

Bible Studies

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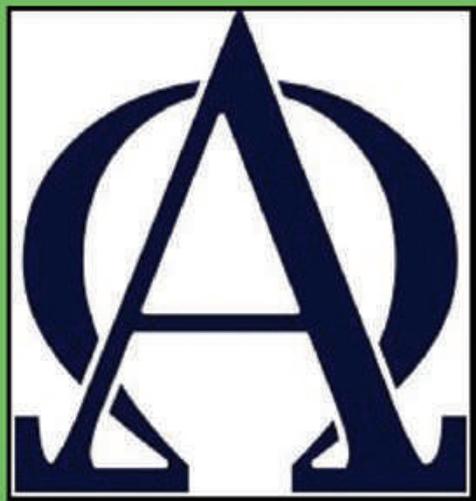
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Revelation ~ Victory Book Chapters 12-22

Introducing
God's righteous judgements
in the time of the end.

From Study Groups
Seven bowls of wrath
and Armageddon (Rev. 16)

Feature
Solomon's Temple—Part 5



Revelation 22:13

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENTS IN THE TIME OF THE END

The fearful judgements of this chapter are 'laser targeted' against those who oppose God. Men think they can operate independently of their Creator. They also imagine that a God of love has no business inflicting pain, failing to understand that righteous judgement is intrinsic to God's character. Disconnected from God's absolute standards of right and wrong, such faulty thinking emboldens them (paradoxically), to savagely murder the saints of God, whose righteous lives rebuke their evil deeds. The more God chastens them, the more their implacable hatred for God and His servants is revealed. These people are Satan worshippers. Like their master the Devil they have become sworn enemies of the Most High. Even as divine judgements rain down, they rage against the One in whose hand is their very breath.

We might ask who 'are worthy' in verse six and what are they worthy of? There is no doubt that those who shed the blood of God's saints are worthy of the severest judgements. With equal certainty we aver, their victims are worthy of the highest honours for their faithfulness to God, in spite of diabolical hatred and violence.

The river Euphrates will dry up when the sixth angel's bowl is poured out. This is to make ready the way 'for the kings that come from the sunrising'

(v.12) At the present time, the Chinese sponsored 'Belt and Road' project (construction of a commercial highway linking China, the Middle East and Europe) is well underway—yet another sign that the times of judgement foretold in this chapter, leading to the final showdown between the nations of the world and Almighty God at Armageddon, are drawing near.

In January 2020, many Chinese citizens working in the Italian fashion industry returned from Wuhan to northern Italy after the Chinese New Year. Some think this may have contributed to the rapid spread of Coronavirus in Europe.

The Covid 19 crisis has led many countries to develop a vaccine passport system which is already mandatory in some settings. Whatever one's view of this, it cannot be denied that in short order, millions have been conditioned to accept the notion that governmental control of individual freedom—including the freedom to enter shops—is a good thing. Our world is accelerating towards the time of the end, when no-one will be allowed to buy or sell without the mark of the Beast.

Truly we can say: 'now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed' (Rom. 13:11) *J.J.*

From Study Groups . . .

SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH AND ARMAGEDDON (Revelation 16)

From Aberdeen: The Book of Revelation tells us in no uncertain terms about the wrath of God. Chapter 16 brings before us the detailed effects of the seven bowls of the wrath of God. John the apostle, whose gospel record tells us so much about the love of God, also does not hold back from detailing the fact that the same God who so loved the world will also deal with an unrepentant world by sending seven angels to pour out seven bowls of His wrath. God's wrath is directed at the dragon, the Beast, the false prophet and also at a world which has pledged allegiance to the Beast and indeed worships the image of the Beast. Clearly, the sons of Adam are responsible for their choices. They have the remarkable capacity to choose whether to worship God or worship the image of the Beast. Multitudes will not heed the warnings of the angel to worship God the almighty Creator and therefore will face the severe consequences of God's wrath in that day of reckoning (Rev. 14:7).

The river Euphrates, mentioned in chapter 9, is again referred to in chapter 16. Is there a connection between the aforementioned 'four angels prepared for the hour, the day, the month, the year' and the 'three unclean spirits' of this latter chapter? In both chapters a 'sixth angel' is mentioned. Is this the same angel in both chapters? Chapter 9 refers to a sixth angel associated with a trumpet, while chapter 16 refers to a sixth angel associated with a bowl [Comment 1]. *James Johnson*

From Aberkenfig: Seven angels were instructed to pour out their bowls, filled with the wrath of God, into the earth. The outpourings of wrath appear to occur in rapid succession, and grow in severity. Chapter 14 explained that all who received the mark of the Beast 'would drink the wine of God's wrath'. Now, as the angel pours out the first bowl (Rev. 16:2 ESV) all who had taken that mark were stricken with 'harmful and painful sores'. Exodus 9 tells of a similar situation in the sixth plague. Both groups hardened their hearts.

The second bowl is poured out and the sea became as 'blood of a corpse' (Rev. 16:3), every living thing in the sea dying, affecting the availability of fish and other sea creatures for food. Also, when the third bowl (v.4) is poured out, the rivers and springs turned to blood. Doubtless this affected where they would get drinking water. We are reminded of the first plague (Ex. 7:18; Ps. 105:29), as well as the second trumpet (Rev. 8:8), although only a third became blood.

The thought of God being unjust and the judgements too overwhelming is answered by the angel in verses 5 & 6, 'Just are you, O Holy One ... it is what they deserve', whilst in verse 7 the voice from the altar which is before God, also says, 'Yea, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgements!'

When the fourth angel (v.8) poured out his bowl, the sun was caused to scorch men with fire, making the earth like a furnace, for many a pretaste of eternal burnings. Sadly, they refused to turn their hearts to Him to quench their barren souls. Malachi prophesied in chapter 4:1 (RV) ‘the day burneth as a furnace ... it shall leave them neither root nor branch’. Did they repent? No! Such is the hardness of the human heart.

The fifth and sixth bowls of judgements which follow are, like their trumpet counterparts, more obviously supernatural than the first four. The political realm is targeted here (the Beast’s kingdom and the kingdoms of the world). The kingdom of the Beast is plunged into darkness as the fifth bowl is poured out and men gnaw their tongues in pain. So intense was this darkness, reminiscent of the ninth plague in Egypt (Ex.10:21-23), none would escape from it. Verse 11 clearly states: ‘they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores; and they repented not of their works’. The afflictions would be cumulative. God has given them five opportunities and there will be no more. The situation is like the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5).

Next, the sixth bowl is ‘poured out upon the great river Euphrates’. The Euphrates measures some 1900 miles (3000kms.) long, up to 2 miles (3 kms.) at its widest with a depth of 30 feet (5 m.) We see how miraculous its drying-up will be. The result is a way made ready for the kings that come from the East. Three spirits in the form of frogs emanating from the evil trinity draw them (presumably from China, Japan and India) to this place, through deceit [and possibly other countries too, like North Korea – *Eds*].

God ensures that all the armies of the world are brought to one place—Har-Magedon (Hebrew), meaning the hill of Megiddo, a vast plain some 14 miles wide and 20 miles long. It is also called ‘the Plain of Esdraelon’ and the ‘Valley of Jezreel’. Titus with the Roman army used this as a natural corridor. Zechariah 12 and 14 describe this event from Israel’s point of view. Revelation 17:17 shows that it was all in God’s purposes and 19:17-21 give details of this ‘battle’ (Note: the phrase ‘the battle of Armageddon’ is not found in scripture).

When the seventh angel pours out his bowl, there comes a great voice out of the Temple saying ‘It is done’. This refers to the wrath of God poured out from the seven bowls.

Never before has there been an earthquake so vast, that ‘the ‘great’ city was split into three and the cities of the nations collapsed. The destruction of islands and mountains and the tsunamis together with thunder, lightning and earthquake would present as a nightmare to John. Possibly the most frightening aspect was the size of hailstones weighing anything from 80 to 120 lbs. (35 - 55 kgs). Still, they continue to blaspheme God. To escape God’s justice is impossible. *Bill Paterson*

From Buckhaven: In chapter 16 the final judgements of God unfold. The great and terrible sign of 15:1 introduces us to these events. The seals and trumpets of previous chapters, while extremely severe, are not the final judgements. The significant number seven comes to our attention again: seven angels pour God's judgements on earth at the appointed time. These judgements have the full sanction of the throne: the loud voice expresses divine authority. The pouring out of the bowls divides into four and three, the last three being directed against the systems of the earth.

The first angel's bowl brings grievous sores, like the plague of boils inflicted on the Egyptians (Ex. 9:10-11). The second bowl turns the sea to blood and all living creatures die. Compared with the trumpet judgements (ch. 8), where the sea only partly turns to blood, these judgements are more severe. The third angel pours his bowl on the rivers and springs, turning them to blood. A separate, high-ranking angel named 'the angel of the waters', acknowledges the righteousness and holiness of God, and the altar proclaims that God's judgements are just—the only occasion when the altar speaks. Certain angels have control of the elements, including the angel of the wind in 7:1 and the angel of fire in 14:18. These are direct judgements on those who shed the blood of the righteous.

The fourth bowl harnesses the power of the sun (no longer darkened), in its fullest intensity of heat, causing severe burns. The response of mankind is to blaspheme God. The fifth bowl targets the Beast's throne and kingdom, which is plunged into darkness. This causes extreme suffering. Men gnaw their tongues in agony but refuse to repent. A direct judgment is on the Beast's economic system which is nearing collapse.

With the sixth bowl, the Euphrates dries up. We recall the drying of the Red Sea (Ex.14:21) and the Jordan (Josh. 3:17). The drying of the Euphrates allows the kings of the East to come to a great battle. They are drawn by demonic forces (characterised as unclean frogs). This event is the great day of God Almighty. Verse 15 gives a warning of preparedness, being awake, clothed and ready for this event.

At the outpouring of the seventh bowl, a great voice from the throne—God's voice—proclaims: 'It is done', signifying the completion of His judgements. This judgement seems to be directed at the realm of the air, the abode of Satanic, evil forces and is preparatory to a cleansed earth, ready for the millennial reign of Christ.

The great earthquake, which shakes the earth to its very foundations, is spoken of in Haggai 2:6. The great city of Babylon is divided and broken up. All the principal cities of the nations collapse. Mountains and islands flee away. Hailstones of colossal weight fall on men, who curse God in their implacable hatred.

Thus, the kingdom of the Beast—Babylon the Great, and the godless systems of men, are destroyed. What God starts, He finishes! *Martin Notman*

From Cromer: *Gloom and doom?* Some have found that the consideration of some chapters in recent months in our study of Revelation have been depressing and dispiriting. However, we are now approaching the end of all things; those who have been determinedly opposed to God are about to get their final 'comeuppance'. Verses 3-6 (ESV) say: 'The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, 'Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!' God had been forbearing for centuries, but now His wrath was to be unleashed on those who rejected Him. Note that there was no repentance for their deeds; they rather cursed God.

Substitution Should we be afraid of these impending judgements? No! The wrath of God upon sin has been vented upon His Son, who took our place. We displayed 'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 20:21 RV), who by His vicarious and substitutionary self-offering justified us and freed us from the eternal consequences of our sin.

Armageddon All the forces assembled by the demonic spirits are to be gathered for battle at the place called Armageddon. It is curious that although the name of this place has passed into the language as the place of the great final battle between the forces of God and those of human and demonic self-sufficiency, no-one knows where it is! The word is said to be Hebrew, and the two most favoured suggestions are that it means 'mountain of Megiddo' or the 'city of Megiddo'. The former seems closer to the Hebrew, but unfortunately no mountain appears to be called 'the mountain of Megiddo'. The plain of Esdraelon is nearby, and that has been and could be a battleground. The 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' in Joel 3:2 could be the same, although no-one seems to be certain whether this refers to a literal location [Comment 2]. *Peter Hickling*

From Greenock: Historically, battles have been fought on flat land to allow for easier troop movement, and flat firm ground was essential for chariots then as well as for today's armoured vehicles. Armies can be challenged by steep cliffs and deep rivers. This area is the limit of chariot access from Egypt (Josh. 17:16). Armageddon is also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Valley of Jezreel, the Valley of Esdraelon and the Plain of Megiddo. Over 30 battles have been fought here. The first

accurately recorded battle in history took place here with Pharaoh Thutmose III beating a coalition of Canaanite tribes in 1457 B.C.

There have been three major Old Testament battles fought here: Deborah and Barak vs. Sisera (Judg.5). God and Gideon defeated the Midianites with the army of three hundred men armed with torches and trumpets (Judg. 7). Saul and his sons lost their lives here having been defeated by the Philistines. They were on Mount Gilboa overlooking the battlefield and from across the valley they were watched by their soldiers (1 Sam. 31:7). More conflicts continued during the Crusades: Napoleon Bonaparte declared it as 'the most natural battleground of the whole earth'. Then the First World War saw General George Allenby fighting the Ottoman Turks in 1918. In its struggle for survival Israel has repeatedly fought its Arab neighbours from here. There is in this same place an Israeli air force base which echoes the 'birds of the heaven' which are called to feast on the slain (Rev. 19:17).

Still to happen are the final battles between the forces of evil and the forces of God before and after the millennial reign. The enemies shall come from the 'four corners of the earth' (20:8). We recognise this as a figure of speech, but the truth is that they will come from the four cardinal points. The forces from 'the East' will come 'with their leaders (kings)' for the last battle. The Tigris/Euphrates is a significant barrier and by being dried up (Rev. 16:12) it will facilitate their advance on Jerusalem.

These campaigns, fighting on the same patch of land, illustrate our experiences. In our Christian walk we are at constant war with the enemy (the Devil). We lose battles when we try to fight in our own strength. When we win it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts' (Zech. 4:6). Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:57) [Comment 3].

Steve Henderson

From Halifax: '*Go your way*' The second woe past (Rev. 11:14), the third woe has swiftly come, and the seven angels of chapter 15 verse 1 are dispatched by 'a great voice out of the temple' (16:1 RV), each with a bowl 'of the wrath of God'. The first angel emptied his bowl 'into the earth' (v.2), that is the land in contradistinction to the sea, rivers, air, etc.; the second 'into the sea' (v.3); the third 'upon the rivers and the fountains of waters' (v.4). The fresh waters of the earth being polluted as blood 'calls forth the dialogue between the angel and the altar concerning the logic of the plagues' (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 549)— 'Righteous art thou ... thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy' (vv. 5-6).

The altar, under which the martyrs with a great voice had appealed 'How long,

O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ (6:10), is heard by John to say, ‘Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgements’ (16:7). Then was poured the fourth bowl ‘upon the sun’ (v.8) and being scorched men repented not, but blasphemed (Gk. *blasphemeo*) God’s name—their vile calumny being against the very One who had power over these plagues (v.9). Again, they blasphemed the God of heaven as they suffered pain and sores under the fifth bowl judgment (v.11).

Bowl six brought about the drying up of the great river Euphrates to open up the scene for the battle of Har-Magedon (see 19:17-21), commonly referred to as Armageddon (16:16 KJV). The seventh angel poured out his bowl ‘upon the air’ (v.17); upon the domain of the prince of the power of the air, that is Satan (see Eph.2:2). Finally, it had come to pass. The great voice emanating ‘from the throne’ indicates that it was God who spoke of the ultimate consummation, just like Jesus, who upon the completed work of expiation, said, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30). Lightnings, thunders, and a great earthquake were accompanied by huge hailstones which had been reserved against the time of trouble, ‘against the day of battle and war’ (Job 38:22-23), and men blasphemed.

Robert J. Butler

From Mount Forest: In the case of the seven seals, the last of the series comprised the next series of seven (trumpets). And the seventh trumpet likewise comprises the seven plagues described in this chapter. But the seventh plague does not lead to seven more judgments. It completes the perfect threefold series and what the early prophecies of the book began to unveil; the majesty of God the Son, revealed as the Lion who is the Lamb, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We may see how descriptions of the triune God are specially applied to the Son in this book. This is part of its core purpose (Rev. 1:1). As the triune God is eternal, the Son is described that way (see Rev. 1:17-18). John writes in chapter 1:8 of God the eternal I AM as the One who is, was and ‘the Coming One’ (using *erchomai*—Thayer: ‘about to come’), which is explicitly a title of the Son who comes to make God known (Mat. 11:3; Heb. 10:37; John 1:18). As foreseen in Revelation 11:17 and now here in 16:5, when that coming of God is being accomplished, the *ho erchomenos* [who is to come] of earlier statements is omitted, without in any way changing the eternal attribute of deity. Different roles within the trinity are recognized in this revelation (e.g., Rev. 1:6;5:5,7). Could the voice in 16:1 be that of the One who opened the seals (6:1,3,5,7,9,12; 8:1), is to judge (John 5:22; Rev.16:7) and to whom the angel is responding in verse 5? [That would seem most likely – *R.B.F.*].

The seven last plagues are remarkable, wider in scope and harsher in severity in comparison to either the limited plagues in Egypt or even those already described by John. The enormity of the descriptions must occur supernaturally. Prophets of the past used models (e.g., Ezek. 4; Jer. 19), but what John saw does not seem to

employ a mere dramatization. The statements we are given here are best understood literally, not allegorically, though the mechanics are beyond us.

By the time of the pouring out of the sixth bowl, the population of the earth will have been decimated. Current technology, like nuclear capability for instance, will become very inapplicable when devastation will likely have swept away electric power distribution utilities, communications facilities, factories and skilled workers. It is therefore reasonable to suppose also that warfare will be waged without today's weaponry and without any semblance of current healthcare systems to address the wounded. By the time these plagues are brought about, Satan will have been banished from the heavenly realm to earth, and eventual eternal demise (Rev. 12:9). When the incarnation took place, it was Satan's will to introduce harm into the Lord's constraining human experience here, and so He fulfilled Isaiah 53:3. Now the tables are turned, and Satan and his multitudes are the ones to suffer on earth, defeated by the heavenly Lamb (Rev. 14:20; 16:16; 19:15), having been drawn to the mount in Megiddo that could become a valley as a result of the earthquake (v.18; cf. Is.40:4; Zech.14:4). Perhaps that could remove the physical distinction between Rev.16:16 and Joel 3:2, though Joel's words may be related more to Matthew 25:31-46.

Geoff Hydon

From Ravulapalem: *The 'Watching' and the 'Keeping of Garments'* The Lord wrote about the nakedness of the church in Laodicea and counselled them to buy from Him white clothes to cover their shame (Rev. 3:17-18).

He warned the church in Sardis that He will come like a thief (Rev. 3:3). At midnight suddenly the cry rang out (Mat.25:6 ESV)— 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' All the ten virgins wakened and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones asked the wise for some oil as they were not ready, and received the negative reply, 'No!' As soon as the wise went with the bridegroom into the wedding banquet the door was shut. For the unwise who came late, the reply of the groom was, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you' (Mat. 25:12). Really, it was a shame caused by carelessness and unpreparedness. Here we draw some important points: all the ten are alike; all are called virgins; all have lamps; all came to see the bridegroom; all fell asleep; all are awakened; the wise are ready and the unwise are unprepared. They do not have the important ingredient, oil, to give light, which is the symbol of the Spirit (cp. Rom. 8:9). By quoting this parable Jesus told His listeners, 'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour' (Mat. 25:13). Paul reminded the church of God in Thessalonica, '... for you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (1 Thes.5:2). Peter wrote in his second letter 'But the day of the Lord will come like a thief ...'(2 Pet.3:10). Jude warned to keep waiting and watching for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 21).

Not only those early Christians but also the present generation must bear in mind to keep watching by staying awake, to stand before the Lord in His second coming. Let us all say 'Maranatha! Amen! Come Lord Jesus!' [Comment 4]. *S.J.M. Edward*

From Surulere: *Similarities between plagues* A startling truth about mankind in times ancient, modern, and the period of Revelation 16 is that they are inherently corrupt and fiercely wicked. In his unregenerate state it is true of all humankind: 'They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one' (Rom. 3:12 NKJV). The prophet Jeremiah captures it succinctly: 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?' (Jer. 17:9).

It was the deviousness of the heart of Pharaoh and his callousness that signalled the beginning of the heart-wrenching and historically defining plagues unleashed on the Egyptians, as a mark of God's awesomeness and fury: 'And I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgements' (Ex. 7:3-4). The first similarity between the plagues of Egypt and that of Revelation 16 is that it is the culmination of a calculated opposition to God and an unwavering stand to ignore His numerous entreaties. Pharaoh would not heed the impassioned appeals of Moses, including the indisputable proofs of the plagues; and those in that darkest of eras in Revelation 16 will ignore the warnings of the two witnesses (Rev. 11), the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev. 7), other witnesses and the angel with the eternal gospel that flies in the midst of heaven (14:6-7).

The sixth plague of Egypt is the first of Revelation 16. Fearful boils that broke out in sores (Ex. 9:8-12) afflicted both man and beast. In Revelation 16 it is a foul and loathsome sore that afflicts all those who have the mark of the Beast and who worshipped his image (Rev.16:2). As always, God's judgement is not capricious, nor excessive, but targeted at those who rebel against Him and despise His offer of salvation.

It is intriguing that both in Egypt and in Revelation 16, bodies of water are an object of the outpouring of God's wrath, being an integral part of human existence: 'Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone'" (Ex. 7:19). Similarly, the pouring out of the second and third bowls impacted dreadfully on the water bodies, both great and small. Whilst the second bowl caused the seas to become like the blood of a dead man mirroring, Exodus 7:18 'And the fish in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will

be loath to drink the waters of the river’, the third bowl turned the rivers and springs into blood.

Significantly, with the turning of the rivers and springs into blood upon the pouring of the third bowl, there is a timely and auspicious reminder to all mankind of God’s righteousness in His judgements. Indeed, ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’ (Gen. 18:25).

The ninth Egyptian plague of incomprehensible darkness was restricted to the abode of the Egyptians, with the Israelites engulfed in light (Ex. 10:21-23) is akin to the fifth bowl which will be poured on the throne of the Beast, with his entire kingdom plunged into palpable darkness that will both disconcert rebellious mankind and produce unshakeable hatred to the almighty God (Rev. 16:10-11).

The eternal lesson of this tale of plagues of two dispensations is the authenticity of the declaration of God: ‘All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, everyone, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all’ (Is. 53:6).

Frederick F. Ntido

From Victoria B.C.: In this chapter God continues His campaign to judge sin and unrighteousness. The plagues of God that struck Egypt centuries before, are strikingly akin to the vials of wrath the seven angels are told to pour out on the earth— affecting waters, air and the seat of the Beast and his kingdom. They both have waters turned to blood, there are sores of the skin, darkness that can be felt, fiery heat, one from hail and lightning and the other from the sun itself. Both have hail which comes down as judgement. Both have a leader or leaders who refuse to repent and turn to the mercy and grace of God. Instead, they blaspheme His holy name. The outcomes of these plagues are that the seas are turned to blood, as are the rivers. Those who killed God’s prophets are given blood to drink. Men and women are scorched. They experience grievous sores from taking the mark of the Beast. People chew on their tongues due to the darkness. These are awful times to come on the earth!

In verses 12 and 13 Scripture relates that the sixth angel pours out the bowl that he has been given on the Euphrates river, that it might be dried up in preparing the way for ‘kings of the east’. Three evil spirits issue forth from the ‘mouth’ of the dragon, and these go to the kings of the earth and the whole world, to counsel them to gather and come to fight at Armageddon (v.16). These spirits appear as ‘frogs’. Does this not hark back to the plague of frogs in Egypt? The land stank because of the frogs. The whole earth will have the stink of these frog spirits upon it.

As far as the place of the gathering of the nations (Armageddon) is concerned, it doesn’t seem clear from Scripture that this is the same valley mentioned in Joel 3:2.

The valley in Joel is called Jehoshaphat, meaning 'God judged'; so, it may be possible that it is the same since judgement is being pictured here.

R. Lefevre, P. Williamson

COMMENTS

1. (Aberdeen): The seven angels charged with the blowing of the trumpet judgements (Rev. 8:2-9:13; 10:7; 11:15) contain certain comparisons with the punishments inflicted by the seven angels with the bowls of divine wrath, e.g., the second trumpet angel's target of destruction was the sea and its creatures, although one difference from the bowl angel was the percentage of what was affected, viz. 33% (Rev.8:8-9) as opposed to 100% (16:3). Third and fourth angels of trumpet and bowl judgements have strong similarities too. There is not enough evidence to assert they are the same angels carrying out both judgements. *R.B.F.*

I think one would look for a correspondence throughout the whole range of the trumpet judgements and the bowl judgements if one was to draw out a parallel between the sixth of each (or of any other of their numerical equivalences). I note that in the online version of the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* such a correspondence is averred and partly elaborated, introduced by 'the chief point claiming attention is the singular closeness of the parallelism between them [the bowl plagues] and the trumpet plagues, a parallelism which extends also to the fifth, sixth, and seventh members of the series. Close, however, as it is, there is also a marked climax in the later plagues, corresponding to the fact that they are 'the last,' and that in them 'the wrath of God is finished'. *P.D.*

2. (Cromer): Whilst we cannot be definite as to the exact locale of Har-Magedon (Hebrew word comprising *har* meaning mountain or hill range, and *mgiddow* rendezvous) we find the corresponding word 'valley of Megiddo' in 2 Chronicles 35:22, where Josiah king of Judah was defeated by Neco, king of Egypt. The Old Testament city of Megiddo was situated on the edge of the Plain of Jezreel, which was regarded as the most strategic land route in the ancient near East. The city itself was filled with international traffic over many, many years. The aura and vastness of the land mass, as viewed from Mount Carmel, is absolutely breathtaking and could easily accommodate the representative armies congregated there with the misguided belief they are on a successful mission of extermination of God's chosen people (see also papers submitted by Aberkenfig & Greenock). *R.B.F.*

3. (Greenock): The spiritual lesson drawn from battles being fought, as it were, 'on the same patch of land' does not of course depend on every one of the examples given being incontrovertibly examples of battles fought on the site of Armageddon. But there is no scriptural proof that the post-millennial 'battle' (if that is the right

word!) in Revelation 20:8 is on that site and certain assumptions (not universally accepted—see for instance Cromer’s paper) have to be made to identify the site in the first place. P.D.

4. (Ravulapalem): The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 refers to the time of the end, after the Lord Jesus returns to the air for His church (Eph. 1:22,23; 1 Thes. 4:15-18). The injunctions to watch and stay awake are particularly aimed at religious Jews, who look for the return of their Messiah.

In his article ‘The Lord’s Second Coming’, (in *‘Spiritual Growth’*) F.A. Banks points out that Matthew 23:37-39 is the basis on which chapters 24 and 25 are built. His argument leads to the conclusion that the question asked by the disciples: ‘What shall be the sign of thy coming?’, refers, not to the Lord’s coming to the air for His church, but to His return to earth as Son of Man in judgement. The three parables in Matthew 25 are prophetic of this moment; the ten virgins and the servants refer to the Jews, ‘the sheep and the goats’ to the Gentile nations.

While the parable of the ten virgins has valuable lessons for believers in every era, its context is the return of the Son of Man to earth and its primary application is to Israeli Jews during the time of antichrist. Some will have their ‘lamps’ filled with oil—implying that with the help of the Holy Spirit they have trusted Jesus as Saviour—while others refuse to own Him as Lord (in the symbolism of the parable, their lamps will be empty). Those who own Him as Lord will go in with Him to the marriage feast at the start of Christ’s millennial reign but those who reject Him will hear Him say ‘I know you not.’ The Lord then re-emphasises the need for vigilance during that terrible time that’s coming – ‘Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour’ (Mat. 25:13)- i.e., the day and the hour of His return to earth.

‘The day of the Lord’ (2 Pet.3:10) begins with the Lord’s return to earth (1 Thes. 5:2) and culminates after His millennial reign, at the great white throne judgement (Rev. 20:11). After this comes the eternal ‘day of God’ (2 Pet. 3:11). J.J.

Feature

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

Our Approach to the House of God Today in Worship, Praise and Prayer

So, what does go on in God's heavenly dwelling-place where He sits throned in majesty? We know He receives the thrice-acclaimed verbal adoration of the six-winged seraphim, an order of angelic beings who have close access to the throne and speak in unison when praising Him and also have responsibility individually in communicating divine messages to God's servants.

Though physically taking place on earth, it is the throne of God in heaven itself where the people of God approach in collective worship at the breaking of the bread on the first day of the week, the resurrection day, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. In so doing they are proclaiming His death and giving glory to His God and Father in offering the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 10:19-22; 12:22-24; 13:15; 1 Cor. 11:22-26). It is the place where prayers of pleading for God's mercy from His own reach His ears and from where He declares His intentions to the nations and imposes silence on earth's inhabitants (Is. 6:1-7; Jonah 2:7; Mic. 1:2; Hab. 2:20; Heb. 4:16).

The Apostle John's Vision of the Temple in Heaven

Just as the tabernacle on earth was prepared for God's dwelling among His people, and replicated what was in heaven (Heb. 8:5; 9:9, 11, 23-24), so the same could be said of the temple. John records that he saw the temple of God in heaven filled with glory. Inside was situated the ark of the covenant and angels were seen to emerge from its precinct. However, in the eternal state of bliss no temple will be required to adorn the holy city, the new Jerusalem, as the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will be there and found to be accessible to all the redeemed (Rev. 11:19; 15:5-6, 8; 21:22).

R.B. Fullarton, Bathgate

He who testifies to these things says,
"Surely I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20 ESV