

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 16 (PART 1)

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT CHAPTER. IT IS GOING TO DESCRIBE WITH VIVID AND TERRIFYING DETAIL AN UNDERSTANDABLE EXPRESSION OF GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON THE EARTH AND SPECIFICALLY UPON HUMANS. THIS JUDGMENT UPON HUMANITY IS WHAT IS CALLED THE "WRATH OF GOD." THE WORD "WRATH" IS THE GREEK WORD *THYMOS* WHICH DESCRIBES PASSIONATE ANGER. THIS IS NOT BECAUSE GOD IS TEMPERAMENTAL. THIS IS BECAUSE THE REBELLION OF MEN AND WOMEN AGAINST THEIR CREATOR. GOD CLEARLY INFORMED ADAM AND EVE THAT THE CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR SIN WOULD BE DEATH. HE HAS COMMUNICATED THIS REALITY TO EVERY PERSON WHO HAS EVER LIVED - THROUGH HIS WORD, HIS PROPHETS, THE GOSPEL, THE CREATION, AND THE CONSCIENCE THAT HE HARDWIRED WITHIN THE HUMAN HEART. YET HUMANS HAVE FREELY CHOSEN TO TURN AWAY FROM GOD. EVEN SO, GOD SENT HIS SON TO TAKE ON THE PENALTY OF HUMANITY'S SIN FOR EVERY PERSON - IF YOU PUT YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD ACCEPTS THE PUNISHMENT JESUS RECEIVED AS A COMPLETE SATISFACTION OF THE PUNISHMENT YOU, A SINNER, OWES.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:9-10 - FOR GOD HAS NOT DESTINED US FOR WRATH, BUT FOR OBTAINING SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, TO WHO DIED FOR US, SO THAT WHETHER WE ARE AWAKE OR ASLEEP, WE WILL LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM.

BUT NOT ALL HAVE FAITH. NOT ALL ACCEPT GOD'S LOVE. NOT ALL WANT TO FORSAKE THIS WORLD. NOT ALL RECEIVE GRACE. AND SO A JUDGMENT DAY REMAINS FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT CLING FAST TO CHRIST'S WORK ON THEIR BEHALF. AND SO IN REVELATION 16 WE READ OF THE FINAL AND JUST WRATH OF GOD

OBJECTIVE FOR THIS WEEK: BREAK DOWN THE SEVEN BOWLS AND COMPARE THEM WITH EGYPTIAN JUDGMENTS.

The Seven Bowls of Wrath (16:2-21)

The Unrestrained, Comprehensive Expression of God's Wrath

Bowl	Area Affected	Reference	Result
Bowl 1	earth	16:2	sores on the beast's worshipers
Bowl 2	sea	16:3	blood and death
Bowl 3	rivers and springs	16:4-7	blood to drink
Bowl 4	sun	16:8-9	burning heat
Bowl 5	beast's throne	16:10-11	palpable darkness
Bowl 6	Euphrates River	16:12-16	gathering for the battle
Bowl 7	air	16:17-21	earthquake shattering the great city

ESV STUDY BIBLE: "THE FIRST FOUR BOWLS INFLECT PLAGUES ON THE SAME SPHERES AS THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS (REVELATION 8:7-12): EARTH, SEA, RIVERS AND SPRINGS, AND SUN. THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS WERE LIMITED TO ONE-THIRD OF EACH SPHERE (SEE ALSO REVELATION 9:4-5, 18), BUT THE DESTRUCTION POURED OUT FROM THE BOWLS IS TOTAL."

THE BOWLS ARE BEING POURED OUT ON THE CREATION, BUT THE EFFECTS OF THE CREATION ARE THE DESTRUCTION AND JUDGMENT UPON UNREPENTANT HUMANS.

REVELATION 16:2 - FIRST BOWL: "POURED ON THE EARTH". RESULT: LOATHSOME, MALIGNANT SORE ON THE PEOPLE WHO HAD THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND WHO WORSHIPPED HIM IMAGE.

EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: 6TH PLAGUE: PAINFUL SORES

REVELATION 16:3 - SECOND BOWL: "POURED OUT INTO THE SEA". RESULT: SEA BECAME LIKE THE BLOOD OF A DEAD MAN. EVERY LIVING THING IN THE SEA DIES.

EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: 1ST PLAGUE: WATERS OF THE NILE TURNED TO BLOOD.

REVELATION 16:4 - THIRD BOWL: "POURED INTO THE RIVERS AND SPRINGS OF WATER". RESULT: THE SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER (AS OPPOSED TO THE SEA) BECAME BLOOD.

EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: 1ST PLAGUE: WATERS OF THE NILE TURNED TO BLOOD.

REVELATION 16:5-7 - REMARKS BY THE ANGEL AND THE ALTAR.

REVELATION 6:9-10 - WHEN THE LAMB BROKE THE FIFTH SEAL, I SAW UNDERNEATH THE ALTAR THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SLAIN BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF GOD, AND BECAUSE OF THE TESTIMONY WHICH THEY HAD MAINTAINED; 10 AND THEY CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, "HOW LONG, O LORD, HOLY AND TRUE, WILL YOU REFRAIN FROM JUDGING AND AVENGING OUR BLOOD ON THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH?"

REVELATION 6:11 - AND THERE WAS GIVEN TO EACH OF THEM A WHITE ROBE; AND THEY WERE TOLD THAT THEY SHOULD REST FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, UNTIL THE NUMBER OF THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS AND THEIR BRETHREN WHO WERE TO BE KILLED EVEN AS THEY HAD BEEN, WOULD BE COMPLETED ALSO.

REVELATION 16:6 - "*THEY DESERVE IT*" - GREEK WORD *AXIOS* (514) WHICH IS MOST OFTEN TRANSLATED "WORTHY". THIS IS THE WORD USED OF GOD (REV. 4:11) AND CHRIST (REV. 5:9, 12) BEING "WORTHY" OF GLORY AND HONOR ETC. IN THIS CASE THE ANGEL DECLARES THAT THOSE WHO HAVE OPPOSED AND KILLED GOD'S PEOPLE ARE "WORTHY" TO RECEIVE JUDGMENT. THE VOICES FROM THE ALTAR AGREE: "YES LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, YOUR JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND JUST" (NLT)

REVELATION 16:8-9 - FOURTH BOWL: "POURED OUT UPON THE SUN." RESULT: THE SUN SCORCHES MEN WITH FIRE, FIERCE HEAT.

THE PEOPLE BEING JUDGED NOW EXPRESS THEIR ANGER TOWARDS GOD AND THEY "BLASPHEMED HIS NAME" (V. 9, 11 & 21 THIS IS REPEATED)

REVELATION 16:10-11 - FIFTH BOWL: "POURED OUT ON THE THRONE OF THE BEAST". RESULT: THE BEAST'S KINGDOM BECOMES DARKENED AND "THEY" (LIKELY REFERRING TO THE SUBJECTS OF THAT KINGDOM) GNAWED ON THEIR TONGUES BECAUSE OF THE PAIN. AND YET, THEY CONTINUE TO "BLASPHEME."

EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: 9TH PLAGUE: SUN TURNED TO DARKNESS. IN CONTRAST TO THE DARKENING OF THE SUN IN THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT, THIS PLAGUE INTENSIFIES THE SUN SO THAT IT BURNS. ALSO, MINDFUL OF THE EGYPTIAN PLAGUES, LANGUAGE USED HERE IS THAT THE KINGDOM OF THE BEAST IS DARKENED AS A RESULT OF THIS BOWL

REVELATION 16:12-16 - SIXTH BOWL: "POURED OUT ON THE GREAT RIVER EUPHRATES". RESULT: WATER DRIED UP SO THAT RIVER'S PATHWAYS COULD BE USED AS A TRAVEL ROUTE. IN ADDITION, AT THE 6TH BOWL, SOME OMINOUS THINGS ARE SEEN. MORE ON THAT IN A MOMENT.

COMMENTATORS NOTE THAT THE EUPHRATES RIVER WAS SIGNIFICANT FOR ITS PROTECTIVE BOUNDARY FOR THE EMPIRES THAT RULED IN THAT REGION THROUGHOUT HISTORY. THE ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES THAT "THE GREAT RIVER EUPHRATES, ANCIENT BABYLON FOOLISHLY RELIED FOR DEFENSE (ISA. 44:27-28; JER. 50:38; 51:36). THE EUPHRATES WAS ALSO THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, AND IT KEPT THE PARTHIANS OUT." (ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTE, REVELATION 16:12-14). IF IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION, BABYLON IS SYMBOLIC OF THE EVIL AND FALLEN HUMAN SYSTEM OF THIS WORLD, THEN THE IMAGERY OF THE DRYING UP OF THE EUPHRATES COULD ALSO INDICATE THE SUPPOSED SPIRITUAL DEFENSE AND BARRIER THAT THIS EVIL AGE USES TO KEEP ITSELF STRONG IS DRYING UP AS THE WRATH OF GOD COMES.



WITH THE EUPHRATES DRIED UP, BABYLON'S DEFENSIVE HELP AND PROTECTIVE BOUNDARY IS REMOVED. THIS SECTION FORESHADOWS AN IMPORTANT AND FINAL BATTLE THAT IS COMING. NOW WITH THE RIVER DRIED, IT WILL SERVE AS A DIRECT PATHWAY FOR THE "KINGS FROM THE EAST" TO BRING THEIR ARMIES TO THE BATTLEFIELD. THIS BATTLE WILL INTERSECT IN A PLACE CALLED "HAR MAGEDON" (AKA ARMAGEDDON). THIS WORD IS WELL KNOWN WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THE MEANING IS NOT WELL KNOWN. WE WILL DISCUSS HAR-MAGEDON/ARMAGEDDON NEXT TIME, BUT FOR NOW IT IS HELPFUL TO KNOW THAT THIS IS A PLACE.

THE DRAGON (THE DEVIL), THE BEAST, AND THE FALSE PROPHET HAVE UNCLEAN SPIRITS WHICH COME OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS WHICH APPEAR TO LOOK LIKE FROGS. JOHN TELLS US THAT THESE THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS/FROGS ARE DEMONIC SPIRITS WHICH ARE GOING TO DECEIVINGLY INFLUENCE THE "KINGS OF THE WHOLE WORLD", RESULTING IN THEIR GATHERING FOR SOMETHING CALLED "THE WAR OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD, THE ALMIGHTY".

IN SCRIPTURE, SOMETHING COMING OUT OF A MOUTH IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORDS AND AUTHORITY OF THAT PERSON (THINK OF THE SWORD COMING OUT OF JESUS' MOUTH). IN OTHER WORDS, THESE DEMONS ARE MOVING AT THE DIRECT COMMAND OF THE DEVIL.

EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: SECOND PLAGUE: FROGS SWARM THE LAND.

REVELATION 16:15 - JESUS SPEAKS

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CHAPTER, JESUS SPEAKS TO HIS CHURCH. HE SAYS: " *BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO STAYS AWAKE AND KEEPS HIS CLOTHES*". WHY DOES HE SAY THIS? WELL, WE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO LOOK AWAY AT THIS INFORMATION - IT'S TROUBLING AND FRIGHTENING! BUT JESUS DOESN'T WANT US TO LOOK AWAY OR IGNORE IT OR "THINK HAPPY THOUGHTS". HE WANTS US TO KEEP OUR EYES OPEN AND SEE AND KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS.

AND IN LIGHT OF SEEING THEM, HE WANTS US TO BE AWAKE AND ALERT - "DRESSED". IT BRINGS TO MIND SOMETHING JESUS TAUGHT FROM THE GOSPELS:

LUKE 12:35-40 - "BE DRESSED IN READINESS, AND KEEP YOUR LAMPS LIT. 36 "BE LIKE MEN WHO ARE WAITING FOR THEIR MASTER WHEN HE RETURNS FROM THE WEDDING FEAST, SO THAT THEY MAY IMMEDIATELY OPEN THE DOOR TO HIM WHEN HE COMES AND KNOCKS. 37 "BLESSED ARE THOSE SLAVES WHOM THE MASTER WILL FIND ON THE ALERT WHEN HE COMES; TRULY I SAY TO YOU, THAT HE WILL GIRD HIMSELF TO SERVE, AND HAVE THEM RECLINE AT THE TABLE, AND WILL COME UP AND WAIT ON THEM.

38 "WHETHER HE COMES IN THE SECOND WATCH, OR EVEN IN THE THIRD, AND FINDS THEM SO, BLESSED ARE THOSE SLAVES. 39 "BUT BE SURE OF THIS, THAT IF THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE HAD KNOWN AT WHAT HOUR THE THIEF WAS COMING, HE WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED HIS HOUSE TO BE BROKEN INTO. 40 "YOU TOO, BE READY; FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COMING AT AN HOUR THAT YOU DO NOT EXPECT."

THE LANGUAGE OF BEING "DRESSED" STRESSES A READINESS. IN THE STORY FROM LUKE 12, THE SERVANT IS DRESSED AS A SERVANT, READY TO SERVE THE MASTER AT HIS COMING. IN REVELATION 16'S CONTEXT PERHAPS THE "DRESSED" LANGUAGE IS FOR A SOLDIER WAITING FOR THE BATTLE. IF YOU KNOW A THIEF IS COMING, YOU DON'T LAY IN BED WITH YOUR PJ'S ON. YOU ARE UP, DRESSED, LIGHTS ON AND EYES OPEN TO ENSURE THAT THE THIEF CAN'T STEAL FROM YOU. CHRIST'S WORD HERE TO HIS CHURCH IS TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, STAY ALERT AND STAY READY TO OBEY - AND THOSE WHO DO, WILL BE BLESSED.

REVELATION 16:17-21 - SEVENTH BOWL: "POURED OUT UPON THE AIR". RESULT: LOUD VOICE FROM THE THRONE SAYING "IT IS DONE" (V. 17). LIGHTNING, THUNDER AND A GREAT EARTHQUAKE UNLIKE ANY THE WORLD HAS KNOWN (V. 18). THE "GREAT CITY" (BABYLON? JERUSALEM?) IS SPLIT IN THREE AND THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH FELL (V. 19). THE ISLANDS FLED AND MOUNTAINS WERE NOT FOUND (V. 20). FINALLY HUGE HAILSTONES (100LBS EACH) FALL AND CRUSH HUMANS (V. 21)

EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: SEVENTH PLAGUE: THUNDER AND FLASHING HAIL WHICH DESTROYED ANIMALS AND HUMANS.

THIS FINAL BOWL DESCRIBES A CATACLYSMIC SHAKING OF THE LITERAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH AS WELL AS A SHAKING OF THE HUMAN INSTITUTIONS (KINGDOMS, CITIES, ETC) THAT HAVE BEEN BUILT ON PRIDE, EVIL AND SIN. THE CREATION ITSELF IS FLEEING AWAY FROM THE AWESOME AND TERRIFYING WRATH OF ITS CREATOR. BUT THE CENTERPIECE OF GOD'S ORIGINAL CREATION, HUMANKIND CANNOT ESCAPE. EARTHQUAKES AND HAIL IN PARTICULAR ARE NOT AVOIDED. THE TALLEST AND STRONGEST BUILDING ON EARTH CANNOT WITHSTAND AN EARTHQUAKE THAT SPLITS OPEN THE EARTH. HAIL FALLING IS UNPREDICTABLE, YOU CAN'T DODGE HAILSTONES, AND YOU CANNOT SURVIVE THEIR STRIKE WHEN THEY ARE 100LBS IN WEIGHT. AS THESE THINGS HAPPEN TO THE EARTH, HUMANITY WILL DIE, FILLED WITH ANGER TOWARDS AND BLASPHEMY AGAINST GOD.

THIS IS THE WRATH OF GOD.