

>>>>>> Lesson 23 <<<<<<<

- 1) Chapter 14 showed John’s visions of God’s actions during the last half of the Tribulation.
- 2) With that complete, we find ourselves one step closer to the end.
- 3) We are now staring squarely at the final pouring out of God’s wrath in the seven bowls.
- 4) Beginning in vs. 1 of chapter 15 we read ...

Rev 15:1 (NIV)

- 1) John now transitions to another vision – “another great and marvelous sign”
- 2) We need to spend a second or so talking about the word PLAGUE.
 - a) First, when you hear the word, you probably think of pandemics, bubonic plague, and other diseases.
 - b) No doubt, this is one of the primary meanings of the word. However, that is not what we are dealing with here.
 - c) According to one commentator, the origin of the word that is used here is late Middle English: Latin plaga ‘stroke, wound,’ probably from Greek (Doric dialect) plaga, from a base meaning ‘strike.’
 - d) In Strong’s the Greek, plagay, lists as a wound or calamity.
- 3) Long story short, as you will see, when the seven angels pour out their bowls on the earth, none of them appear to be infectious diseases.
- 4) The first does cause sores to breakout on those who worshiped the Antichrist, but it is to be isolated to them and it appears to be total, complete, and immediate – not spreading or communicable.

Rev 15:2-4 (NIV)

- 1) As we saw back in our discussions of chapter 4:6 there may be no actual sea in heaven per Rev 21:1.
- 2) Therefore, what John is describing is a transparent crystal platform before God's throne, shimmering and glistening like a tranquil, sunlit sea.
- 3) I think we can assume this is the same sealike crystal platform John describes in his original reference back in chapter 4.
- 4) Beside the sea, surrounding the throne, John sees all the saints that had remained faithful to Christ throughout the tribulation.
- 5) Their resurrection is described in chapter 20:4

Rev 20:4 (NIV)

- 6) As is obvious here, they are rejoicing at their victory and praising God for it.

Rev 15:5-6 (NIV)

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 7) As earlier in our study, John sees the dwelling place of God standing open.
- 8) Here, it is referred to by the name of the temporary structure used by the Israelites in the wilderness journey – tabernacle of the Testimony.
- 9) Out of the temple come the final 7 angels that will carry out God’s plan and complete the judgments.
- 10) Their garments are indicative of their purity and also hark back to priestly garments of old.
- 11) John continues in vs. 7 ...

Rev 15:7-8 (NIV)

- 1) Here, we have the four living creatures again.
- 2) As I’m sure you recall, they are actually angelic beings of high order.
- 3) MacArthur calls them “cherubim and exalted order of angels frequently associated in Scripture with God’s holy power.”
- 4) As we have seen, they are God’s instruments for making the connection between his desires and the angels carrying out the plan.
- 5) One of them has the bowls that are to be given to the angels who will carry out the plagues or calamities on the earth.
- 6) These bowls (also called basins) would be used in the temple for various purposes, such as collecting the blood of the sacrifices.
- 7) When these bowls are poured out, there will be no escape, and the judgment will be complete.
- 8) This destruction is described in the bowl judgments.
- 9) Again, harking back to Old Testament examples, the smoke that filled the temple is the manifestation of God's glory and power
- 10) God's glory filled the temple, appearing like smoke, and God sets in motion the final phase of judgment.

11) The LABC makes an interesting comment:

The fact that no one would be able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed indicates that the time for intercession had passed.

No one could come before God to stay his hand.

It seems that even the time of worship and praise was suspended as God brought about this final act of history. It is as if heaven was waiting

12) John MacArthur adds:

The glory cloud will remain in the heavenly temple until the earth is completely purged, cleansed, and prepared for the King and His kingdom.

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- 1) There is a contemporary phrase that I think truly applies here – “tipping point.”
- 2) It is defined as – “the point at which a series of small changes or incidents becomes significant enough to cause a larger, more important change.”
- 3) I’m not really sure I would call the previous events small, but they do lead to this major ending or change.
- 4) Thru the tribulation thus far, sinners will:
 - a) Have been warned repeatedly to repent.
 - b) They will have experienced 14 terrifying judgments.
 - c) They will have acknowledged that these judgments came from God.
 - d) They will have heard the gospel preached many times:
 - i) By the 144,000 Jewish evangelists
 - ii) By the two witnesses
 - iii) By other redeemed Gentiles and Jews
 - iv) Even from an angel flying in midheaven
- 5) Despite all this, they will refuse to repent and turn to God for forgiveness.
 - a) In fact, in some cases they even curse God.
- 6) Thru these next events, God now brings it all to an end – the final invitation has been made!

Rev 16:1-7 (NIV)

- 1) The voice comes from the temple.
- 2) Since the temple is filled with smoke indicating God’s presence, we must assume that it is God who speaks this command.
- 3) I think it is significant here that the voice that John records as the initiator of the bowls is that of God himself. Not one of the four living creatures and not an angel.
- 4) Of course, it is also significant to note that this first judgment effects only those who have the “mark of the beast and worshiped his name”.
- 5) Believers are not subject to these sores.
 - a) The three Greek words describing these sores combine to describe sores that are festering, painful, incurable, inflamed and oozing.
 - b) They are painful beyond description.
- 6) The second angel’s bowl when poured out destroys the seas.
 - a) It kills every living creature in them.
- 7) The third bowl destroys all fresh water – rivers, streams, springs, lakes – any and all sources of water are now unusable.
- 8) As always, these descriptions that John’s vision supply are to show the severity of the situation in clear terms – not necessarily to be taken literally.

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- 9) However, if we allow our minds to contemplate the situation on earth given these descriptions, we can know without doubt how horrible things are.
- 10) No matter where you look, where you go, there is no escape from the agony and suffering at the individual level.
 - a) The smells of the dead and dying animals and rotting bloody waters are everywhere.
 - b) There is no relief for your pain.
 - c) You likely by this time have no medical help for your sores and the pain is unbearable.
 - d) This is torment like mankind has never experienced in all of human history.

Rev 16:8-9 (NIV)

- 1) For an unspecified amount of time, perhaps up to 3 or more years, the earth's inhabitants have lived with a sun that is at two thirds of its original intensity.

Rev 8:12 (NIV)

- 2) Now, suddenly, it is not back to normal instead, it is blazing hot!
- 3) As John describes, it sears with an intense heat so hot that it causes men to curse God.
- 4) Again, I think it is so important that we see that the people of the world – the sinners – know who is causing the suffering they are enduring but they still refuse to repent.
- 5) God gives us the ability to think logically – to reason right and wrong.
 - a) We have within us these capabilities.
 - b) All that is required in most cases is a knowledge of the situation and its parameters and we can see or workout proper courses of action.
 - c) However, we also have within us emotions that, regardless of any given set of facts, we can and often do choose to ignore the logical conclusion and path to take and become so bound up in our opinion that we take the wrong path.
 - d) We have all seen ample evidence of this over the past 3 years – during the elections and throughout the pandemic.
 - e) Here is the ultimate example of this emotionally warped thinking.
 - f) You know who God is, you know He is the source of the suffering you are experiencing yet, instead of logically acknowledging him in a way that would possibly stop your suffering these folks let their hate and pain (emotions) rule and they curse the very entity that can give them the relief they so desperately need!
- 1) With the fifth bowl, God turns His attention away from the stubborn unbelieving people and toward Satan and the temporary world dominating reign God has given him.

Rev 16:10-11 (NIV)

- 2) There is another debate here among scholars as to where the bowl is poured out – Satan's actual throne, the city of Babylon, or the entire world.

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- 3) Regardless of where it is poured out, the result is the same – his entire kingdom – the world as it will be known and exist at that moment is plunged into darkness.
- 4) The Greek word translated “plunged into darkness” means to obscure or blind.
 - a) To me, this indicates a complete removal of all light.
 - b) Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet along with all of mankind were in total darkness.
 - c) Have you ever gone into a closet and closed the door and stood for a while?
 - i) When you do, you will find, depending on how well the door opening fits, that you will be able to start to see again.
 - ii) This is because the pupils of your eyes adjust to use what available light there is and you are able to see again.
 - iii) If the door opening is absolutely and completely a seal (very unlikely) you will never be able to see because there is no light source at all.
 - iv) I envision this as the condition that the bowl of the fifth angel brings about – a complete and utter lack of light – everyone is blind and unable to navigate by sight.
 - (1) There only choice is to move along by touch and memory.
 - (2) A state of total blindness.
- 5) And the result of all this -

“Men gnawed their tongues in agony 11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.”
- 6) This is the ultimate act of defiance by those hopelessly engulfed in the Antichrist's satanic system.