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REVELATION

The Seven Bowl Judgements Revelation 16

I. The Beginning of the End

- a. We are approaching the final act in God's judgment – This has to be encouraging to John
 - i. Language used at the beginning of Chapter 15 and at the end Chapter 16
 - ii. ***Rev 15: 1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. - 16:17 - "And a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, 'It is done.'"***
 - iii. These last seven judgments that come in the form of plagues are the culmination of God's measured wrath as illustrated in bowl judgements
- b. Where do they come from?
 - i. ***Rev 15:5 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.***
 - ii. The "tabernacle of testimony" held the tablets of the Ten Commandments – the moral law – God's righteous requirements – As one author puts it "God's law is *"not an imposition, but an exposition."* It is not an imposition of some arbitrary morality on the human species, but an exposition of the way God created us to be. When we violate God's law we violate ourselves: we go against reality. We end up ruining ourselves and creation around us."
 1. These judgements are the natural consequences of violating God's moral law
 2. This is holiness confronting evil – God will not look away from sin, He will not ignore it – that would violate His nature
- iii. The clothing of the angels reflect that - white linen and gold sashes. They reflect the purity of Jesus Himself.

II. The First Bowl

Rev 16:1-7 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man ;and every living creature in the sea died. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

- a. Each of these judgements are an outward sign of an inward disease – a sickness of the soul

- i. As J Vernon McGee points out – life is in the blood – our ability to fight off disease and infection resides in our blood stream – it is the delivery system for antibodies and white blood cells that are essential for healing
 - ii. This first bowl judgement brings about sores to all who have received the mark of the beast – sores that will not heal – “why do you say that? We don’t see that in the text.” Oh, but we do.
 - iii. There are striking similarities between the bowl judgements and the plagues of Egypt found in the book of Exodus – those similarities are not mere coincidence, they are a fulfillment of an Old Testament promise
- b. ***Exo 9:8-11 So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. (9) And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." (10) Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. (11) And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians.***
 - i. ***Exo 15:26 and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."***
 - ii. ***Deu 28:15 "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: // Deu 28:27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. // Deu 28:35 The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.***
 - iii. ***Lev 26:21 'Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins.***
- c. This is hard to hear. How can a God of love put His creation through this?
 - i. This is an act of love. Warnings throughout history, prophets, priests, Jesus, His Word – and if we still won’t listen, God will reveal to us on the outside what is taking place on the inside so that we may turn to Him
 - 1. The purpose of the plagues of Egypt – expose false gods and show the power of the one true God - leading hard hearts to repentance
 - ii. These bowls are a measured response to what exists in the hardened heart of man. It is serious because our condition is serious.
 - iii. We are dying without Jesus.
 - 1. True healing is only available through the blood of Jesus Christ – the blood He willingly shed for mankind
 - 2. That is why the angel doesn’t question God or say “Lord, what are you doing?” The angel cries out "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

III. They Did Not Repent

Rev 16:8-11 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

- a. We are almost surprised to find out what it contains, but we shouldn't be.
 - i. The Old Testament prophets told us what was to come, Paul told us in his letters to the Thessalonians, and even Jesus spoke plainly about the Great Tribulation and the end times
 - ii. Deut 32 talks about a day when man will be devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction
 - iii. Isaiah 24 talks of the inhabitants of the earth being burned and only a few remaining
 - iv. Then in Isaiah ***42:25 Therefore He has poured on him the fury of His anger And the strength of battle; It has set him on fire all around, Yet he did not know; And it burned him, Yet he did not take it to heart.***
 - v. The prophet Malachi wrote in ***Mal 4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch.***
 - vi. Jesus said in ***Luke 21:25 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.***
- b. Bowl of fire is a living picture of the wrath of God (the fire that refines the believer) and the darkness (which we saw in Egypt) is a living picture of the willful delusion of mankind
 - i. What was mankind's response to the sores, and fire, and the darkness? They blasphemed God and they did not repent
 - ii. What is blasphemy? We had to look back at Mark 3 when Jesus cast an evil spirit out of a man who was blind and mute. Many began to wonder if He was the Messiah they had been waiting for. But the scribes came down from Jerusalem and told the people "By the ruler of demons he casts out demons."
 1. ***Mark 3:28-30 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"—because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."***
 2. Blasphemy is attributing evil to God. And the unforgivable sin is calling the Holy Spirit a liar as He draws us to the cross of Jesus Christ for forgiveness, and taking our sins with us to the grave.

IV. The Sixth and Seventh Bowl

Rev 16:12-16 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the

kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

- a. There are two significant rivers in scripture – the Jordan – which the Israelites crossed over in the Promised Land, and the Euphrates – which bordered the city of Babylon
 - i. This judgement will seem like a blessing to the rulers of earth during the Great Tribulation – opens a door
 - ii. Unclean spirits will come out of the mouth of the dragon and gather all the armies of the world together to war against God for the great final battle in the Valley of Armageddon
 1. This great river will dry up allowing their armies to cross over easily
- b. Little do they know this is all part of God's plan – The Lord is bringing all the armies of the world together for one final judgement
- c. ***2 Th 2:9-12 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***
 - i. People struggle with this verse – the God of truth sends strong delusion?
 - ii. The world seems complicated – all kinds of false religions and belief systems and theologies, and there seems to be so many competing affections – the love of money, the love of pleasure, the love of power and prestige
 - iii. All of these empty pursuits fall under the same banner – which is the worship of self above God – rejecting truth and a finding pleasure in unrighteousness
 - iv. That “delusion” brings all these camps together – unifies them
 1. Pulls back the veil and reveals that they are all on the same team – sin is sin, rebellion is rebellion – unbelief is unbelief

V. The Final Bowl Judgements

Rev 16:17-21 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

- a. Hail fell upon men – the punishment for blasphemy in the Old Testament? Lev 24
Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord, the congregation shall stone him
 - i. What kind of God is this?
- b. Judgment is terrible yet justified,
 - i. ***Psalm 75:8 (NKJV): For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth Drain and drink down.***
 - ii. ***Isaiah 51:17 (NKJV): Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk at the hand of the Lord The cup of His fury; You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, And drained it out.***

- iii. *Jeremiah 25:15 (NKJV): For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: "Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it."*
- c. But it come after an opportunity for repentance
 - i. *Matthew 26:39 (NKJV): He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*
 - ii. *John 18:11 (NKJV): So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"*
 - iii. *Isaiah 53:5–6 (NKJV): But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*
 - 1. *Galatians 3:13 (NKJV): Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree").*
 - 2. It is finished – I have drank the cup – it has not passed by Me
 - iv. What kind of God is this? This is the righteous God, the just God, the loving God who is calling His creation to repentance and forgiveness. Who is pointing us to the cross of Calvary where Jesus cried out "it is finished!" and took His last breath – taking the sins off all who will believe with Him to the grave.
 - v. It is finished (grace) are wonderful words for those who will believe in the truth – it is done (judgement) are terrible words for those who refuse to humble themselves before the almighty God.
- d. *The bowls are primarily aimed at the beast.*
 - i. But the inescapable truth is we become like what we worship. If we give our hearts to the beast, we will share in His end. If we give our lives to Christ, we will share in His eternal reign.
 - 1. No one stands under God's wrath except those who have chosen it
 - 2. Either Jesus bears God's wrath for you, or you bear it yourself
 - 3. *Heb 10: 26 (CSB) For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, who has regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know the one who has said, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, and again, The Lord will judge his people. 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*