

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 5/19/10 Wednesday Evening

Series: *A Walk through the Book of Revelation*

Revelation 16 "The Judgment Climaxes: The Bowl Judgments"--part 2

Setting the Stage for Tonight's Study:

The book of Revelation records the prophetic description of the end times. In the Apocalypse, the apostle John presents a series of visions given to him while he was on the island of Patmos at the end of the first century A.D.

He begins with a portrait of the Glorified Christ in chapter one, followed by seven letters from Christ to seven churches that existed in his day (chs 2-3). In chapters 4-5 John gives us a glimpse at the throne of God in heaven where he sees the Lamb.

For three years John had followed the Lamb of God. John actually saw the Lamb die on a cruel Roman cross. And John saw the empty tomb after the Lamb conquered death.

But in Revelation John presents the Lamb in a very different light. He's no longer a suffering, despised, rejected Lamb. In Revelation John looks ahead to the time when the Lamb will be the Judge, the executor of God's wrath. In that day the world will no longer mock Him, but quake before Him.

Tonight we come to Revelation 16. We're approaching the final stretch of the final period of this present age. The events of this period, known as the Tribulation, are presented by John beginning in chapter 6. There will be three phases of judgment according to what John saw:

*Seal Judgments (chs 6-8)

*Trumpet Judgments (8-11)

*Bowl Judgments (15-18)

Last time we looked at the material that introduces the bowl judgments in chapter 15. The actual judgments are recorded in chapter 16 as we'll now see...

The Seven Bowl Judgments--Revelation 16

We're given some general, introductory insights concerning the bowl judgments in verse

1. John said he heard a loud voice.

Q: From where did the voice originate? From the temple

Q: To whom did the voice speak? To the seven angels. Who are they? See 15:1

Q: What do the bowls contain? God's wrath

Q: What were the angels instructed to do? Pour out the seven bowls on the earth

Note: Note *where* the bowls are poured out as we move through the text.

The destinations are different each time. Here's what happened in the vision...

I. The first angel poured out his bowl (2).

A. This judgment was poured out on the *land*.

B. It resulted in painful sores.

Q: Who experienced the sores? See also 13:15-17

Q: By implication, who did *not* experience the sores?

II. The second angel poured out his bowl (3).

A. This judgment was poured out on the *sea*.

B. As a result, the sea turned into blood.

Q: What kind of blood?

Q: Consequently, what happened? Every living thing in the sea died.

Note: It sounds reminiscent of Moses and the plagues on Egypt.

III. The third angel poured out his bowl (4-7).

A. This judgment was poured out on the rivers and springs of water.

B. As a result, the fresh water became blood.

Q: What happened as a result?

Next, unlike in the record of the first two bowls, John hears something...

C. Then John heard something (5-7).

1. The angel in charge of the waters spoke (5-6).

Q: Who is this angel?

Q: To whom does he speak?

Q: What does he say? Notice his emphasis on God's *justice*.

Discuss: How could you use these verses to respond to the critic who says, "I can't fathom that a God of love would do the things described in Revelation."

2. The altar agreed (7).

Q: How can an altar speak? Who is the altar?

Q: What attribute of God does the altar likewise affirm? His justice

IV. The fourth angel poured out his bowl (8-9).

A. This judgment was poured out on the sun.

B. As a result, the sun scorched people.

1. The people cursed God.

Q: Why did they curse God?

Notice the text indicates that people will perceive that this judgment is the work of God. Yet how do they respond?

2. The people refused to repent and glorify Him.

Q: Repent of what?

Q: How does a person *glorify* God in such a situation?

V. The fifth angel poured out his bowl (10-11).

A. This judgment was poured out on the throne of the beast.

Q: Who is the beast? The world ruler or ruling organization (13:1)

B. As a result, there was darkness.

The beast's kingdom plunged into darkness. What does that indicate?

1. Men experienced great agony. So much so that they will "gnaw their tongues."

2. They chose to curse God rather than repent.

Q: Repent of what? The text states, "Of what they had done" ["their deeds," KJV].

VI. The sixth angel poured out his bowl (12-16).

A. This judgment was poured out on the great river Euphrates.

B. As a result, the Euphrates dried up.

Q: Why was this necessary? "To prepare for the kings from the east."

Q: Who are these kings?

C. Then John saw three evil spirits (13-16).

1. He describes their appearance (13). They looked like frogs.

2. He describes their origin. They have a diabolical origin.

Key: This is the first mention of the "false prophet," who is apparently the same person referred to earlier as the "beast out of the earth" (13:11). Strauss calls the three "the evil trinity (p. 288)."

3. He describes their purpose (14).

Q: What will they do? Miraculous signs

Q: What will be the effect of their miracles? This demonic influence will convince men to unite in their rebellion against God.

4. He describes the result of their efforts (16).

Note: The kings will gather at Armageddon. Why? To prepare for a great battle (the one described in 19:19ff.???)

D. In the middle, John heard a message from the Lord (15).

Q: What's the essence of the message?

Key: There was a break between the sixth and seventh seal judgments, and between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments. But there's no break in this series. The seventh bowl judgment will involve the overthrow of Babylon itself, the capital of the Beast's empire...

VII. The seventh angel poured out his bowl (17-21).

A. This judgment was poured out into the *air*.

B. Here's what happened.

1. A voice cried, "It is done (17)!" It's apparently the same voice as in 16:1. John heard and recorded similar words in John 19:30. From whom? Spoken by Jesus from the cross.

Q: *What* is done here?

2. Then came lightning, rumblings, thunder, and an earthquake (18).

The same spectacular phenomena occurred at the conclusion of the seal (8:5) and trumpet judgments (11:19), too. "In Revelation thunder and lightning always mark an important event connected with the heavenly temple." [in *NIVsb*, p. 1930; see 4:5; 8:5; 11:19].

Notice the effect of this earthquake...

3. The great city split into three parts (19a).

Q: What city is that? In 11:8 the phrase "the great city" refers to Jerusalem. Here it seems to refer to the capital of the beast [Ladd, 218], Babylon [a previous earthquake has already demolished Jerusalem-- 11:13].

4. The cities of the nations collapsed (19b).

5. Islands and mountains left (20).

6. Hailstones fell (21a).

7. People cursed God (21b).

Discussion:

1. Why did God give us chapter 16? Why did He tell us ahead of time about these future events?

2. What kind of impact does this scene have on you? *Should* it have?