

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of The Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Last week I taught an introduction to Revelation Chapter 15 and when time expired we were in the process of reviewing the seals, trumpets and bowls which in the aggregate form a nexus, for chapters 15 and 16.
2. Before we continue I want to provide "1Jo 1:9 time" as may be necessary.
3. I want to review some of that learned last week and then we will begin new material at point eight on page three. First, however, let's take a look at an expanded translation of Revelation chapter fifteen.

Expanded Translation

Rev 15:1 I John saw in the third heaven a third sign which was even greater than the first two, it was awesome; there before my eyes were the seven angels with the seven last plagues - I'm talking about the last seven bowls, these bowl judgments represent implementation of God's final vengeance.

Rev 15:2 And then I saw what was much like what I had seen in an earlier scene, a sea of glass, but this time the tranquil sea was mixed with fire and judgment; standing beside the sea were numerous saints martyred in the Tribulation; these were those special believers who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They had been given harps by God the Father and they were ready to play and sing in praise of God.

Rev 15:3 The martyred saints began a delightful serenade. They sang a medley from the Old Testament: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, for You are the King of the ages.

Rev 15:4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Rev 15:5 And then I was given a vision of the Heavenly Temple, the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was opened and I was permitted to view the Ark, Cherubim, Golden Censer and Mercy Seat all illuminated by the Shekinah Glory.

Rev 15:6 Out of the Holy of Holies came the seven elect angels, each had one of the seven last plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining white linen representing the righteous judgment of God and they wore garments resembling that worn by the Priests.

Their white robes were bound with golden sashes tied around their chests. Rev 15:7 Then one of the four special elect angels resident in the Throne Room of God gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls in which to carry the seven plagues; the bowls were filled with the wrath of the eternal God. Rev 15:8 And the entire temple area to include both the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place were filled with a cloud like smoke from the glory and power of God; no one could see to enter the Temple nor could they enter until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Introduction

1. Chapter fifteen and chapter sixteen go together because they describe two aspects of the same set of events - the seven final judgments upon planet earth.
2. Revelation chapter fifteen is the shortest chapter in the Book of The Revelation but it is by no means the least important.
3. It reveals a joyous yet solemn scene in heaven as preparation is made for the final, most dreadful judgments of the entire tribulation.
4. As we have noted one judgment after another has gotten successively more severe, and now God reveals to John the final sign of a coming punishment on a Christ rejecting world.
5. The seven bowls are poured out in the Great Tribulation, the last or seventh taking place near the Second Advent of Christ.
6. We will study the bowl judgments in chapter sixteen but I think it might help at this point to list the seven bowl judgments:
 - (1) sores appear on the bodies of all unbelievers
 - (2) the ocean becomes blood
 - (3) rivers and streams become blood
 - (4) the heat from the sun intensifies burning the skin of unbelievers
 - (5) the pain of unbelievers intensifies as darkness pervades
 - (6) the Euphrates dries up and a vast armada of Orientals appear
 - (7) unprecedented earthquakes appear destroying city after city
7. Let's review in narrative form the seals, the trumpets and the bowl judgments:

The Seals

1. The first seal is a picture of the Antichrist who comes on the scene of history immediately after the Rapture – The White Horse.

2. The second seal is a picture of the great war which begins just before the Second Advent - The Red Horse.
3. The third seal is a picture of the great famine occurring as a result of that war - The Black Horse.
4. The fourth seal is a picture of the death of many; particularly emphasized are the deaths of the unbelievers, this because there is also a picture of hades; We find here that a fourth part of the earth's population is destroyed - The Green Horse.
5. The fifth seal speaks of the many saints martyred in the Tribulation; they are seen in heaven in white robes depicting their positional sanctification - the martyrs under the altar.
6. The sixth seal is a general description of several unusual disasters like earthquakes, sun turning black, moon becoming blood etc.; this sixth seal would certainly seem to occur at the Second Advent – the unnatural disasters.
7. The seventh seal encompasses the seven trumpets; the seven angels with the seven trumpets are seen as part of the seventh seal.
8. The Trumpets are even more difficult to place in "a proper chronological order" for many would seem to occur in part in the first half and part in the second half; and then others are clearly events which occur just before the Second Advent.

The Trumpets:

1. The first trumpet describes hail and fire mixed with blood falling from the heavens; the result is a terrible environmental disaster to 1/3 of the earth.
2. The second trumpet describes the fall of a mountain into the sea causing a third of the earth's "seas" to turn to blood.
3. The third trumpet describes the falling of a star named "wormwood;" it falls on a third of the waters of the earth; the waters are polluted and many drink and die.
4. The fourth trumpet signals that a third part of the light bodies of planet earth are darkened; a big bird announces three woes to come.
5. The fifth trumpet tells of a key to what many believe to be Tartaros. The key is given to Satan who releases these unique demons; the special demons are large scorpions who sting only unbelievers.
6. The sixth trumpet describes the demons who dry up the Euphrates river to facilitate the movement of a large oriental army. They arrive at Jerusalem for the battle of Armageddon; this is the second of the three woes - this would seem to occur at the end of the Tribulation just before the return of our Lord.

7. The seventh Trumpet consists of the seven bowls which will be described in chapter sixteen; that the third woe or seventh trumpet is soon coming is announced in Rev 11:13 and 14.

Rev 11:13 At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Rev 11:14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

The Bowls

1. As earlier seen, Mr. LaHaye assumed the seals and the trumpets occur in the first half of the Tribulation. This may or may not be accurate. With reference to the severity and timing of the bowls he is certainly correct.

2. Like LaHaye, I too believe the seven bowls are poured out in the Great Tribulation, the last or seventh taking place near the Second Advent of Christ.

3. In chapter fifteen we are about to see a preview of an unprecedented judgment from a "Righteous God."

4. Chapters 15 and 16 bring to an end the strange and eclectically "ordered" events leading up to the second coming of Christ.

4.1 His coming being summarily described in Rev 11:15-19 and later in greater detail in chapter 19 where emphasis is placed on a description of Christ rather than the event of the return of Christ.

Rev 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Rev 11:16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,

Rev 11:17 saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

Rev 11:18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great--and for destroying those who destroy the earth.

Rev 11:19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

5. The seven bowls are introduced in our chapter 15 as "the seven last plagues" which are the divine judgments preceding the second coming of Christ just as the "seventh trumpet" announced the coming of Christ with emphasis on the event and the 6th seal described the heavens coming apart as a sign of His coming.

6. The seven plagues are also called the seven vials. The Second Coming of Christ follows the seventh vial. The term vial is a translation from the Greek **Phiale** which can be found elsewhere in the Apocalypse five times:

Rev 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden "vials" (**Phiale** - a broad shallow cup) full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

Rev 15:7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden "**vials**" full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

Rev 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the "**vials**" of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Rev 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven "**vials**" and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven "**vials**" full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

7. There is certainly some indication that the seals, trumpets and bowls move the narrative forward.

8. My *New Scofield Bible* records Rev 10:1 through Rev 11:14; Rev chapters 13 and 14 and Rev chapters 17 and 18 as intervening sections that do not advance the narrative chronologically.

9. It would certainly seem Chapter 19 of the book of the Revelation follows immediately after chapter 16 in the chronological development. The final series of the seven last plagues is introduced by the vision in which John sees "another sign in heaven."

10. Let's see what we can learn from the exegesis of Rev 15:1-2.

KJV

Rev 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Rev 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

NIV

Rev 15:1 I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues -- last, because with them God's wrath is completed.

Rev 15:2 And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God.

Expanded Translation

Rev 15:1 I John saw in the third heaven a third sign which was even greater than the first two, it was awesome; there before my eyes were the seven angels with the seven last plagues - I'm talking about the last seven bowls, these bowl judgments represent implementation of God's final vengeance.

Rev 15:2 And then I saw what was much like what I had seen in an earlier scene, a sea of glass, but this time the tranquil sea was mixed with fire and judgment; standing beside the sea were numerous saints martyred in the Great Tribulation; these were those special believers who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They had been given harps by God the Father and they were ready to play and sing in praise of God.

1. John Walvoord has written:

"The word another refers to the two preceding signs of chapter twelve, namely, the woman who appeared as "a great wonder in heaven," literally "a great sign in heaven" (Rev 12:1), and the "great red dragon" (Rev 12:3), signifying the empire of the beast under Satan's control. The three signs taken together represent important elements in the prophetic scene:

(1) Israel, that is, the woman;

(2) the final world empire under the control of Satan and the beast, that is, the great red dragon; and

(3) the seven angels having the seven last plagues, that is, the divine judgment (*of God*) upon the satanic system and political power of the beast."

2. The awesome sign in heaven is described in the NIV as "great and marvelous;" these words appear together elsewhere in the book of the Revelation. Only here and in verse three of this chapter fifteen do we find a description of the works of God, appearing separately and quite often. John is clearly impressed.

3. Central in the vision are seven angels, not to be confused with any other group of seven, this because the Greek article is not used with the expression.

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Rev 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets ...

Rev 8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

4. This new group of seven angels is described as having the seven last plagues. As in the trumpets and seals, the number seven is used of completion and perfection.

4.1 This will be the last and a perfect judgment.

4.2 It is most significant that they are described as "last," more emphatic in the Greek, (literally "having seven plagues, the last ones").

5. This implies that the previous judgments unfolding in the breaking of the seals and the blowing of the trumpets were also plagues, that is, divine judgments of God pouring out affliction upon a wicked world, not to be compared with the bowl judgments.

End Lesson Taught 8-30-17

The Westbank Bible Church does not seek donations nor do we authorize any business to solicit same on behalf of the Church.