

The Seven Last Troubles



SABBATH—MARCH 9

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 15; 16.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘All people will fear [honor] you, O Lord. All people will praise your name. Only you are holy. All people will come and worship before [in front of] you, because it is clear that you do what is right’ ” (Revelation 15:4, ERV).



When people turn away fully from Bible truth and accept Babylon's lies, they are full of Babylon's wine or false teachings.

WHAT IS IN THE HEARTS of humans before they fight the last war against God's people? Revelation 11:18 shows us. The people on earth “ ‘were filled with wrath [anger]’ ” (NLT). These words match Jesus' words in Luke 21:25, 26 about the end times. People on earth will turn away from God. They will support Babylon and drink her “wine.” Babylon is a symbol for false religion. Babylon's wine is a word picture for false teachings. When people turn away fully from Bible truth and accept Babylon's lies, they are full of Babylon's wine or false teachings. Babylon will make **everyone** who does not obey God drink her wine. After that happens, God pours out all His anger against sin. God's anger is shown in the Seven Last Troubles, or Plagues, that fall on the earth.

Revelation 15 starts with seven angels. Each angel has a bowl filled with God's anger. But before the angels pour God's anger on the earth, we see a picture of God's loyal people standing on a sea made of glass in heaven (Revelation 15:1–4). They refused to accept the special stamp, or mark, of the wild sea animal's power. So, God protected them on earth from the Seven Last Troubles.

WHAT DO THE SEVEN LAST TROUBLES MEAN? (Revelation 15:1)

A time will come when every person on earth will decide to serve God or Babylon. Babylon, as we saw, is a word picture for false religion. After everyone chooses, Jesus will be ready to come back. But before He comes back, the angels who stopped the four winds from blowing on the earth (Revelation 7:1–3) will let the winds go.

Read about the Seven Last Troubles, or Plagues, in Revelation 15:1. How do the Egyptian plagues (Exodus 7–11) help us understand the reason for the Seven Last Troubles?

Why does the Bible say that the Seven Last Troubles are the very last troubles that happen on earth? The Seven Last Troubles happen after the troubles shown with the Seven Trumpets. We already learned that the Seven Trumpets show us the things that happened, or will happen, in the church from John's time until Jesus comes back. So, that means the Seven Trumpets explain the troubles that happen while God's people preach the Good News (Revelation 10:8–11:14) during the time that Jesus works for sinners in heaven (Revelation 8:2–5). God mixes His love with the troubles from the Seven Trumpets during that time. God pours out these troubles to help His enemies turn back to Him. Right before Jesus comes back, God will pour the Seven Last Troubles on the people on earth who made their hearts "hard" against Him (Revelation 16:11; Romans 1:26–28). God will **not** mix the Seven Last Troubles with mercy. The people who turned away from God now will suffer for their choices.

Revelation 15:5–8 show us the seven angels who will pour out the Seven Last Troubles. Revelation 15:8 says, "no one was able to enter the temple" (AMP). What do these words tell us about when the Seven Last Troubles will happen?

The words "no one was able to enter the temple" show us the time when Jesus' work in heaven for sinners will stop. When His work ends, the chance for people to turn away from sin is over. Then God will pour the Seven Last Troubles on the earth. So, the Seven Last Troubles will not help anyone to turn back to God. The Seven Last Troubles will show only the hate that is in the hearts of Babylon's followers. The Seven Last Troubles will cause Babylon's followers to hate God even more.



God mixed His love with the troubles from the Seven Trumpets.

GOD POURS HIS ANGER ON THE EARTH (Revelation 16:1–11)

When Jesus finally finishes His work for sinners in heaven, the time will be finished for people on the earth to accept Him. By this time, everyone already has made a decision to worship either God or the wild sea-animal power. Every decision is now final. Now the time comes for the God-haters on earth to experience God's full anger against sin, because they refused to believe His Good News.

In many ways, the Seven Last Troubles, or Plagues, match the Ten Plagues that God poured on Egypt (Exodus 7–11). The last seven Egyptian Plagues hurt only the Egyptians, but the plagues did not touch God's people. In the same way, God's people will stay safe during the Time of Trouble (Psalm 91:3–10; read also Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, pages 629, 630). The Egyptian plagues showed everyone Pharaoh's "hard" heart. God sent the plagues to show the Egyptians that their gods had no power to save them. In the same way, the Seven Last Troubles show everyone the "hard" hearts of the wild sea animal's followers. The Seven Last Troubles also show God's enemies that Babylon cannot save them from God's anger.



The 1st Trouble is painful sores that break out all over the bodies of the people who worship the wild sea-animal power.

What happens in Revelation 16:1–11? What word pictures does Revelation use to show us the things that happen?

Ellen G. White tells us that Troubles #1–4 "cannot be worldwide or everyone on the earth will die."—*The Great Controversy*, page 628, adapted. The 1st Trouble is painful sores that break out all over the bodies of the people who worship the wild sea-animal power. The 2nd Trouble and the 3rd Trouble turn the waters on the earth to blood. The 4th Trouble causes the sun to become very hot so that it burns people and causes them awful pain. But the pain caused by Troubles #1–4 does not turn the humans who hate God back to Him or change their hearts. They curse God and do not honor Him. They continue to sin.

In Revelation 16:10, 11 (read also Exodus 10:21–23), we see that the 5th Trouble attacks the wild sea animal's throne. Satan himself gave the wild sea animal his throne (Revelation 13:2). This throne is a symbol of Satan's power. As people suffer in pain, they learn that Babylon cannot protect them. But not even the fear of the Seven Last Troubles will change their "hard" and evil hearts.

THE EUPHRATES RIVER DRIES UP (Revelation 16:12)

Read about the Euphrates River in Revelation 16:12. (Also read Revelation 17:1, 15). What is the Euphrates River a word picture for? What does it mean in the book of Revelation when the Euphrates River dries up? How is the dry river connected to the Seven Last Troubles?

In the Old Testament, we see that the Euphrates River is important to Israel's enemies, Assyria and Babylon (Isaiah 7:20; Jeremiah 46:10). The river flows in the middle of the city of Babylon. The river is important to the city because it feeds the crops and gives water to people. Babylon cannot live without the Euphrates River.

Revelation 17:1 shows us end-time Babylon as a woman. She sits on many "waters." It is possible that these waters are the Euphrates River (read Jeremiah 51:13). Revelation 17:15 explains that the waters where Babylon sits are a word picture for the people who support Babylon. These people are the governments and powers who are connected with Babylon. But in the end, these powers will turn away from her and stop supporting her.

The 6th Trouble helps us remember the Old Testament story about the time when Cyrus the Persian (read Daniel 5) and his army came to the city of Babylon. A history expert named Herodotus wrote about what Cyrus did. Herodotus lived during Old Testament times. Herodotus says that King Belshazzar of Babylon had a feast. On that same night, the Persians caused the Euphrates River to flow in a different direction. Then the Persians entered the city by walking on the empty riverbed and surprised everyone in Babylon.

Revelation 16:12 says that the Euphrates River will dry up. The dried-up river is a word picture that shows us that God will end Babylon's power. Remember, the Euphrates River is a word picture for the support that worldwide powers give Babylon. So, when the Euphrates River dries up, it shows us that these powers stop supporting Babylon. As people on the earth see the awful things happening in nature (Revelation 16:3–9), they turn to Babylon to protect them. But then the 5th Trouble attacks the center of Babylon's power (Revelation 16:10, 11, ERV). The powers who support Babylon see that she cannot protect them. But their hate for God makes them blind. They attack Babylon and cause her power to end. But their hearts do not change. That is why Satan can trick them to join his last worldwide war against God. Then Satan and the evil people on earth try to destroy God's people completely.



The dried-up river is a word picture that shows us that God will end Babylon's power.

SATAN'S LAST BIG LIE (Revelation 16:13, 14)

Revelation 16:12 tells us that the reason the Euphrates River dries up is “to make a road for the kings from the east” (CEV). In the Old Testament, the “kings from the east” were Cyrus and his army coming from the north and then turning east to fight against Babylon (read Isaiah 41:25). Cyrus and his army beat Babylon. Their win helped God’s people to go back to their home in Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:27, 28). In the same way, the word picture of the Euphrates River drying up shows us that the kings from the east are coming to save God’s end-time people from danger.

The kings from the east in Revelation 16:12 are Jesus and His army of angels. At His Second Coming, Jesus will appear with His angels (Revelation 15:6; Revelation 19:8). Revelation 17:14 shows us that in the battle of Armageddon, Jesus and His army of angels will beat Satan and his army who hurt God’s people.



The kings from the east in Revelation 16:12 are Jesus and His army of angels.

Revelation 16:13, 14 show us demons that look the same as frogs. What work will these demons do to help Satan’s plans for the last war of this earth’s history?

When the Euphrates River “dries up,” Satan and his evil team of worldwide powers lose people’s support. That is when John sees demons that look the same as frogs come out of the “mouths” of these worldwide powers. In the Egyptian troubles, frogs are the last plague that God sends against Egypt that Pharaoh’s magicians can copy (Exodus 8:1–15). So, the frogs that come out of the mouths of these evil powers show us that the last work that Satan will do is copy the work of God.

What work is that? Satan gives his evil team power to do miracles the same as Jesus did when He lived on earth. You will remember that Satan’s evil team includes: (1) the dragon (false religions and the belief that dead people communicate with the living); (2) the wild sea animal (the Roman Catholic Church); and (3) the false messenger (Protestant churches that turned away from Bible truth). The miracles that these three powers do are part of Satan’s end-time plan to trick the people on earth so that they will join him in the war against God’s people. Yes, the leaders on the earth feel tricked and fooled. But they join Satan anyway. When that happens, everything is ready for the big war that will cause the end of this earth’s history. The name of this big war is the battle of Armageddon.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON (Revelation 16:16)

Revelation 16:16 shows us that evil spirits trick the kings on the earth to fight the battle of Armageddon. How can Satan trick all the evil people on earth to join him in this big war before Jesus comes back?

Demons will do miracles to trick people all over the earth so that they will join Satan's army. These miracles will be a big success worldwide. How can Satan trick so many people? Because they already turned away from the Good News about Jesus. That makes it easy for people to believe Satan's lies. Satan's demons do many false miracles to make their lies seem true (read 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12). These lies cause the evil people on earth to join Satan's war.

The name of the place where the last war will happen is named Armageddon. In the Hebrew language, Armageddon means "mountain of Megiddo." Now, it is important to understand that Armageddon is a word picture in the book of Revelation. But in Old Testament times, there was a real city named Megiddo. It was a very strong city. It was built in a place named the Jezreel Valley on the Esdraelon Plain, which was near a very high hill named Mount Carmel. Megiddo was a very important place during Israel's history. John uses Armageddon as a word picture to show us that the people on the earth will join Satan against God.

John also uses the name "mountain of Megiddo" as a word picture for Mount Carmel. Israel fought a very important battle here. There, God's messenger Elijah fought against the religious leaders of the god Baal (1 Kings 18). They fought about who was the true God. Fire came down from heaven to Elijah's altar to show everyone that the Lord was the only true God. The fire showed that humans should worship only God. Revelation 13:13, 14 show us that before the Seven Last Troubles fall on the earth, the wild land-animal power will make fire fall from heaven to copy what God did at Mount Carmel. This false miracle will trick the people on the earth so that they make a law to keep Sunday holy.

Remember, Armageddon is not a real war that people will fight somewhere in the Middle East. It is a spiritual war between Jesus and Satan's army (read 2 Corinthians 10:4). The war will show everyone who is the true leader in heaven and on earth and over all the planets forever. We need only to look at what happened at Mount Carmel to know how this war will end: Jesus wins. Satan loses.

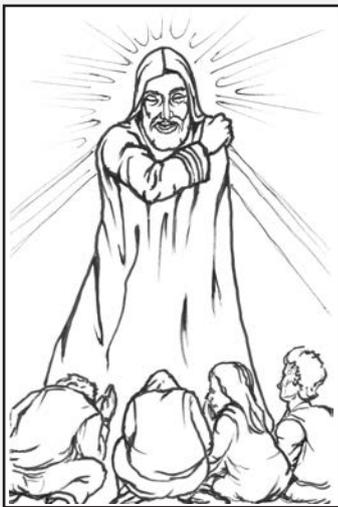


Fire came down from heaven to Elijah's altar to show everyone that the Lord was the only true God.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “People who make their minds strong with Bible truth will be the only ones who stay loyal to God in the end times. . . . Paul warned us about how bad things will be in the end times: ‘The time will come when people will not listen to the truth. They will look for teachers who will tell them only what they want to hear’ (2 Timothy 4:3, NLV). That time is now here. The people on the earth do not want Bible truth. Why? Because Bible truth makes them feel guilty for loving sin and the things on this earth. Satan gives them the lies they love to believe.

“But God will have a loyal people on the earth who follow the Bible and the Bible only. The Bible has the final say over all that they believe and do. . . .

“Satan has a long history of trying to trick people. But what will his last trick be? Satan will pretend to be Jesus Himself. Christians everywhere for a long time said that Jesus’ coming was their biggest hope. They believe that everything Jesus promised them will happen at the Second Coming. Satan is a big liar. He will act the same as Jesus. In different places on earth, Satan will show himself to humans. He will act as a king who shines with brightness. He will look the same as Jesus in the picture that John gives us in Revelation 1:13–15. Human eyes have never seen anything that looks the same as the glory that will cover Satan. There will be shouts of celebration: ‘Jesus has come! Jesus has come!’ The people will bow down in front of Satan because they think he is Jesus. . . . Satan will speak in a sweet and loving voice. He will say some of the same truths that Jesus said. Satan will heal people’s diseases. While Satan pretends to be Jesus, Satan will tell people that he changed the Sabbath to Sunday. He commands everyone on earth to keep holy the day that he blessed: Sunday. He will announce that anyone who continues to keep holy the 7th day does not show respect to his name. Satan will blame these people for the troubles happening on the earth. Why? Because this group refuses to obey his angels or believe their false messages. That is Satan’s strong lie that is almost too powerful.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, pages 593–595, 624, adapted.



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DISCUSSION QUESTION:

① How does the message to Laodicea help God’s people at the end time get ready for the last battle?