**Revelation**

*Lesson 32 – Revelation 16:12-21*

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| **First Trumpet** – Hail & Fire *on Earth*; 1/3 of the land burned (7th Exodus plague – 9:22) | **First Bowl** – Sores on unbelievers *on earth* (6th Exodus plague – 9:8) |
| **Second Trumpet** – Mountain falls *on sea* turning 1/3 *water* *into Blood*; 1/3 of *things die* (1st Exodus plague – 7:17) | **Second Bowl -** poured *on the sea*, *water turns to blood and things die* (1st Exodus plague – 7:17) |
| **Third Trumpet** – Bitter Water (Wormwood); 1/3 of the *rivers and springs*🡪poison and death (1st Exodus plague 7:17) | **Third Bowl –** poured on *rivers and springs* which become blood (1st Exodus plague – 7:17) |
| **Fourth Trumpet** – Darkness; 1/3 of the *heavenly bodies* struck (9th Exodus plague – 10:21) | **Fourth Bowl –** poured on *the sun*, which scorches men with fire (7th Exodus plague – 9:22) |
| **Fifth Trumpet/First Woe** – demons (“locust”) who spiritually and psychologically *torment* unbelievers; sun and air *darkened* (8th & 9th Exodus plagues – 10:4, 21) | **Fifth Bowl –** poured on the throne of the beast; his kingdom is *darkened* and men are in *anguish* (9th Exodus plague – 10:21) |
| **Sixth Trumpet/Second Woe** – demons (“angels riding scary looking horses) who kill and wound 1/3 of unbelievers |  |
| **Seventh Trumpet/Third Woe** - A Song of Praise for the Great Day of God’s Wrath & Final Judgment with lighting, earthquake, thunder, and hail (7th Exodus plague plus Sinai description of God’s presence – 9:22, 19:16-19) |  |

*Verses 12-16: The Sixth Bowl*

1. The sixth bowl shows the preparations being made for the Battle of Armageddon.
2. The river Euphrates is dried up to prepare for the kings from the east (v12)
   1. The 6th trumpet was the release of demons who were bound at the Euphrates river (Rev 9:14).
   2. The drying of waters is an image of God’s judgment. **Jeremiah** **50:38** – “A drought against her waters, that they may be dried up! For it is a land of images, and they are mad over idols. **Jeremiah 51:36-37a** – “Behold, I will plead your cause and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry, and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins,”
   3. The imagery of “east” in the Old Testament is frequently a depiction of God’s judgment. The Lord placed a cherubim at the “east” of Eden when driving Adam and Eve out (Gen 3:24). Cain settled in Nod, east of Eden (Gen 4:16). The people who built the Tower of Babel migrated from the east (Gen 11:2). Lot journeyed east to settle near Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 13:11). The 7 lean years in Joseph’s dream is caused by the east wind (Gen 41:6, 23, 27). The plague of locusts come from the east wind (Exodus 10:13). The “people of the East” is a description of Israel’s enemies (Judges 6:3, 33, 7:12). Jonah sat to the east of Nineveh while hoping for God’s judgment to fall upon them (Jonah 4:5) and it was an east wind that beat down upon Jonah so that he wanted to die (Jonah 4:8).
   4. So the Battle of Armageddon, which is the most intense confrontation between God and the forces of Satan, is God’s judgment upon all those aligned with Satan.
3. Though God makes it possible for the kings of the east to rise up against Him, we also see that Satan is behind this for his evil purposes. Out of the mouths of the unholy trinity (dragon, beast, and false prophet) come 3 demonic spirits described like frogs to assemble the kings of the world for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. William Hendriksen says these demonic spirits “represent satanic, hellish ideas, plan, projects, methods and enterprises, hell-born and introduced by hell into the sphere of thought and action. This battle or persecution is inspired by hell itself.”
   1. These demons perform counterfeit miracles in order to deceive unbelievers. The false prophet in Revelation 13:13 performs great signs in order to deceive people.
   2. These people in their being deceived are being used by satan and assembled to oppose the Lamb of God (Rev 17:14).
   3. And all of this takes place in the location called Armageddon, which means “Mount of Megiddo.” In Judges 5:19, part of Deborah’s song says that the Israelites fought the Canaanites by the waters of Megiddo. The ungodly king Ahaziah fled to Megiddo after being mortally wounded in battle (2 Kings 9:27). Pharaoh Neco killed the godly (but disobedient) King Josiah at the Battle of Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29, compare 2 Chronicles 35:20-22). Meggido was a sight for major, decisive battles in the OT and it becomes symbolic for the final, climactic showdown between God and those opposed to Him.
   4. Remember, this is all a part of John’s vision so this is all symbolic so we should not attempt to find geographical details and the movings of particular national armies in this section. We must not be like dispensationalists who claim that this means an Oriental army, perhaps China or India, will descend upon the Middle East. This is primarily a spiritual battle. This is spiritual warfare. It’s between God with His people on one side and Satan with his people on the other side. It’s not a battle between geopolitical nations.
   5. And it is going to be God’s final display of His sovereignty and omnipotence which is why He is described as God the Almighty. The war is over before it’s even begun because who can stand against the all-powerful God of heaven.
4. In the mist of describing the preparations for this battle, verse 15 gives us a little parenthesis. Christ suddenly appears, unexpectedly. 1 Thessalonians 5:4 – “4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.” 2 Peter 3:10 – “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed” So in the midst of being in the same world in which God is breaking seals, blowing trumpets, and pouring out bowls of His wrath and judgment as precursors to His great day, we are called to persevere. Stay the course. Continue to follow Jesus no matter the cost so that you will be found ready and not falling away into idolatry and the deceits of the dragon’s beast and false prophet. Don’t compromise with unbelieving Babylon (who will be made naked in Revelation 17:16).

*Verses 17-21: The Seventh Bowl*

1. The 7th bowl is the Second Coming. Revelation 15:1 said God’s wrath would end with the 7th bowl. We’ve seen this pattern of lighting, thunder, and earthquake 3 times already in Revelation – Revelation 4:5, 8:5, 11:19. It’s God’s presence and it is terrifying and awe inspiring.
2. The removal of islands and mountains in verse 20 alludes to Haggai 2:6-7 which says, “For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. 7 And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.” This passage is quoted in Hebrews 12:26-27 which explains the meaning of Haggai saying that the created order will be shaken and what will remain is things which cannot be shaken. This is also patterned after the final battle described in Ezekiel 38-39. 38:19-23 describe a great earthquake, shaking at God’s presence, mountains being thrown down, and God entering in judgment. The 6th seal (Christ’s 2nd Coming) in Revelation 6:14 says the sky vanished and every mountain and island was removed from its place.
3. We already saw Babylon described as a great city in Revelation 11:8 where the bodies of the 2 witnesses lie dead. 11:13 says 1/10 of the city fell because of a great earthquake. 14:8 declares that Babylon has fallen because she made the nations drink of her cup of sexual immorality. 14:10 talks about those who worship the beast and receive its mark drink of the wine of God’s wrath which is in the cup of His anger. So all of these previous images we have seen, come back again. And Revelation 17-18 is going to describe the fall of Babylon in greater detail. It’s like Revelation 17-18 are going to expand on Revelation 16:19-20 here.
4. In all of this, we see antichristian governments falling apart as cities and nations lie in ruin. The entire empire of evil is going to be destroyed by God’s wrath and His coming. But even in such a state, verse 21 says the impenitent are still going to curse at and blaspheme God.

**Message for Us**

1. “When the world, under the leadership of Satan, antichristian government, and antichristian religion – the dragon, the beast and the false prophet – is gathered against the Church for the final battle, and the need is greatest; when God’s children, oppressed on every side, cry for help; then suddenly, dramatically, Christ will appear to deliver His people.” –William Hendriksen
2. “The message of the seven vials is that God’s Spirit will not strive with man forever (Gen. 6:3). There is an invisible boundary line between God’s patience and wrath. And whoever refuses to be warned by the sounding of the trumpets will inevitably be destroyed by the outpouring of the vials.” –Joel Beeke
3. “God’s anger is like a dam. Behind the dam is a tremendous reservoir of water. Every now and then, when it has been raining heavily and the reservoir is getting dangerously full, the sluice gates are opened and some water is let out so that too much pressure is not put on the dam. The wrath of God is like that; it isn’t entirely pent up, but is drawn down and poured out from time to time. However, on the day of judgment, the dam will break and the wrath of God will be poured on this world without restraint.” –Joel Beeke
4. “The NT is full of accounts of the reality of the kingdom of darkness. Our rationalistic age makes it difficult for us to see with the same eyes as the biblical writers, yet these same age-old forces are still very much at work. Does part of their deception convey the notion that they do not exist? Do we really understand how to fight this activity of such forces? Our battle is not only against the world’s influence and the influence of our own indwelling sin and the detrimental influence of our old nature on us, but our ‘struggle is … against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places’ (Eph. 6:12).” –Greg Beale