

Revelation 16

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Date: 05 October 2008

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[0 : 00] Please stand for the reading of God's Word.

Revelation chapter 16. Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.

So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshipped its image. 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 his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.

And I heard the angel in charge of the water 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. And I heard the altar saying, Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments.

[1 : 12] The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues.

They did not repent and give him glory. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores.

They did not repent of their deeds. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for battle on the great day of the Almighty.

Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed. And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

[2 : 23] The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth.

So great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people. And they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. What a powerful youth pastor we have.

Thanks, Kevin. Thanks to you for being here. Join me in prayer, please. Lord, we love you, and we worship you, and we give thanks for this afternoon in your presence with your people.

[3 : 40] Praise you, Lord, that you are here with us. I pray, Lord, that you would open the eyes of our hearts, that we may see wondrous things from your word.

We give you glory and praise, and we give this time to you. That's your name. Amen. Amen. It's good to have the west side in the house on this afternoon.

Glad that you can join us for getting introduced to Joseph Kim. Revelation chapter 16. Thank you. Revelation chapter 16. This is one of the scenes in Revelation where the scenery really changes abruptly.

From what we see in Revelation chapter 15. There is an abrupt turn. You might even say a 90-degree angle kind of turn that we are faced with here.

[4 : 43] Look back with me at Revelation chapter 15, and I'll try to help you to see what I am saying on this afternoon.

Verse 1 actually introduces the next major section of the book that includes what we see in chapter 16.

John here sees yet another heavenly vision. And I saw, he says in verse 1, another sign in heaven great and amazing.

The vision featured seven angels with the seven plagues that would bring the wrath of God to completion.

You see that in verse 1? Which are the last for with them the wrath of God is finished. It comes to its end, its completion, its goal.

[5 : 43] But rather than proceed to the particulars of God's judgments or the particulars of this final phase of divine wrath, the camera, as it were, cuts away momentarily to another scene.

It's a glorious scene. And our kid Dave a little bit, he gets to preach these glorious scenes. But we look at this glorious scene in 15, and we see there it features the worship of the faithful in the heavenlies.

Well, isn't it good when the saints of God get together and lift their hearts and their praises to God? What you have here in verses 2 through 4, you've got the redeemed lifting up a song of victory and of worship to the living God.

It's great when redeemed people sing. And our singing now, our singing when we gather as the people of God, our singing as we sing in our private devotions, and I hope you're doing a little singing in your private devotions, making a joyful noise unto the Lord, because that is also a place where you can lift a song of praise to Him.

But what happens is our singing now is merely a preview of the worship when our redemption will be fully realized in glory.

[7 : 18] And I enjoy, and I believe we enjoy singing now. But this is simply a foretaste of that which is to come in the very presence of God.

And when that which is veiled from our eyes now becomes fully, fully visible. Oh, what a marvelous day that will be. But there are several things that I want you to see here.

Revelation doesn't always sequence one thing after another chronologically. What we see here in these verses, in verses 2 through 4 and 15, it seems to see these verses best as following what we see in chapter 16.

The last clause of verse 4 helps us to see that. Look there with me. For your righteous acts have been revealed. We see those righteous acts revealed in chapter 16.

So that helps us to see the song that celebrates the fact that the just actions of the living God have been revealed. And that's what we're going to look at in chapter 16.

[8 : 28] The victory song, in verses 2 through 4, is patterned after the song of Moses. You see that reference there? In verse 3, they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

And then they go on into it. You remember that in Exodus chapter 15. The people of God sang a song about the triumph of the Lord, who had executed his righteous judgments against the beast-like ruler of that day, Pharaoh, who had, and this is a key term, who had hardened his heart. And he hardened his heart again and again and again. It's sort of, I'm going to let the people of God go. And then you say, well, no, I'm not going to let the people of God go. But he reneged on his promise and his intention.

So as the song in Exodus chapter 15 followed the victory there, such is the case here. However, here in the text, the song that celebrates the victory comes first in the sequence.

The righteous acts that secure the victory will be depicted later. As we move from chapter 15 to chapter 16, the safety and the serenity and the singing of chapter 15, verses 2 through 4, they quickly give way to the chaos and the confusion and the calamity of chapter 16.

[9 : 56] And even as chapter 15 continues, we see heaven's preparation for the outpour of God's wrath.

I just about make apologies for talking about God's wrath, but I cannot do that. Because it's a reality that's really embedded in the very heart of God.

And as we have made our way week after week, and we've seen some really ugly kind of scenes in Revelation. But again, that just shows you God's righteous anger against sin, against the way that we have sort of messed up in this world.

And as Andy prayed, the Lord doesn't really give us as our sins deserve, but one of these days, the full weight of the wrath of God will fall on this world and on individuals who have turned their back on Him.

Scripture doesn't apologize for that. And neither should we. Seven angels having the second, seven plagues of heaven's agents representing the interest of the Almighty God.

[11 : 13] That's what these seven angels do. And we see them emerging from heaven's sanctuary. They are dressed for the part. They have bright linen clothing.

You see that as we go into verse 6 and verse 7. They have bright linen and golden chasses around their chest. This depicts the majesty and the beauty and the royalty and the glory of God.

And they're reflected in what we see in these angels. These are heaven's emissaries about to undertake the very mission of heaven. And one of the special throne room agents, we see that in verse 7.

One of the living creatures. They had hands over these special utensils, these bowls, to these seven angels.

These bowls were used in the temple service and in the tabernacle service back in the ancient worship of Israel. But if we would see, and just turn over to your left to Revelation chapter 8.

[12 : 18] I want you to see in Revelation chapter 5, verse 8. I want you to see where we see those bowls, I believe, for the first time in the book of Revelation.

We see them in chapter 5. Look at verse 8. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp.

And notice, golden bowls, not full of wrath, but full of incense, which are, notice, the prayers of the saints.

In Revelation chapter 5, verse 8, these bowls are holding the prayers of the saints. But here we see these golden bowls in Revelation 16, full of the wrath of God.

So we see this common utensil that is for both the prayers and the wrath. And because of this common utensils, some see, and I believe they rightly see, with good reason, that the wrath of God is outpoured in answer to the very prayers of the saints of God.

[13 : 29] Oh, the power of the prayers of the saints of God. I oftentimes think that we don't understand what has been entrusted to us as God's people in the God-given resource of prayer.

The power of thy kingdom come, thy will be done kind of praying. Praying that focuses on the agenda of the Almighty. The stresses and the strains of God's people on earth serving God's purposes, they are not ignored by the very God of heaven.

And such was the case in Moses' day prior to the Exodus of old. And we can see that in Exodus chapter 2, verses 23 and 24. Turn over there with me, page 46 in your few Bibles.

I just feel I need to take this time because I think this is a critical piece in what we're seeing. We notice that there are several Exodus kind of connections that we see in Revelation chapter 16.

Verse 23, during those many days the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery. And notice what they did.

[14 : 46] They cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning. And notice what else the Lord did.

God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And what else did the Lord do? God saw the people of Israel and God knew.

Notice right here on the threshold of deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The prayers of God's people had gone up for years. And God, in answer to those prayers, what comes on the heels of that?

The Egyptian, the judgment on the Egyptian people followed the prayers of the saints of God going up before Him. I find it quite interesting that in 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 12, Peter quotes Psalm 34, 15, and 16, for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayer, but

the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

And I believe that we see both of those here in Revelation chapter 16, the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, but His face is against those who do evil.

[16:05] That was the case with the prototypical Exodus account, and that's the case that what we see here. Let me give you two headers that will help you as I proceed through the rest of the sermon.

Both of these headers really demand our attention. The first one is this, God's retribution, we see this, God's retribution on the rebellious.

I mean, chapter 16 is filled with that. God's retribution or God's wrath on the rebellious. But then we see a surprise in verse 15.

There we see what I call God's reminder to the righteous. Retribution on the rebellious, but God's reminder to the righteous in the midst of his pouring out of these judgments and the outpouring of divine wrath.

There is a reminder for the righteous people of that day as well as for the people of God in our day. There is a reminder that you and I need to hear.

[17:23] What is it analogous to, that is, what we see in Revelation 16, what is it analogous to?

Let me give you a picture. What we see in Revelation chapter 16 is like a vehicle where the tires or the wheels have come off and God has the lug wrench in his hand.

He has been the one responsible for the judgments on earth. And we see that as the seal judgments progress and as the trumpet warnings progress and here we come to the bold judgments.

It's just like lug nut by lug nut it's been removed and here we come to the final judgment and here we have this is a world as it were that's been judged.

There's no wheels on the vehicle huh? It's a wheel but even though check this out brothers and sisters that even though sometimes there is this wheel vehicle people still refuse to acknowledge the sovereign holy and just God.

[18:43] isn't that the nature of rebellion? He that hardens his heart often shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.

The nature of rebellion and some of you may find yourself in rebellion even now. The Lord has knocked on your heart and the door of your heart he has allowed certain things to invade your life and you seemingly may not even have a clue.

You remain hard-hearted stiff-necked in your rebellion. hard-heartedly and stubbornly rebellious people are bent on destruction.

Revelation chapter 16 is we see the divine warrior is on the prowl. His wrath is being poured out. Now some see these phenomena as literal.

There are various schools of interpretation that would even push these things far into the future and some in that particular school would say that these are literal kinds of judgments as in the Egyptian judgments were literal so will the judgments leading up to the end of the world as far as what we see here.

[20:11] In the particulars others see them as more symbolic or figurative depicting disruption that will take place on the earth using imagery of horrible things using language and figures accordingly.

John saw them sure but their meaning are beyond the symbols that are used. Some would hold to that particular interpretation of what we see here. Well given the symbolic nature of apocalyptic literature it seems best to see the phenomena as primarily perhaps not exclusively but primarily symbolic.

With that in mind several observations about God's wrath are in order and the horror and the terror of what we see whether we're talking about symbolically or literally the horror is still there and I believe that's the point that needs to get across.

What are some observations about God's wrath and obviously time will not allow us to go through everything but I just want to get some high points just to help you see some things about the righteous anger of the living God.

These judgments as we can see in verse one they're set in motion by the living God. The word comes from heaven. Gold pour out on the earth seven bowls of the wrath of God.

[21:45] We see on back in chapter 15 these judgments are initiated by God. They are heaven's judgments on earth. They are patterned after the physical plagues inflicted on Egypt of old.

We've seen that not only in the bowl judgments We see that also in the trumpet judgments which are warnings! And as you see in those trumpet judgments they were just sort of partial kinds of judgments!

judgments! If you look in Revelation chapter 8 you see that there are a third of the earth and a third of the sun and all there are partial kinds of judgments that are being depicted. You don't have that here in this chapter.

Just as the plague judgments of Exodus were God's response to the hard-hearted rebellion of Pharaoh of Egypt, so the outpouring of divine wrath that we see here is in response to the hard-hearted rebellion of people that are living in between the first and the second advent first and second coming of Jesus Christ.

If you will look and see how these parallel the Exodus plagues you see frogs in verse 12 that are spirits coming out of the mouth of this unholy trinity.

[23 : 01] You see the boils or sores in verse 2. Hail appears in verse 21. Darkness and I believe in Exodus it speaks about the darkness that you really could feel.

That's pretty dark, isn't it? Water turned to blood verses 3 through 7 and pollution could be in view there. These judgments are patterned after the physical judgments that were poured out in the Old Testament in Exodus.

But notice they are also far-reaching in their impact. The systems that serve mankind's well-being and livelihood are affected. The earth and the sea and fresh water sources and air and the geopolitical centers of the world.

God's judgments are far-reaching and they're comprehensive and they are complete. The number seven is the indicator of the completeness and the comprehensiveness of what we see here.

The very forces of nature designed to serve and to facilitate life on earth would be the unfriendly forces against the rebellious people.

[24 : 11] Atmospheric and natural discard are in view in what we see. They are intensified kind of judgments. They parallel the trumpet judgments as I mentioned which mirror also the rebellious Exodus people, generation people.

The same realms are affected but they are more severe than with the trumpet judgments. Intensified and final judgment is what we see here.

I really as we look at look at verses five through seven these judgments are just judgments. Look there with me and I heard the angel in charge of the waters say just are you holy one who was who is and who was for you brought these judgments.

They have shed the blood of saints and prophets. The Christian community is in view here and you have given them the blood to drink. It is what they deserve.

Rather it's payback time here is what's in view. These punishments are exacted by a holy and just God and these judgments are made in conjunction with his holiness and his wisdom.

[25 : 34] Here is a perfect case of the punishment fits the crime. No opportunity for appeal. The judgments of God are coming with severity.

The target these judgments target the rebellious. Let me just give you a few observations about the rebellious people. Look at verse two. They are people with displaced and misguided loyalties and worship.

See that in verse two. So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark which is an indication of the ownership of the beast and worshiped his image.

Rather than submitting to the God of heaven they bowed down to the things that are not of God. They are idolaters. They belong to the beast. Their agenda is the same anti-God agenda of the beast.

This powerful anti-God entities in the world. The mark of the beast indicates the ownership of the beast and their dedication to the beast. These rebellious people demonstrate their misguided allegiance through the persecution of God's people as we've noted also in verse six.

[26 : 49] And we could go on and mention but what you've got here is God's retribution on the rebellious. That comes through very clearly as you move to the final rebellion and retribution the end of the age judgments are seen in verses 12 through 17.

And it's a scene that's akin to 1 Kings chapter 22 where Ahab was going to battle and the spirit of the evil one got in the prophets and convinced them to go into battle into destruction and here you

have these frogs and this deceit that's going on in this unholy trinity they're convincing the kings these leaders to come into war against the holy God.

And in Psalm 2 we see notice also it is against his Christ. A place of battle. Armageddon also believed I believe to be figurative calls to mind a place in Israel's past where a great battle was exercised.

So the outpouring of the seventh angels bowl the end comes the wording is it is done we see that it's clear in verse 17 and as we see these other phenomena the lightnings and the thunder and the earthquakes we see elsewhere in Revelation that these are indications of the very coming of God in judgment then time the end has come that's what we see here so what should you and I ask as we look at these things these very severe judgments of the living God are there indications that the divine warrior is even on the prowl in our day as you and I look around us and see the systems of this world crumbling and falling might we ask ourselves is the

Lord at work in some way maybe in some kind of veiled kind of way but still it's God's doing the wheels are off the vehicle the lug wrenches in God's hands in our scrambling efforts that we have to put Humpty Dumpty back together and again do we really need to ask does Humpty in this world need to really stay on the ground are the varied happenings in our world indications that the wheels are indeed coming off and that situations in our world could in fact get worse should our queries and questions be directed to Washington or Springfield or other power centers in this world rather should they be directed to God should we begin to lift our eyes to the one who is in fact enthroned in the heavens who has all power in his hand looking intently and expectantly to him are the tires missing are their luck nuts missing globally or nationally or personally do these things indicate that you and I need to make a pylon to the almighty it's foolish if we don't clearly revelation 16 is about [30 : 26] God's retribution on the rebellious but look at verse 15 in the midst of this behold I am coming like a thief blessed is the one who stays awake keeping his garments on that he may go not go about naked and be seen exposed imagine with me the reader in the first century audience when he gets to this point in this prophetic letter the listening audiences notice a slight change in the tone in the inflection when they hear these words behold I'm coming like a thief blessed is the one who stays awake keeping his garments on that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed thieves come and announced so does Jesus following the announcement of Jesus coming like a thief there's a pronouncement a blessing the third of seven in this book the first words or a call to alertness or vigilance you see that there blessed is the one who stays awake keeping his garments on they heard similar words earlier in the letter to the church at

Sardis remember then what you have received and heard keep it and repent if you will not wake up I will come like a thief And you will not know at what hour I will come against you once again that word comes again in the context of final judgments that we see these piercing words it's the voice of Christ stay awake stay dressed be ready that's the voice of Christ that's the voice of Christ to us age old boy scout model that hasn't changed for decades be prepared that's the model of God's people through the ages spiritual preparation is what is in view here God's reminder to the righteous those who belong to him just be ready these words that we see here in this verse echo Jesus words in the gospel now but concerning that day or that hour no one knows Mark chapter 13 verse 32 not even the angels in heaven not the son but only the father be on guard stay awake for you do not know when the time will come it is like a man going on a journey when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge each with his work and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake therefore stay awake for you do not know when the master of the house will come in the evening or midnight or when the cop crows or in the morning lest he come suddenly and find you asleep what I say to you I say to all says the Lord stay awake what a word what a reminder to the righteous in the midst of this context of judgment written to those in first century written to those of us in 21st century there's so many things that can lull us to sleep and sort of dull our consciousness to the reality of God in the world and the reality of God's judgment in this world stay awake revelation chapter 16 shows us what happens when God's mercies are rejected and here it is the rejection of God's mercy results in the release of God's wrath that's what we see here when God's mercies are rejected the result is the release of the very wrath of God in this world and God has offered himself to us in the person and the work of his son Calvary mercy there was great and grace was free pardon there was multiplied to me there my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary it is the place where justice and mercy meet and mercy wins for all of those who embrace the work of Christ on their behalf the rejection of God's mercy results in the release of

God's wrath are you rejecting God's mercy here are there indications that you have spurned the very mercies of God what a pastoral word here rebellion must be rejected he that often being reprov'd heartless shall suddenly be destroyed in that without remedy blessed is the one who fears the Lord always who but whoever heartens his heart shall fall into calamity rebellion brothers and sisters for you and me for the world must be rejected but mercy must be received have you received that mercy through through the marvelous matchless grace of God God's voice of mercy God's voice of warning reminder is what we hear

[36 : 08] God's word to the rebellious be warned God's word to the righteous be ready that's a word those combined words fit everybody here in some way if you have not received God's mercy you can receive it today and if you have received God's mercy you can join us join us in the closing song that we're going to sing in celebration of that mercy God's depth of mercy let me pray even as our musicians come thank you Lord for your mercy through Christ what we see here once again ominous scenes of judgment of the wrath of God outpoured on a rebellious world may we not find ourselves among them but may we be reminded as your people that we are to be ready we are to be alert we are to be spiritually clothed we are to be about your business your business of witness in this world your business of really representing you and representing you well

Lord grip us with these things I pray we commend ourselves to you we bless and we honor your name amen let's stand together