

## **Lesson Nineteen**

### **Bowl Judgments Four-Seven (16:8-21)**

#### **Bowl Four: Scorching Heat (16:8-9)**

The sun's strength becomes so intense and severe that heat inflicts those who do not repent (cp. II Peter 3:7, 10, 12). Christians are protected from this plague as the Israelites were protected during the plagues of Moses. Unbelievers blaspheme, which suggests they correctly attribute the plague to God. However, they curse God rather than repent.

- Trumpet 4: 1/3 of heavenly bodies lose their light
- Bowl 4: the sun intensifies so that unbelievers are burned

#### **Bowl Five: Painful Darkness on the Beast's Throne (16:10-11)**

This plague is an intensification of the 8<sup>th</sup> plague of Moses (Exodus 10:21-23). God sends pain to the center of the Beast's power. It is once more clearly stated that this plague falls only upon unrepentant man. Darkness is so severe that agonizing pain befalls man. Perhaps the accumulation of the former plagues accompanied with intense darkness brings about agonizing pain. This plague does not bring repentance. Rather, unrepentant man continues blaspheme toward God.

- Trumpet 5: demonic locusts torment a part of the earth
- Bowl 5: darkness brings pain to unrepentant man

### **Bowl Six: Drying Up of the Euphrates (16:12-16)**

16:10-12. God arranges the final battle on earth. The beginning of this battle was described in trumpet judgment six (9:13-21). The Euphrates River is a natural boundary of Palestine. The drying up of the Euphrates is a symbolic way of stating that the pathway to Palestine is open. The “kings from the east” suggests a union of nations that encroach upon Palestine and commence the final earthly battle.

16:13-16. The dragon is Satan, the beast is the antichrist, and the false prophet is the beast from the land. Three unclean spirits are identified as evil frogs. The phrases “unclean spirits” and “spirits of demons” underscore that evil is motivating the great final battle. Demons empower the false prophet to perform signs so as to persuade participation (13:13-14). “Kings of the whole world” is a reminder that the End finds a universal coalition warring against God and His people.

In verse 15, Jesus interjects a word of assurance and caution as the final battle on earth is described. Jesus will come like a thief in the night. The NT uses the “thief” imagery to denote Jesus’ return as being unexpected by many people (cp. Matthew 24: 42-44; I Thessalonians 5:2-8; Revelation 3:3). If we are

prepared, Jesus' return is not like a thief. "Awake" is a reference to preparation. One must keep his clothes on or else he will be naked and unprepared for Christ's return.

Once Jesus offers a word of caution and assurance, the vision continues. The location of the final battle on earth is Armageddon. The Hebrew *har megiddon* means "hill of Megiddo." Megiddo is known in the OT as a natural battleground located between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea (Judges 5:19; II Kings 23:29; II Chronicles 35:22). The final battle is a conflict between God and His people and Satan and his loyalists.

- Trumpet 6: the Euphrates River dries to prepare the way for the kings of the east to enter Palestine and 1/3 of mankind is killed
- Bowl 6: kings of the earth march over the dry riverbed of Euphrates to complete the final battle on earth

### **Bowl Seven: The Air and Consummation of Earth (16:17-21)**

The seventh angel pours his bowl of judgment on the air (cp. Ephesians 2:2). Bowl judgment seven is a proleptic vision of the destruction of Babylon (cp. 14:8; chapters 17-18). The voice out of the temple was heard previously (16:1); most likely this is the voice of God Himself. "It is done" is one word that means, "It has

come to pass.” Upheaval of the natural elements is common to denote the power and might of God, especially in the End (4:5; 8:5; 11:19). Babylon is split in three parts. This illustrates that what was once a union of nations, now has split apart. God remembers the evil of Babylon. Saints are not to grow weary because God will not forget the evil and persecution waged by evildoers. As the final battle on earth is complete, the consummation of human history concludes with the destruction of the old earth and the creation of a new earth. This is further described in chapter 21. God pours his wrath on unbelievers with 100 pound hailstones. There is one final opportunity to repent but unbelievers continue to blaspheme God until the very End.

- Trumpet 7: a hymn of rejoicing for God’s judgment
- Bowl 7: total destruction of the earth by a great earthquake and large hail

**Do not oppose God! The consummation is coming!**