

The Book of Revelation

Session 20: The Seven Bowls of Wrath

Revelation Chapters 15-16

Revelation 15: The Shortest Chapter in Revelation

- 1] And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

“Another sign”: Connects this with the series that began with Chapter 12. Recapitulation Style; Cf. Gen 1 & 2; Exodus and Deuteronomy; all four Gospels, etc.

“...is filled...” = “was finished.” Cf. Ps 110:1.

- 2] And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

“Sea of glass”: fire mingled; standing on it, (not “beside” it, as in NIV, Greek preposition could mean by, upon, or over). The world viewed them as losers; captured, reviled, persecuted, hated. They were on a shuttle service to heaven! [Perhaps the most pervasive human defect is our stubborn insistence that our perceptions and illusions should be taken for objective reality.]

- 3] And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

King of “Ages”: Jer 10:40; 1 Tim 1:17.

“Song of Moses”: Ex 15:1-21; Deut 32:1-43. [Sung before the giving of the Law in Ex 19ff.]

“Song of the Lamb”: Rev 5:9-12.

Note that there never is any word about the *martyr’s* achievements. The only pronouns refer to God. Remember: Revelation is Christocentric. Don’t be distracted by the four horsemen, seven trumpets, et al: **Who is being unveiled in this Book?** [Various ancient manuscripts have three different renderings: King of the saints, King of the nations; King of the Ages (cf. Jer 10:7,10); King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God (1 Tim 1:17).]

- 4] Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Note the *decline* of the fear of God in our age... There is little reverential fear of God, even among believers....

“Nations shall come and worship...”: Not true today. The immorality, godlessness, and injustice—even in our own country—is increasingly conspicuous (Ps 7:9; 11:7; 107:1, 40, 42; cf. Ps 2:8; Phil 2:9-11). Judgment proceeds out of heart of His holiness: inner Temple; expands 7th Trumpet (11:18).

- 5] And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

The temple is mentioned 15X in this book, but not until Chapter 4, when the Church is removed. From then on, God is dealing with a people who have had a temple—a replica of things in heaven (Ex 25:40; Heb 9:23).

- 6] And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.
7] And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

Clothed in linen? Variant reading: precious stones!? Bowls, vials: censer (Rev 5:8); flat saucers as used in worship.

- 8] And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

“Smoke”: Isa 6:1-4; Lev 16:12, 13; Aaron, on Day of Atonement, was to carry the censer of coals so that he *die not*. Even the redeemed are denied access. God suffers alone for the horror of sin. These seven angels with these seven bowls make it clear that these judgments proceed from God, not man’s mistakes or Satan’s enmity. Beware the Wrath of the Lamb. [Seven churches = complete history of the church. Seven = complete. Each series of seven may involve *parallelism* among them...]

Revelation 16: Bowls on the Kingdom of the Beast

- 1] 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.
2] 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.

“Earth”: Sores on Beast-worshippers (6th plague, Ex 9:8-11); unfulfilled prophecy, Deut 28:27, 35. Sores = outward sign of inward corruption (cf. Mt 23:27, 28).

Moses: “no graven image”; worship of hosts of heaven (Deut 4:19; 17:2, 3; 2 Kgs 17:9-11, 16, 17). Ex 8:17, 18; 9:1: Devil worship in the House of God.

Viral warfare [cf. AIDS, et al.] Cf. first bowl with 6th plague (Ex 9:8-12): Plague of boils predicted, not yet fulfilled (Deut 28:15, 27); incurable (Deut 28:35).

- 3] And 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.

“Blood”: Literal blood? (Ps 105:29; Lev 17:11), cf. first plague (Ex 7:20-25). Compare to the “Red Tide,” occasionally observed from excessive growth of microorganisms. All sea life in the region dies. [Also, cf. Exxon Valdez spill, Persian Gulf spills unleashed by Iraqis in 1991, et al.]

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

“Rivers”: Beast-worshippers cannot find anything to drink but blood! (vs. Ex 7:20, 21).

[Greek leaves out “and shall be.” “The existing One, the One who was, the Holy One.” There is no point in speaking of the One who shall come!]

- 6] For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.
7] And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

The old saying, “what goes around, comes around.” The altar speaks: the cross? (5th Seal Rev 6:9-11). This altar was the shelter of the martyrs...is it yours?

[Note: first three bowls, men dwelling on the earth. Last four, men linked with Babylon.]

- 8] And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.
9] 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.
“Host of heaven”: Deut 4:19; 17:2, 3; 2 Kgs 17:9-11, 16, 17.

Sun Worship

- The earliest form of Paganism, originating on the plain of Shinar.
- Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10). Hebrew, *marad*, “to rebel”; future tense, “we will rebel.” The final global dictator will be an Assyrian: (“Nimrod II”?) Micah 5:5, 6; Isaiah 10.

And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Genesis 10:8-10

“Before” should be “in defiance of” the Lord.

The sun was first worshipped by Nimrod and his followers on the plains of Shinar and Bab-El was the site of the first temple to the sun. Gen 11:4. Mazzeroth corrupted to the zodiac. [See *Signs in the Heavens and Monuments: Sacred or Profane?*] All paganism is derived from this beginning. This also accounts for the parallelism in the pagan myths in all parts of the world.

Nimrod

Nimrod persuaded mankind not to ascribe their happiness to God, but to think that his own excellency was the source of it. And he soon changed things into a tyranny, thinking that there was no other way to wean men from the fear of God, than by making them rely upon his own power.

Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews, I.c.4.2*

From the foundation of the world none was ever found like Nimrod, powerful in hunting, and in rebellions against the Lord.

Targum of Jonathan

He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, ‘Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!’ There is it said, ‘As Nimrod is the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.’

Jerusalem Targum

Cush begat Nimrod, who began to prevail in wickedness, for he shed innocent blood, and rebelled against Jehovah.

The Chaldee paraphrase of 1 Chr 1:10

[Quotes from Barnhouse, *Revelation.*]

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- 9] 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.

“Heat”: Deut 32:22,24; Mal 4:1; Isa 24:4-6; 2 Pet 3; Lk 21:25, cf. Anthropic principle (*Beyond Coincidence*, et al.).

“...repented not...”: “It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man.” [Albert Einstein]

- 10] 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,

The seat [throne] of the beast (must be a man!). Rev 13: “Who is able to make war with the beast?” Here is the answer: God is able to make war with him! Cf. with 9th plague—Darkness (Gen 1:2). Darkness which could be felt (Ex 10:21-23). Cf. Isa 60:2; Joel 2:1-2, 31; Nah 1:8; Mk 13:24,25. [a Nova?]

Darkness

- Unexplained examples of darkness:
 - May 19, 1780, New England, “The Dark Day.”
 - Mar 19, 1886, Central Wisconsin (10 minutes)
 - Dec 1904, Memphis, Tennessee
 - Mar 1911, Louisville, Kentucky
- Spiritual darkness: in a cultural war, truth is the first casualty: Evolution; Psychology; Palestinian State; Islam; Legalism; Media; Government Schools; etc.

- 11] And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

“God of Heaven” title of Daniel 2:18,19,28,37,44.

- 12] 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.

Euphrates

- The cradle (and grave) of man’s civilization (Zech 10:11; Isa 11:15,16).
- Eastern boundary of Israel (Gen 15:18) and the Roman Empire...

The river Euphrates is mentioned 25X in the Bible: to dry-up (cf. Red Sea, Jordan). It is 1800 miles long; 300-1200 yards wide; 10-30 feet deep; often deeper, wider...in the 1991 Gulf War, armies of 30 countries bottled up Saddam Hussein’s forces against the Euphrates.

“Kings of the Rising Sun”: 10X in NT; 3X in OT (LXX).

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat.*

Rudyard Kipling, *The Ballad of East and West*

- 13] 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.
- 14] 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.

“dragon...beast...false prophet”: Unholy trinity?

Frogs: 2nd plague, (Ex 8:2-5, 14); cf. locusts as demons [Rev 9; Amos 7:1(LXX); Ezek 38 (frogs *responded to Pharaoh’s magicians*).]

[Aristophanes tells of a special costume worn on the Greek stage, the *bactrachis*, or frog-garment: used as sex symbol, representing fecundity.]

Battle against whom? God Almighty. Where? *Israel!*

- 15] Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Garments: old English “habit” = manner of living; French, one’s clothing... “Ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief...” (1 Thess 5:4).

- 16] And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Zeph 3:8; 2 Chr 35:22; Josh 5:14; Zech 12:11. 60 miles N of Jerusalem.

Megiddo

- Jabin + 900 chariots were overwhelmed
- Gideon’s 300 defeated the Midianites, Amalekites & children of the east
- Samson triumphed over the Philistines
- Barak & Deborah defeated Sisera
- Saul was slain by Philistines

- Ahaziah slain by arrows of Jehu
- Pharaoh Necho slew King Josiah
- Saracens, Christian crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, Arabs, et al.
- Napoleon's disastrous march from Egypt to Syria

- 17] And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.
- 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 air": The last sphere of Satan's influence. "Prince of the power of the Air" (Eph 2:2); "high places" (Eph 6:12) = "heavenlies" (Eph 1:20; 3:10).

"It is finished" vs. "It is done." (*Tetelestai* = "paid in full.")

"Temple": The last reference. Mentioned 6X with the bowls of wrath.

"Earthquake": Isa 29:6; Ps 50:3,4; Zech 14:4; 13:9; Hag 2:6,7.

- 19] And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.
- 20] And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Cf. Rev 11:13; Zech 14:4; Ezek 47; Zech 13:8,9. "Babylon" mentioned in Rev 14:8. Ch. 17 & 18 coming. God made the country; man made the cities. The corruption, the graft, the buying and selling of justice, the deification of money, the exaltation of lust, the exploitation of the masses in their lightless and vapid lives.... Verse 20 cf. Hag 2:6,7; Jer 4:23-27.

- 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: Job 38:22,23; Jer 4:23-27. Greek talent = 86 lbs. Hebrew talent (silver) = 110 lbs. Troy; 96 avoirdupois; other, 135 lbs. Babylonian talent: heavier... Attic, 57.7 lbs. (Cf. Beth-Horon, Josh 10:11.)

Josephus: Roman catapults threw stones the weight of a talent into Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when Titus leveled the city. **Penalty for blasphemy: stoning!** [Hail also accompanies nuclear effects...] Note: These judgments are not the "blessed hope": "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Many are trying to reduce the population of the earth; it seems more appropriate to reduce the population of hell! Judgment cannot produce repentance; it was never intended to. God changes hearts through His grace and mercy. This book was sent to the seven churches: *It was given to us in order to change our lives right now!*

Next Session

Babylon: read Chapters 17 & 18. Also Isaiah 13 & 14; Jeremiah 50 & 51.

The Book of Revelation Session 21: The Mystery of Babylon Revelation Chapters 17-18

And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Genesis 10:8-10

Global Dictator

Nimrod: Hebrew, *marad*, "to rebel"; future tense, "we will rebel." The final global dictator will be an Assyrian: ("Nimrod II"?) Micah 5:5,6; Isaiah 10.

Spiritual Babylon

All forms of occultic practices have had their origins in the original city of Babylon (Isaiah 47). Tammuz, the son of Nimrod and his queen, Semiramis, was identified with the Babylonian Sun God, and worshipped following the winter solstice: ~ Dec 22-23. As Babylon was conquered by subsequent empires, this entire religious system was transplanted, first to Pergamos (Rev 2:12-17) and then to Rome.

As Christianity was established as the official state religion of Rome, many of the religious traditions and practices of the earlier pagan worship were adapted and incorporated, including many of our traditions surrounding Christmas. The Babylonian worship of Ishtar, the Golden Egg of Astarte, and the fertility rites of spring give us Easter, and the calendar year-end on October 31, and its associated occultic rituals, gave us our Halloween. This was related to worship of Baal (Mars) and