

life group study guide

November 22, 2015

Revelation

Chapters 16-18

(Mainly the battle of Armageddon; the fall of Rome; and the call for believers to not take part in the worldly pleasures and deceptions of modern day Rome's)

I haven't heard anyone say this so far in our study, so I thought it helpful to include it at this time: "One fact we know for sure is that Apocalyptic Scripture all was created in times of desperate need. Revelation was written at a time when the Jewish nation was struggling to exist. At this time Rome was presenting the Jews the options of death or assimilation into the pagan world. One writer points out that apocalyptic writings demonstrate that 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity.' Apocalyptic Scriptures were relevant to the situation of the day. Daniel and Ezekiel were written during the Babylonian exile. Revelation was written during the trials of pagan Rome."

Chapters 16-18 include narrative that encourages interpretation that will largely be based upon which theory of interpretation the reader uses. There is no right or wrong theory as is demonstrated by the many respected scholars who identify with one or the other or a combination of the **8 (EIGHT)** popular theories. My own approach is to read the chapters quickly as if I were one of the saints at one of the seven churches addressed in the book reading this letter for the first time. In the light of current events it will not require much effort to read the letter as though you are reading in a time of severe tribulation for Christians! Read the chapters or the entire letter at one sitting, letting God speak through His word, not getting bogged down in details or exact applications. Try to avoid imposing upon God's word the interpretations you may have had from teachings in the past. Imagine you are attending a play seeing the visual presentation with John and hearing the dialogue with John.

In chapter 16 we see a free adaptation in the bowls of the trumpets of chapters 8 & 9. It is important to notice that they do not harm God's saints. What the bowls represent God's response to the total corruption of earth's moral, ethical, and spiritual environment. This seems to me to represent the culmination of evil influence. These wraths are poured out almost synchronously.

1. Read Romans 1:24,26 & 28. This is the ultimate. Compare the plagues of Egypt with the bowls of wrath. Compare the hardening of Pharaoh's heart by God with these people's hardening in Revelation 16: 9, 11, & 21.
2. Read Revelation 16:15, this may well be the summation theme of Revelation!
3. What is your feeling after reading about the Wrath of God? Does this sound like so many people today's feeling of the love of God? How can God be loving and wrathful?
4. With the sounding of the sixth trumpet (Revelation 9:13-21) an angel called for the loosing of the 4 angels bound at the river Euphrates who were prepared for the killing of 1/3 of

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mankind. The same theme is further developed with the pouring out of the sixth bowl of God's wrath (Revelation 16:12-16). The kings of the earth who supported Satan gathered at the place called Armageddon. This is a complicated Greekized Hebrew word, anglicized into Har-Megadon. The actual "battle" seems to be described in Revelation 19:11-17. How do you imagine this battle you are watching take place? It seems to me to be brief, final, but brutally dramatic. Is the sword from Christ's mouth actually a sword or is it the Sword of Truth, the victorious, judging Word of Christ? Do you see any description of a battle or conflict like we see on TV or in movies? Does God need an army of His own to defeat an army of Satan?

5. How do you feel at the end of chapter 16? Victorious? Frightened? Apprehensive? What changes do you see taking place in your life after reading of the Wrath of God?