

Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 1:10 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's Study of Revelation 16:17-21

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken!" (Matthew 24:29)

Remember last week's lesson on Revelation 16:1-16? Where we learned about six of the seven "bowl judgments" which will be poured out on the earth by seven angels, in the last days of the Great Tribulation, as described by the beloved disciple John, which he received in further visions from God, while exiled on the Isle of Patmos!

The first angel poured out his bowl on the earth and it resulted in "loathsome and malignant sores" (or boils) on all the people of the world who had the mark of the beast and worshiped the image of the beast! Just like the boils that God used to "smite" the Egyptians, in Exodus 9, trying to persuade Pharaoh to "let the children of Israel go" from bondage in Egypt! (Deuteronomy 28:27 described the boils of Egypt as including "tumors with a scab and itch, from which cannot be healed"! Ouch!) The boils inflicted by the angel in Revelation 16 seemed to help fulfill the decree announced earlier by another angel (in Revelation 14:9-10) that "if anyone worships the beast and his image or receives the mark of the beast...he would drink of the wine of the wrath of God, mixed in full strength in the cup of His wrath"! (Imagine, getting a "full portion" of the wrath of God!)

The second and third bowl judgments, seen in John's vision, turned the sea and the "rivers and the springs of waters" into blood, just like when Moses, in Exodus 7:20-21, "lifted up his staff and struck the water of the Nile River and it turned into blood"! And like, in Revelation 8:8-11, when the second and third trumpet judgments "turned a third" of the sea and the springs of water into blood, killing "a third of the creatures in the sea" among other things! The third "bowl judgment" being global in nature and thus lots worse! (And remember too how the "angel of the waters spoke up to make it clear, just for the record, that those receiving the judgment "deserved it"!)

The fourth bowl was actually "poured out on the sun...causing the people of the world (speaking of unbelievers) to be scorched with fierce heat"! And then the fifth bowl, by contrast, bringing "darkness on the throne of the beast and on his kingdom" (which was a worldwide kingdom at this point). And so, Satan, whom the Bible says, "transforms himself into an angel of light" and "blinds people so they can't see the light of the glorious gospel," will have his kingdom shown for what it is! The "kingdom of darkness! (And yet, through all this, as verse 9 notes again, "the people did not repent so as to give God the glory"!)

And then, finally, the sixth bowl, you'll remember, poured out on the Euphrates River, causing it to dry up, Revelation 16:12 says, "so that the way would be prepared (by our Sovereign God, of course!) for the kings from the east" to join together with the "kings of the whole world," all under the influence and spell of Satan and his demonic forces, to enter Palestine for, "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty"! Armageddon!

And our lesson last week closed with a warning for all to be ready for the Second Coming of Christ, who will "come like a thief in the night"! With a third "beatitude" promising that those who "stay awake" and "keep clothed" (in righteousness?), and ready, will "not be ashamed" but, in fact, "blessed"!

And that sets the stage for our lesson last night on Revelation 16:17-21 and the seventh, and final, judgment of the Tribulation!

Verses 17-18 begin: "Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, 'It is done!' And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty...!" Wow!

Note, first-off, that the bowl judgment was "poured out upon the air"! Speaking of the earth's atmosphere! With all its ramifications! Ironically, it is the last area of Satan's domain! He's characterized, in Ephesians 2:2, as "the power of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience"! Operating in the "sphere of the heavenlies! MacArthur notes that "there is a sense in which God, as part of this "judgment," is actually cleansing the domain where Satan last ruled"!

But we are also going to see here, and elsewhere as we continue our study in Revelation, some cataclysmic changes that will take place in the atmosphere and are destined to have horrific and lasting impact on the earth as we know it! (How else would it be able to produce "100-pound hailstones"?)

The "loud voice coming out of the temple from the throne"? Who else but God proclaiming that "It is done!" Speaking of the "final judgment" which is to be poured out on the earth during the Tribulation! Reminding us of the last words of Christ on the Cross when He said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) when the "judgment" for the sin of the world was placed on Him! (MacArthur notes that it is good to be reminded that if we are not covered by the judgment that occurred at Calvary, where Christ bore our sin, which was "imputed" on Him, then we will experience the judgment of the wrath of God on us! And possibly both during the tribulation here on earth (if it were to take place in our lifetime) as well as for all eternity! Wow!

Then "flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder...and (then "punctuated" with) a great earthquake such as there never has been..."! Again, similar to what accompanied the seventh seal (in Revelation 8:15) and the seventh trumpet (in Revelation 11:15-19), only much more intense and expansive! The greatest "shaking" of the earth ever! And again, demonstrating the fury of God coming out of the very throne room of God in heaven!

These earthquakes to come in the tribulation are not something new to the world! And we have already seen in our study all kinds of things "catapulting" loose out of heaven, as the solar system has been breaking up! When God sent the great flood to the world, Genesis 7:11 says "the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened," believed to form the configuration of the continents and the oceans, with the moving of the "tectonic

plates" causing earthquakes, and an "unstable world," resulting from the "fall" and the "curse"! God created it perfect, but sin caused it to be broken up!

The prophet Haggai wrote about this (in Haggai 2:6): "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more, in a little while, I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land!' He "shook" it with the curse, and He's going to shake it again, this time, both the heavens and the earth! Isaiah 24:20 says, "The earth reels to and for like a drunkard and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, never to rise again!" And verse 23 adds: "Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and His glory will be before the elders!"

And we have to include the perspective from Hebrews 12:25-27: "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those who did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven!' This expression, 'Yet once more,' denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain!"

Going back to our text and describing the impact of the earthquake...Revelation 16:19-20 says "the great city (speaking, we believe of Jerusalem) was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations (by contrast!) fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men!" Wow!

We believe these verses make a notable distinction between what happened (or will happen) to the great city, Jerusalem, and particularly to the wicked city, Babylon!

Zachariah 14:4 (believed to be speaking of Christ's return) says, "In that day His feet will stand of the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south (presumably by a great earthquake)..." and, verse 8 continues, "And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea..." (implying a notable change in its topography)! And Christ will reign on Mount Zion which, due to a re-configuration of the world, caused by the great earthquake, will actually be raised as the mountains and other high points in the rest of the world will be "flattened"! An unimageable amount of shaking of the earth to return it to the way God created it originally, and wants it, so He can come and reign over it! (A whole lot of shaking going on!)

Job 38:22-23 says, "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, which I have reserved for the time of distress, for the day of war and battle!" (It will take a "storehouse" to produce the magnitude of the hail promised!)

And so, Jerusalem will not be judged by the seventh bowl, but blessed! It will be made more glorious, while Babylon and the cities all over the earth will crumble, as the earth shakes like it has never been shaken before! Babylon, in particular, will be remembered by the Lord in a judgmental way, "mixed in the full strength of the cup of God's wrath!"

Revelation 16 closes with the all-too-familiar response of the people of the world who can only find it within themselves "to blaspheme God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe"!

Aren't you glad that "Jesus came to deliver us from the wrath to come"?

Take the words of David, in Psalm 26:8, with you this week! "I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken!"

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