



Sermon Series Notes

“Hurting People, Hardened Hearts” (Revelation 16)

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Intro: I want to remind us all of something that is helpful in reading through or studying the book of Revelation. God gives the apostle John summary versions of prophetic things yet to take place, then following chapters give details of those summary prophecies. For example, chapter 14 is a summary, an overview, then comes the detail. Some of this detail is what we see as we come to chapter 16. With that said, we are looking at things that take place just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ, near the end of this seven year period called The Great Tribulation.

v.1 We started in chapter five with a seven sealed scroll in the right hand of the Father. Contained in this scroll are prophetic events that bring about the ultimate redemption of the entire creation. From the seventh seal came seven angels who had seven trumpets. The seventh trumpet yields seven angels with seven bowls filled with the wrath of God. Chapter 15:1 says that with these God’s wrath is completed (for the Great Tribulation, not eternity). These prophetic judgments are unleashed with increasing intensity, because God does not want anyone to perish. The increased intensity is meant to gain increased attention, and hopefully as a result, repentance.

The plagues from the seal judgments affected one fourth of the earth, then another third was affected by the trumpet judgments that came out of the seventh seal. These bowl judgments that come out of the seventh trumpet affect the entire earth. They are complete and final, culminating in the end of the world as we know it. The bowls are poured out in rapid succession with no interlude; See Isaiah 24.

v.2 Bowl # 1, Ugly and painful sores; This was the sixth plague on Egypt (Ex.9:8-11); the boils were so painful that Pharaoh’s magicians could not stand before Moses (they called in sick!).

v.3 Bowl # 2 causes all the sea to turn to blood, and **everything** in the sea dies; The second trumpet saw one third of the sea turned to blood, and one third of the sea creatures die (Rev.8:8-9).

This was the first plague on Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex.7:19-21). All the fish in the Nile died, and the stench was awful (v.21). Even those of us who live on the Gulf Coast of Florida & have experienced “Red Tide” cannot imagine the stench from this future event!

v.4 Bowl # 3 defiles all the fresh water on the entire planet!

The third trumpet brought bitterness to one third of the fresh water (8:10-11). Here it is ALL defiled.

vv.5-6 As the third bowl is poured out, the angel in charge of the waters confirms that these judgments are just. And the altar responds in like fashion (v.7).

Note: Rev.6: 9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

These fellow servants have now been killed, and the time for vengeance has come; see Isaiah 61:1-2. The people experiencing these calamities are the same ones who celebrated the first Anti-Christmas when God's two witnesses were killed and their bodies left to rot in the streets of Jerusalem(Rev.11:10). They are anti-God and anti-Christ.

v.8 Bowl # 4 GLOBAL WARMING!

v.9 Can you imagine someone experiencing the horror and pain of these coming events, and their response is to curse the name of God, rather than cry out for mercy?

Isn't it interesting that the normal context of the term "GD" in our day is when something is going bad or has gone bad.

v.10b Bowl # 5, Darkness

Matt.24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

This was the ninth plague on Egypt (Ex.10:21-23). Verse 21 says it was a darkness that could be felt.

"The transition from the fourth to the fifth bowls is most striking. The one had been the fiery, scorching, blinding brightness of the sun; the next is an impenetrable darkness. Astronomers have observed phenomena in star suns outside of our solar systems, where, within a few days, a star has increased rapidly in magnitude, then, immediately after this great flare-up, dims far beneath its earlier brightness. The diminishing light of the sun would cause a thickening of the clouds until little light could come through."

John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Luke 22:53 Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour – when darkness reigns.

Mark 15:33 At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Jude 1:13...for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

Matt. 8:11-12...many will come and take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matt. 22:13-14 (parable of the wedding banquet, one not wearing wedding clothes) Then the king told the attendants, "Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are invited, but few are chosen.

Matt.25:30 (parable of the talents, one who buried his) And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Col.1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Eph.5:11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness...

vv.10b-11 Isn't it fascinating that they know who it is they are cursing. They believe in Him, yet they refuse to submit to Him. See Romans 1:18-23.

vv.12-14 Bowl # 6, The drying up of the Euphrates; The Euphrates is 1780 miles long, an average of thirty feet deep, and from three to twelve hundred feet wide.

The sixth trumpet released four angels at the Euphrates, and John saw an army of two hundred million who will kill one third of mankind (Rev.9:14-16). The sixth bowl now sees this same army deceptively led by Satan for “the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”

Countries along the Euphrates? Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia.

The Euphrates is one of the original boundaries of the Garden of Eden (Gen.2:10-14). It is also the eastern boundary of the land God promised to Israel. And it is the ancient boundary of the “kings of the east” (enemies of Israel), as well as the old Roman Empire.

v.15 It’s as if God is saying to us who are reading and studying these prophecies (yet to be fulfilled): Don’t fall asleep spiritually; don’t allow yourself to get caught up in this world and miss out on the deliverance from God’s wrath.

v.16 Bowl # 7, The Battle of Armageddon; Armageddon means “mound of Meggido.” Meggido overlooks the entire plain south toward Galilee and west toward the mountains of Gilboa. The location is about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. Over two hundred battles have been fought here. It’s where Gideon and three hundred men overcame the Midianites, Samson took on the Philistines, King Josiah was killed (against Neco king of Egypt), Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera; The Turks, Muslims, Syrians, Egyptians, and the Europeans have all waged war in this valley. In Napoleon’s excursion into Egypt, he passed through this valley and said, “If ever there is a place on earth where the last war must be fought, it is here.” He called it “the perfect battlefield.”

Note Rev.14:20 (blood will flow as high as the horses’ bridle for 180 miles).

vv.17-20 An earthquake like never before; the “great city” splits into three parts (Is this Jerusalem?); all the cities of the nations collapse (New York, L.A., Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing, Moscow, etc.); 100 lb.

hailstones raining down on men. One of the surprising results of the 1950’s nuclear testing in the Bikini Islands was the hailstones that formed when surrounding water shot so high into the air that it froze before returning to earth.

v.21a What was the O.T. punishment for blasphemy? Stoning (Lev.24:16).

v.21b The heart of sinful man will be fully revealed in these final days known as The Great Tribulation. All man has to do is repent, acknowledge the Lord as sovereign, and he would be saved from God’s wrath.

Prov.19: 3 A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.

Prov.29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.

The Path To A Hard Heart

1. An initial rejection of God

- The inhabitants of the earth in this coming day have been warned by God’s messengers (144,000 Jewish evangelists; two witnesses of Rev.11), and by angels flying in mid-air, Rev.14:6-12). Every time someone rejects God’s warning, they allow their heart to become harder

2. Suppressing the truth by living for pleasure/self

- Note: It’s what I did as a habit when I was living in rebellion. As soon as I got in my car, the radio or tape was on (not Christian songs). I stayed away from people (and places) that proclaimed truth. And if truth was spoken, I made a pointed effort to “tune it out.” It got so bad that, when my best friend’s dad died, some of my buddies and I got together before the funeral & gott high. I did not want to think about death, I did not want to hear truth. So I suppressed the truth.

3. Repeated rejection of truth over time

- I cannot tell you how happy I am that I finally stopped resisting and rebelling against God. Father, thank you for your patience with me!

4. God grants your desire (See Romans 1:24a, 26-32)

- This is what happened to Pharaoh & the Egyptians(See Exodus 7:11-12, 22; 8:15, 18-19, 30-32; 9:6-7, 10-12, 34-35; 10:18-20, 27). But wouldn't you expect that from people who worshipped and served every god but the true God, the God of Israel? See Amos 4:6-12.

Asa (See II Chron.15:1-2; 16:7-10, 12)

CONCLUSION

Proverbs 17:10 A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.

Proverbs 27:22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him.

- Pestle: A hard tool with a rounded end that is used for pounding or crushing substances (such as medicines) in a deep bowl (called a mortar)

Hebrews 3:7-15; 4:1-2, 6-7