throughout the Gospel Age and it is their messages that are like *lightnings, thunderings and voices*. They create social and religious revolutions to some extent, but most particularly during the 6th (the great Reformation period, 6:12, 11:13), and during the 7th (the Armageddon crash, 16:18) stages of the Church.

Rev. 11:19, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament (Covenant), and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings and an earthquake, and great hail."

The context goes back to verse 15. This is the time of the 7th Trumpeter, the 7th stage of the Church, Laodicea. The ark of the covenant is in His temple. This represents the time when the 144,000 Bride of Christ is complete, though the Feet members may remain in the flesh for a time to deliver the final truth messages—the 7 last plagues, that lead to the great earthquake (16:18), along with hail, hard truths (16:21).

Rev. 16:18 "And there were voices and thunders and lightnings and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great."

The LORD uses these 7 Last Plagues to be flashes of "lightning" to startle and enlighten people to His truths. He uses the "thunderings" to create controversies over all the now exposed deceptions. And He uses the "voices" to be persistent expressions of these plaguing truths, particularly among the "bundled Tares" – nominal Christians. The result is the greatest earthquake in human history! It will be God's process to remove the "old heavens and old earth" (compare 2 Peter 3:7-13, Rev. 21:1) in order to establish the new.

We read that the great city Babylon fell in three parts. These are the same three parts that tried to hold it together – the Dragon of Civil power, the Papal Beast and the False Prophet of Federated Protestantism. It the greatest and most severe social revolution, consisting of the mass of burning of bundled Tares, that is – nominal Christians rejecting all aspects of what they had been taught by their Church leaders. They will realize that their promised "ticket to heaven" was nothing more than baseless promises.

It is the "city of the Gentiles." Yes, Symbolic "Babylon" seems so impressive, so large, so impregnable with the wealthy and powerful men of earth supporting it. But they are just "Gentiles," not spiritual Israelites (Rev. 2:9, 3:9; Romans 2:27-29, 9:6).

“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”

This greatest revolution dissolves into anarchy as all forms of governments are rejected and abandoned.

We can compare Rev. 6:12, 14. There the “earthquake” is the French Revolution. We read that “every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” Yes, all of Europe was affected as far as forms of government go. But note that they were only “moved out of their places.” That is, governments had to react to the social revolutionary ideas of the time, but men and women still had some form of government. However, in Rev. 16 it is different. There will be no earthly governments to raise up and assume control. No, the LORD’S time will have come. The “earthquake” revolution will dissolve into the fire of anarchy – the absence of any government. Thus, the great Armageddon crash will be complete. Thus ends the Fourth Universal Empire and only the Fifth Empire, the Kingdom of God, will abide (Daniel 2:44, 45).

“The Battle of Armageddon,” pages 556, 557, in commenting on Ezekiel 38 and Magog’s invasion of Israel after the Church is gone – “The Lord then declares his purposed destruction of the wicked host; and the description seems to indicate that it will be accomplished by an outbreak of jealousy, revolution and anarchy amongst the various elements composing the great mixed army; a revolution and strife which will involve whatever may still remain of the home governments of the various peoples, and COMPLETE the universal insurrection and ANARCHY – THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE OF REVELATION 16:18-21.”
(capitalization added).

Rev. 16:21: “And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven every stone about the weight of a talent and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

Hail is frozen water which represents destructive hard truths. This is the culmination of the 7 LAST PLAGUES OF CONDENSED TRUTHS. The “men” are those that were formerly nominal Christians otherwise depicted as Tares, imitation Christians, Christians in name but not joint-sacrificers with Jesus. When the Church systems are shown to have falsely represented God and Jesus, and that their having attended their services and donating to their support DID NOT GUARANTEE heaven or salvation for them, they will lose whatever amount of faith they had. These are those Tares who had been previously “bundled” into their

various denominations, and now they have been set ablaze and are consumed as imitation Wheat or imitation Christians, and they turn on the very religious systems that they had previously supported! This is very much like what took place during the French Revolution when, in a short 10-year period, the people rejected both Papacy and the Civil rulers that had supported each other in controlling the masses. That depiction of a “tenth part of the city falling” in an earthquake – symbolizing social revolution (Rev. 11:13) – is but only a small event compared to what will occur when the entire City falls. The other nine tenths will fall during the greatest earthquake that ever will be (Rev. 16:18, 19).

The hail stones weighed about a “talent.” This is variously presented as weighing between 70 and 100 pounds. The picture clearly presents that no one could possibly stand up to such a crushing bombardment. It represents that all pride or confidence in the religious and civil systems is destroyed.

“and men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail.”

Those who are beaten down by the messages of truth blaspheme the true God who sent them. Blaspheme means “to rail against,” “revile” and “speak evil of.”

In context, from verses 8 and 9, the scorched men blasphemed the name of God WHICH HAD POWER OVER THESE PLAGUES, and they repented not.

Again, in verse 11 they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and repented not.

This is similar to Pharaoh who also did not repent when God plagued him.

These “men” who blaspheme God do not become true believing Christians. They do not develop true sincere faith. Rather, they lose their faith in the Church and Civil systems they had trusted. They become part of the irreligious masses of people, symbolized as being a part of the LORD’S Great Army. They become part of the Sea Class that swallows up Babylon the Great (Rev. 18:21). As the “earth” represents society under religious restraint, the sea shows people without any religious restraint.

Why does Babylon fall into destruction? It falls because a great earthquake of men and women reject their claims, reject their authority.

But let us not lose sight of this understanding. The PLAGUE OF HAIL IS A PLAGUE OF HARD TRUTHS. Where did this hail of truth come from? It came out of heaven. Yes, it is the culmination of the condensed truths of the 7 Last Plagues

that had been uttered by God’s representatives – the Feet Members of the Body of Christ, those Spirit-begotten and Sealed in their Foreheads, those last members of the 144,000 in their final witness to the truth!

In harmony with the foregoing, we want to consider Psalm 149:5-9:

“Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand. To execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints. Praise you the LORD.”

Br. Russell comments on these verses in Reprints 5451, 5631 and 5761. But it is "What Pastor Russell Said" (the Question Book), page 387, from 1916, that perhaps offers the most succinct interpretation.

Since these verses state that ALL the Saints have this privilege of executing judgment on the social, financial, civil and religious powers, then it must mean that the 144,000 are complete and working together. However, the emphasis is on the Saints still living in the flesh, though Sealed in their Foreheads. It is these that rest in faith and sing harmoniously the Plan of God, who use the two-edged sword which represents the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12

It is two-edged. It recalls the "two witnesses" – the Old and New Testaments – for out of these go forth the trumpet blasts of plaguing Truths. The Truth is the Saints' only weapon. It is Truth that defeats error, even as light dispels darkness.

There is an example of the entire Christ complete, but the Feet members still on the earth during the final war against Christ, shown in Rev. 17:12-14: **“And the ten horns which thou sawest are the kings which have received no kingdom, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful.”**

Here we read that these united forces attack the Lamb and those that have been called (to the High Calling), chosen (spirit-begotten) and faithful (ultimately faithful to be counted as the final Feet members of the Body of Christ).

Again, the only way to attack Jesus who is a glorified divine spirit being is to attack his Body members – Sealed – “faithful,” though still in the flesh.

Returning to the Question Book, page 387, Br. Russell also makes a connection between the binding and judgment work of Psalm 149 with Elijah's smiting of the River Jordan with his rolled-up mantle. He writes: "The river Jordan means a judgment, and the smiting of this Jordan may mean TO PUT THE TRUTH IN SUCH A WAY AS TO DO THE JUDGING. The Elijah will handle this sword." This symbolizes a public message given by the Feet Members.

In the 2nd Volume, pages 257 through 264, Br. Russell identifies John the Baptist as a representation of the final Feet Members of the Body of Christ. He brings out how he denounced the marital union of King Herod and Herodias as being adultery. For this he was imprisoned and then beheaded at the request of Herodias and her daughter Salome. This well represents that John's message of truth identified the Biblical picture – that to have a virgin who claimed to be united to Christ, but instead unites herself to the kings of earth, is committing spiritual adultery. This suggests that this will be the experience of the Feet Members. Note well, it was a mother harlot who instructed her daughter to seduce the drunken civil authority to put to death God's prophet!

Now we want to consider some Scriptural pictures, with Harvest Message quotes, that demonstrate that Br. Russell thought that the Little Flock would have all been gathered out of the nominal systems and complete, even though some might still be in the flesh, BEFORE the seven last plagues would be poured out. He also expected that these plagues would be poured out in a SHORT period of time, perhaps a year:

4th Volume page 268, "Some of these have already obediently come out of her and the remainder are now being tested on this point, BEFORE the PLAGUES are poured out upon Babylon."

3rd Volume, page 135, "The Sealing of the Servants of God BEFORE The Plagues Come Upon Babylon."

3rd Volume, pages 165 and 166, "...Come out of her my people, that ye ... receive not of her (coming) plagues ... Thus, the classes are to be marked and separated BEFORE THE PLAGUES come upon rejected, cast off Babylon."

Rpt. 2297, "As soon as this call (Rev. 18:4) has found all the worthy ones who shall inherit the Kingdom with the King, THEN THE PLAGUES SHALL COME upon the residue, the nominal system."

Rpt. 2957, "The ordinary avocations of daily life shall continue until disturbed by the commotion and trouble of the Epiphania and the Apokalupsis (revelment) of the King IN THE POURING OUT OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES."

The following Scriptures and quotes demonstrate the suddenness of Babylon's fall:

Jeremiah 51:7, 8: **"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken, the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is SUDDENLY FALLEN AND DESTROYED, howl for her..."**

Rev. 18:8, 10, 17, 19: **"Therefore shall her PLAGUES COME IN ONE DAY, death, and mourning and famine ... Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon that mighty city! For in ONE HOUR is thy judgment come ... For in ONE HOUR so great riches is come to nought ... Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in ONE HOUR IS SHE MADE DESOLATE."**

Rpt. 5565, "Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues and telling them that VERY SUDDENLY a great calamity will come upon this great institution called Christendom, which will entirely demolish this system in every sense of the word."

Rpt. 5697, "They will be eager to come out of Babylon before her plagues come LIKE A DELUGE, AS THEY WILL SOON COME."

In this same Reprint, Br. Russell states that these plagues will be "both physical and mental." I suggest that the "mental" distress comes first as a result of the plaguing truths that they are forced to hear and then will follow the "physical" distress as the formerly "bundled Tares" come apart and tear down these insidious systems of corruption.

Rpt. 2553, "Therefore shall her PLAGUES come in ONE DAY (prophetic time is a day for a year) ..."

4th Volume, page 39, "shall her Plagues come in one day (suddenly) ..."

We also remember that in Daniel, chapter 5, the fall of literal Babylon happened suddenly – in one night. And perhaps Daniel, the long-forgotten prophet of the LORD, might represent the Feet Members in giving a final "message of interpretation of the LORD's condemnation."

The last, but in no way the least, example, is that of our Lord Jesus Christ. We remember that suddenly he was arrested after having preached openly for three days. He gave a witness before the mixed group of religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who cooperated to kill Jesus. They conspired to have the reluctant civil power (Pontius Pilate) put him to death. Before Pilate, Jesus also gave a good witness. And in his martyrdom, Jesus was a witness to the people.

As the Pharisees and Sadducees are two religious groups, working with the Roman authority – Pontus Pilate – our Revelation 16 shows it is the Papal Beast and the Federated Protestants as the False Prophet, that work with the Dragon of Civil authority.

End.