

# Napoleon to the Modern World

## 1789-1815 to today

Chapter

# 5



### Key Bible References

Revelation Chapter 16

## Overview of Revelation 16

Revelation 16 details the events that followed the “great earthquake” of Revelation 11:13, which was the French Revolution. A great voice commands the seven angels to commence the work of judgement and to prepare to pour out the “vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” These judgements of God will culminate in the war known as Armageddon. The 'vial' can also be translated as 'phial'. It is a remarkable fact that Napoleon was known for carrying a phial of opium into battle and this section of the book of Revelation highlights the role of Napoleon in the changes brought about following the French Revolution and their impact on the modern world.

## Beginning of Judgement

### Bible Reference:

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. (Rev 16:1) And the first went, and poured out his vial 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. (Rev 16:2)

## History

With the French Revolution and the confiscation of property, the nobles of the Church and aristocracy fled across the Rhine and attempted to gain the support of Germanic princes to invade France. In August 1791 the Emperor of Austria and King of Prussia had agreed that force might be needed to restore the 'monarchical government' in France. In 1792 when foreign armies were gathering on France's borders, Louis XVI was compelled by the Legislative Assembly, France's Revolutionary Government, to declare war against Austria, beginning a conflict that was to last twenty-five years.

The Duke of Brunswick commanding the Austrian and Prussian forces declared that he intended to restore Louis XVI's authority. Anger was aroused in France and Republican demonstrations swept Paris. The Legislative Assembly suspended the King and took the royal family hostage.

## Commentary Revelation 16:1-2

The first angel 'poured out his vial upon the earth'. The 'earth' is the successor to the Roman Empire. In keeping with the images of Revelation 8:7, the earth is the Roman earth, the territory of the Roman Empire, the borders of Europe.

A “grievous sore” fell upon men. This was a malignant ulcer that spreads and the French Revolution, beginning in France was to spread through Europe, with Napoleon carrying forward the spirit of the Revolution.

The Catholic Church is identified by “which had the mark of the beast and upon them that had the mark of the beast”. It was to become a victim of the Revolutionary spirit, as revealed by the Reign of Terror.

The Roman Catholic Church was to become a victim of the doctrines of the French Revolution.

## The Reign of Terror directed to the old French order

### History

At first the French armies suffered defeat, but in September 1792 the French army defeated the Prussians at Valmy. The French enjoyed further successes. Savoy and Nice were annexed and the Rhine provinces and Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) were conquered.

However, France was soon faced by strong opposition from England, Holland and Spain, which supported the monarchy.

A new National Convention elected by universal suffrage took office with the Jacobins in a powerful position. During the Reign of Terror (June 1793-July 1794) under the Jacobins and Robespierre, there were persecutions and cruelty in an attempt to uproot and entirely destroy the Catholic Church in France. Robespierre was a man of passionate revolutionary convictions and he believed that drastic measures had to be taken against opponents of the Revolution.

Louis XVI was found to have had correspondence with Austria and the enemies of the Revolution and he was tried before the

Convention. He was convicted of treason and guillotined on 21st January 1793. With a coalition of armies of the large powers of Europe defeating the French in March 1793, France was threatened with invasion. The Jacobins formed the Committee of Public Safety, made up of ten men who set about to prepare France for a major war effort. By August 1793, an army of 700,000 men had been raised and the nation's resources mobilised for war. With an army imbued with the spirit of nationalism, all foreign forces were driven off French soil by May 1794.

Robespierre was obsessed with fears of traitors and executions increased in June and July 1794. The deputies of the Convention became afraid of the domination of the Jacobins, who had established a dictatorship through the Committee of Public Safety.

An anti- Robespierre group emerged, which arrested Robespierre and tried him as an enemy of the people. He was convicted and guillotined. Other prominent Jacobins were imprisoned or guillotined. The machinery of the Terror was dismantled and France came under more moderate Bourgeois leadership.



*“The Awakening of the Third Estate” a Print from the French Revolution  
The old Military and Religious order fear the people who take the weapons,  
the castle in the background is crumbling*

## An Era of Naval Warfare from 1793

### Bible Reference:

The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. (Rev 16:3)

### History

The French came into conflict with the British navy but the French proved to be no match for the British on the sea. The victories of Hood, Howe, Bridport, and Nelson from 1793 onwards established the supremacy of the British navy. The British navy contributed to Napoleon's defeat in the Middle East.

In July 1798 Napoleon landed with his army in Egypt and captured Alexandria. In August 1-2, 1798, the French navy was destroyed by the British under Nelson in the Battle of the Nile. By occupying Palestine Napoleon, believed he could extend his power into Russia and then take control of all Europe and Asia. With this aim, Napoleon marched towards Joppa and Acre, but his army was shadowed by the British navy. He failed to take Acre and was forced to return to Egypt. After defeating a Turkish army in Egypt, he returned to France to consolidate his power there.

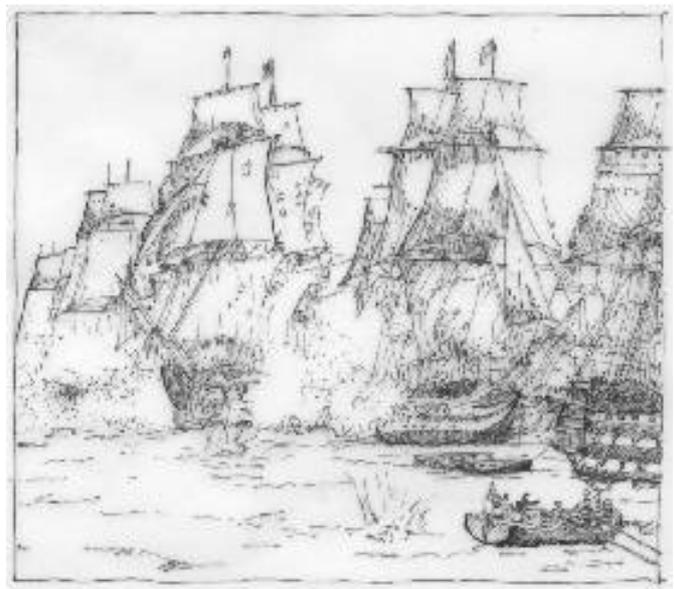
Britain continued to resist Napoleon. In 1805 as Napoleon prepared an invasion force for a Channel crossing, a British fleet under Lord Nelson caught up with the main French fleet off Trafalgar and the French were decisively defeated and an attack on Britain was prevented. Napoleon then attempted to prevent Britain from selling goods to Europe with the Continental System (1806). Britain imposed a counter blockade to cut Europe off from imports needed for the war effort and the economy, which resulted in the European states avoiding Napoleon's orders. Defeat of Britain had eluded him.

The British blockade had caused a stagnation of sea traffic affecting trade and commerce.

### Commentary Revelation 16:3

The second angel "poured out his vial upon the sea". The result of the British Blockade was figuratively as "the blood of a dead man" and "every living soul died in the sea".

Trade, so important to both Europe and Britain, was so seriously stagnated and affected that hardship resulted for both Europe and Britain.



*Battle of Trafalgar*

## The Rise of Napoleon: The Alps campaigns 1796-97

### Bible Reference:

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus. (Rev 16:4-5)

### History

At the end of the Reign of Terror, France's government was placed in the hands of five Directors. A Constitution, favouring propertied classes, was met with strong opposition. The army, under Napoleon was called in. A demonstration on 5th October 1795, was quelled. Over 200 demonstrators were shot and killed with what Napoleon called a 'whiff of grapeshot'. Napoleon Bonaparte was then promoted to the rank of major-general.

The Directory in 1796 saw Britain and Austria as their main opponents. From the Republic of Switzerland and the adjacent Highlands, the Rhine, Danube, Rhone and Po rivers flow. This area, which was where the third angel poured out his vial "upon the rivers and fountains of waters", was under the control of Austria and the Austrians succeeded in driving the French from the area. This area had been the area affected by Attila and the third Trumpet (Revelation 8) and was to be the scene of Napoleon's greatest achievements.

Napoleon was entrusted with the French army in Italy. During 1796-1797, Napoleon defeated the Austrian armies wherever he met them in the region of the Alps and rivers. These waters "became blood" which describes the intensity of Napoleon's military campaign, in which he won twenty six battles. Control of the Alpine regions of southern Europe and domination of Italy was seen as the key to European power. Austria, threatened with invasion, accepted the Peace of Campo-Formio dictated by Napoleon. The Emperor of Austria was also the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and Austria's defeat had been humiliating. Napoleon sent to France plunder seized on his campaign to help relieve the Directory's financial problems.

His army, having successfully embarked on foreign conquest and exploitation, Napoleon now believed that he was a 'man of destiny' and conceived 'the ambition of performing great things' and he fostered an intense nationalism

among his troops. In 1799 Napoleon was hailed as a hero and gained sufficient support from members of the Directory to elect him and two others to the position of Provisional Consuls to draw up a new constitution. In fact Napoleon was the real power as master of the armed forces.

Napoleon had proved to be the most successful French General and his military genius had brought him to prominence. He was idolised by the masses and by 1804 he had sufficient power to make himself Emperor of France.



*Napoleon's Emblem as Emperor*

He rapidly made domestic reforms and brought stability to France. He developed an efficient tax collection system, which strengthened the financial system, founded the Bank of France, began a programme of public works, which stimulated the economy and he centralised the administration of every local government, thus tightening Paris' control over all France. He introduced a national system of state supervised education and the University of France (1808) regulated the teaching and examining of secondary and tertiary institutions. The Code Napoleon revised laws, upholding the Revolution's abolition of feudalism, confirmed the equality of citizens and guaranteed the rights of property ownership. The "angel of the waters" acknowledges that this is the way God "has judged".

## The Power who had persecuted was now persecuted

### Bible Reference:

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 another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. (Rev 16:6-7)

### Commentary Revelation 16:6-7

Napoleon's wars were primarily against the Papacy, "for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets", which refers to the persecution that the Catholic Church had inflicted of non-conformist Christians over many centuries. Judgement had now come upon the Papal system. This weakening of Papal power was now to allow non-conformist sects to develop and reduce the power of the Pope.

In 1801 Napoleon negotiated an agreement with Pope Pius VII to reduce the religious

bitterness created by the Revolution. The Pope secured the removal of restrictions on the right of Catholics to worship and Napoleon agreed only to recognise Catholicism as the faith of the majority of Frenchmen as other religions were now to be recognised. The Pope could only appoint bishops from a list of Napoleon's nominees, thus reducing the Pope's control further.

The judgements had been in response to the prayers of the faithful as "out of the altar" signifies prayer.

## Napoleons wars extend into Austria 1803-7

### Bible Reference:

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which has power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. (Rev 16:8-9)

### History

At the end of 1803 Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia formed a Coalition to fight against Napoleon. Between 1805 and 1807 Napoleon defeated these armies in the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, Auerstadt and Friedland. Europe was completely in his power. Although Austria had led the coalition, Austria lost its political authority which was replaced by a loose confederation of Germanic states under the control of Napoleon's brothers and marshals.



*Artillery of the French forces*

### Commentary Revelation 16:8

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun" symbolically relates to the judgement upon the political power in Europe. Austria was the European power and supported the Papacy and the Emperor was the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

Austria led the coalition of forces against France and the conflagration that followed was able to "scorch men with fire" and

with "great heat", with wars that resulted in much bloodshed and death.

## History

During 1807-1808 Napoleon invaded Portugal and Spain, but he had to employ large forces and a long battle against guerilla type resistance to conquer Spain. Many bourgeoisie and peasant classes of Europe had welcomed the abolition of serfdom and aristocratic privileges, but by 1810, when Napoleon's Empire had reach its greatest extent, it was realised that France benefited more than they did. Napoleon had set up his own brothers or marshals as kings and princes and French traders were able to exploit their countries. Anti-Napoleonic sympathies were appearing.

In 1812 when Napoleon led half a million men into Russia to add Russia to his Empire, the Russian's retreated and in September Napoleon occupied a deserted burning Moscow. With winter approaching and the peasants cutting off supplies, he retreated, with his troops suffering hunger, disease, bitter cold desertions, peasant guerillas and Cossack attacks. In December when he crossed the frontier, only 30,000 of his troops remained.

In 1813, Austria, Prussia, Russia and Britain formed a fourth Coalition against Napoleon. He won battles at Lutzen, Bautzen and Dresden, but was decisively defeated in

Leipzig in October 1813.

The Russian, Prussian and Austrian armies converged on Paris from the north while the Duke of Wellington with an army of British, Spaniards and Portuguese crossed the Pyrenees into France in April 1814.

Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to the island of Elba but within a year he had escaped to France, took over the government in Paris and set about raising an army. After a 'Hundred Days' he was defeated near Waterloo in June 1815 and exiled to St Helena, where he spent the last six years of his life writing his memoirs.

## Commentary Revelation 16:9

The years of Napoleon's reign over Europe was not regarded as a judgement by the population of Europe. The people failed to recognise that it was God's punishment on the iniquitous Papal system, as "they blasphemed the name of God, which had power over these plagues" and "did not give Him glory". This was evidenced by the fact that Europeans sympathised with the Papacy and even Britain supported the Papacy in its distress. The Papacy still retained power in Europe, although in a more limited way.



*Napoleon leading triumphant in battle*

## Annexation of the Papal states

### Bible Reference:

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, (Rev 16:10)

### History

The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the “seat”, which is better translated as 'throne'. Napoleon's wars had greatly weakened the Holy Roman Empire. The civil head, the Emperor of Austria was removed from power and the Papacy, the religious head was greatly weakened. The French Revolution had resulted in the confiscation of the Catholic Church's property and Catholic worship had been forbidden. The Pope issued an edict of excommunication against the French and in 1798 Napoleon successfully invaded Italy and demanded that the Pope renounce his temporal authority. When the Pope refused to do this he was taken prisoner by Napoleon and died in exile. Pope Pius VII became Pope in 1800 and following negotiations a Concordat was signed and Churches were reopened. In 1805 when Napoleon became Emperor, Pope Pius was

summoned to Paris to crown him Emperor but Napoleon seized the crown and crowned himself.

In 1806 Napoleon won a decisive victory against the British, Russians and Austrians at Austerlitz and the Holy Roman Empire was ended. A few years later Napoleon invaded the Papal states of Italy and annexed them to the French Empire. Napoleon took the Pope prisoner and exiled him to Savona in 1809 and later to Fontainebleau. With the civil and religious heads of the Holy Roman Empire removed from power, the “beast” was metaphorically plunged into political “darkness”. They “gnawed their tongues for pain” reflects the humiliation that was experienced by the Papacy with the termination of the papal kingdom and the expenses of the war imposed on the Pope. Rome had become merely a city in the French Empire.

## They did not repent

### Bible Reference:

And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. (Rev 16:11)

### Commentary Revelation 16:11

The Protestant powers, including Britain, restored the Pope in Rome after Napoleon's defeat in 1815. In this way they “blasphemed the God of heaven” as the lesson had not been learnt by the nations that God had brought judgement upon the Church for its persecution and bloodshed of non-conformists. The Pope was restored to his Pontifical position, from where he continued blasphemies, by

maintaining such idolatrous practices as the worship of the virgin Mary and the saints of the Romish calendar. Bible societies that encouraged the study of the Bible were condemned and the circulation of the scriptures that were not accompanied by the Catholic Church's interpretations were denounced by Leo XII in 1824. In this way there had been no change in the Church's attitude and thus they “repented not of their deeds.”

## The Turkish (Ottoman) Empire

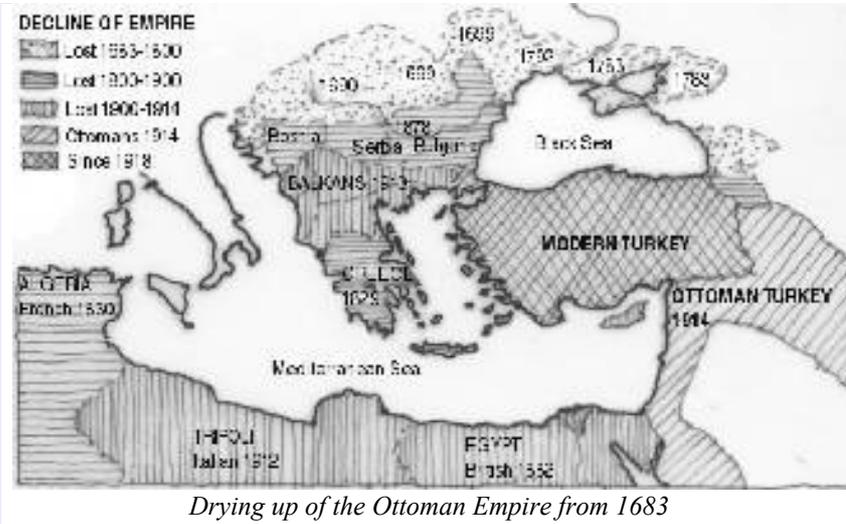
### Bible Reference:

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (Rev 16:12)

### Commentary Revelation 16:6-7

The “sixth angel poured out his vial on the river Euphrates”, which identifies the Turkish Empire, as the Euphrates was the principle river of Turkey. The river “dried up”, indicating that the power of the Turkish Empire was about to decline.

History verifies that this prophecy has been in the process of being fulfilled. At the height of its power the Turkish Empire extended into Europe, occupied areas of southern Russia, dominated the Middle East, Egypt, Arabia and North Africa. In 1827, Greece gained its independence with the help of Britain, France and Russia. Following war with Russia in 1828, the Turkish Empire was forced to grant autonomy to Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia.



In 1829 France occupied Algiers in North Africa and annexed it in 1842. By 1854 the Crimean War between Turkey and Russia had further weakened the Turkish Empire. In 1881 France annexed Tunis and in 1882 Britain occupied Egypt. In 1908 Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria claimed independence. In 1911 Italy occupied Tripoli and the Balkan Wars 1912-1913 reduced Turkey's influence to the area around Constantinople and Adrianople.

In World War 1, Turkey joined Germany and

the Central Powers and lost her Middle Eastern territories including Palestine, Arabia and Syria. The Empire was reduced so much in size that it became the Republic of Turkey.

In 1917 the Anzac Light Horse Brigade, under the British General Allenby, invaded Palestine and broke the final stronghold of the Turkish Empire. At the same time Lord Balfour in England was proposing that a homeland in Palestine should be created for the Jews.

It was not until finally in 1948, after WW2, that the United Nations approved the creation of the nation of Israel. In 1967 the nation of Israel, after the Arab nations attacked Israel, took control of their ancient capital, Jerusalem.

In this way the conditions were prepared for “the way of the kings of the east”. Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah of the Jews and he will return to rule in Jerusalem. The freeing of Jerusalem from non-Jewish, that is gentile rule, allowed for the nation of Israel to be established as required by prophecy.

In Malachi 4:2-3 there is an analogy of Israel's promised Messiah as the 'Sun of Righteousness', who is the Son of God. It is as their King that Jesus

Christ will subdue Israel's oppressors. Just as the sun rises in the east their Messiah will arise as a metaphorical illuminary with his saints to redeem Israel and bring peace to mankind.

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, .. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 4:2-3).

## The Spirits go forth

### Bible Reference:

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.  
(Rev 16:13)

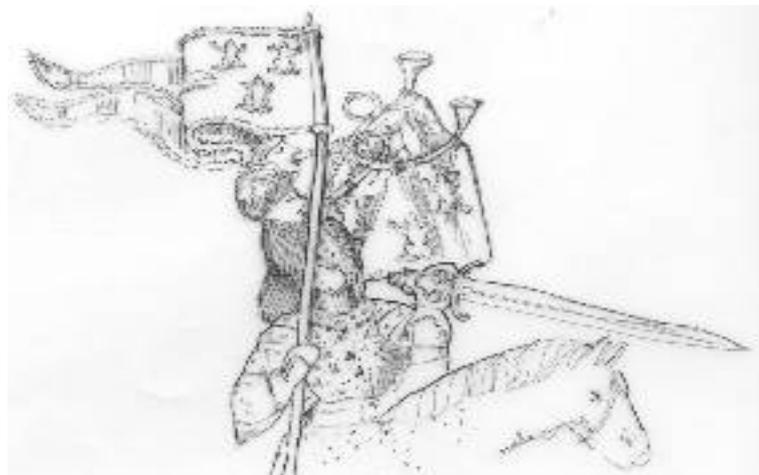
### Commentary Revelation 16:6-7

The use of “three unclean spirits like frogs” indicates the French nation. Historically frogs have long been associated with France. The Franks originated in the marshy lands of Westphalia and frogs are inhabitants of marshes. Three frogs constituted the heraldic symbol of the French people. Pharamond who reigned in Treves in 420 adopted the three frogs on his shield, Childeric, king of the Franks in 456 struck a medal displaying the frog as his symbol and the banner of Clovis, the son of Childeric, and the first Christian king of France (466-511) used the symbol of three frogs to represent the army of France.

Even in modern times the term 'frogs' has been used to identify the French people. The term “spirit” is used for “teaching” or “doctrine”. There were three principles and cries that emerged from the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity. The voice and cries of

the people were to be carried into the next century, culminating in great changes in society and politics. Democracy, socialism and communism, as political philosophies, developed throughout the world. Nationalism, which enshrined race and religion, became one of the underlying causes of WW1 and Hitler's nationalism was the dominating feature of Hitler's propaganda campaign to lead to WW2. Humanism placed emphasis on the rights of man and his view of the world, instead of the Creator's expectations.

These modern philosophies “come out of the mouth of the dragon,,the beast...and the false prophet”. This must be viewed as a modern day prophecy. These symbols relate to military, political and religious features of modern world and specifically European diplomacy. The book of Revelation is primarily about the Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and European world. It automatically follows that this prophecy relates to the following verse.



*Three frogs banners of Clovis I (466 – 511) the first King of the Franks.  
From a tapestry at Rheims France*

## To gather to the battle of that great day

**Bible Reference:**

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Rev 16:14)

**Commentary Revelation 16:6-7**

These spirits create a “spirit of devils” which is like that of an illness, a madness (Greek: daemons), that will affect the nations. “Working miracles” literally means “working signs” and the signs that are obvious in Europe today are the economic and political changes in Europe with the growing power of the European Economic Community and the political unity being developed. There are increasing signs of a European military confederation. The religious power of Rome has been increasing in influence through its association with the European Community and the United Nations. The “signs” in Europe are of increasingly dramatic political, military and religious changes and the rise of a confederation of nations.

The word “world” according to 'The Dictionary of New Testament Theology' states that this word is 'okoumene' and was used in the period of the Roman Empire to mean 'Imperium Romanum', which were the lands under Roman rule. It naturally follows that the area to which this prophecy refers is that of the Mediterranean and European world and this is the area of the modern day European Community.

This verse concludes with the prophecy that these nations are being prepared for a battle, “to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”. It is in Revelation 16:16 that we are given the name of that great battle, “Armageddon”.