

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 in part Rev 15:3-4 by way of the *Doctrine of Music* and when time expired were about to complete the exegesis of Rev 15:5-6.
2. Before I continue I want to provide "1Jo 1:9 time" as may be necessary.
3. Before we resume our exegesis I want to provide an expanded translation of Rev 15:1-6.

Expanded Translation

Rev 15:1 I, John then 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 vials, these bowl judgments represent God's final and complete wrath. I mean it is curtains for planet earth.

Rev 15:2 And then I saw what was like an earlier scene I had recorded, a sea of glass but this time the tranquil sea was mixed with fire and judgment; standing beside the sea were numerous saints earlier martyred; these were those special believers divinely selected to live, suffer and die in the Tribulation. 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 of the Tribulation began to sing; they sang two songs: the first was the song of Moses recorded in Exo 15:1-19 and the second was called the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, 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 of God Himself.

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. The white robes would seem to represent their righteous role; the gold sash may symbolize God's glorious victory.

4. The main difference was the size and the opulence of the materials used in the Temple.

5. Now let's close the study of Revelation Chapter 15 with an analysis of Rev 15:7-8, but first a brief review of that earlier learned.

Review

1. John sees the seven angels receiving from one of the four special angels the seven plagues. The bowls are said to be filled with the wrath of God.

2. Wycliffe has written: "The reference to plagues in verse six may be prophetic, or the bestowal of the vials may be the authorization to use them."

3. To me the answer rests more with just what is written: the angels come out of the temple in verse 6 having (a present participle of **Echo**) seven (**Hepta**) plagues (**Phlegas**), not vials (**Phule**) as we will find in verse seven.

Expanded Translation

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. The white robes would seem to represent their righteous role; the gold sash may symbolize God's glorious victory about to be imposed on planet earth.

4. Now let's see what we can learn from a study of the last two verses of Chapter fifteen.

KJV

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 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

NIV

Rev 15:7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever.

Rev 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Principles

1. In verse seven the extent of the divine judgment is indicated by the word "full" indicating the devastating character of this divine judgment.

1.1 The Greek for "full" is **Gomos** meaning to load a cart or a ship; the noun **Gemos** was often used for the cargo of a commercial boat or sea going ship.

1.2 The word for "wrath" is **Thumos**, and as we studied earlier such is the result of God's righteous anger; the result of His anger is his wrath; however, such a description when used of God is an anthropomorphism.

2. The solemn reminder that God lives forever and ever gives a solemn cast to the wrath that is to be poured out; it is a forever infliction upon those who perish.

3. As the angels emerge from the sanctuary, it is filled with smoke proceeding from the glory of God and His power, a pointed reminder of the indescribable Holiness of God.

3.1 The scene can be compared to Exo 40:34-35 when the cloud filled the Tabernacle.

Exo 40:34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Exo 40:35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

4. Access into the sanctuary is made impossible by the smoke; no one can enter therein until the judgments contained in the seven plagues have been given to the seven select angels. With the smoke it is much like the modern theatrics employed today at various concerts and/or athletic events.

5. It is an ominous sign of impending doom for those who persist in their blasphemous disregard of the Sovereignty and Holiness of God. And now for an expanded translation of verses 7 and 8:

Expanded Translation

Rev 15:7 Then one of the four special elect angels resident in the Throne Room of God gave to the seven angels a golden bowl in which to carry the seven plagues; the vials 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 had been completed.

6. Now for an analysis of Revelation Chapter 16.

Principles

1. From time to time I think it is important to stop and ask ourselves the question "why do we study the Apocalypse?"

2. After all some will say "so what?" Since we live in the church age and will be raptured, why do we need to know eschatology?"

3. The question I suspect can best be answered by simply reviewing the emphasis placed upon that subject in the Holy Scriptures:

3.1 One fifth of the Bible is about prophecy and one-third of that one-fifth deals with the Second Advent of Christ.

3.2 There are 660 general prophecies found in the Bible and 333 of these are about Jesus.

3.3 Of that 333 some 109 were fulfilled at His First Advent leaving 224 yet to be fulfilled at His Second Coming.

3.4 Let's look at it another way: out of all the verses in the Bible 330 of them bear on the subject of the Second Advent or one out of twenty-five.

3.5 Other than faith there is no other subject in the Bible discussed more than His Second Advent and every time His First Advent is mentioned the Second Advent is mentioned eight times.

3.6 The Lord Himself referred to His Second Coming 21 times and believers are told 50 times to be ready for His Second Advent.

4. We begin Chapter Sixteen with a rather straight forward assertion.

Expanded Translation

Rev 16:1 I, John, then heard a loud voice coming out from the heavenly temple. The voice said to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath upon the earth."

5. Let's return to our study of the first vial and verse two of Revelation chapter sixteen.

KJV

Rev 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

NIV

Rev 16:2 The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.

1. With the pouring out of the first vial, a terrible judgment falls upon men who have the mark of the beast. There is a notable contrast between the first vial and the first trumpet, in that the first trumpet (Rev 8:7) burns up a third part of the trees and all the green grass.

1.1 It is true there is a similarity, both the first trumpet and the first vial are said to fall on "the earth."

NIV

Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

2. In Rev 16:2 the judgment is upon men; in fact, it is directed to a particular group of men, namely, the beast worshipers who have received the mark of the beast.

3. The judgment is described as a sore or ulcer (Greek, **Helke-Elke**) which is bad (Greek **Kakos-Kakos**) and evil (Greek **Poneros-Poneros**).

4. The judgment is in the form of a physical affliction of unusual severity bringing widespread suffering.

4.1 Smith notes that **Helke** used here to describe the sore is the word selected by the translators of the Old Testament into Greek (the Septuagint - the LXX) for the boils inflicted on the Egyptians in Exo 9:9-11.

NIV

Exo 9:9 It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land."

Exo 9:10 So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on men and animals.

Exo 9:11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians.

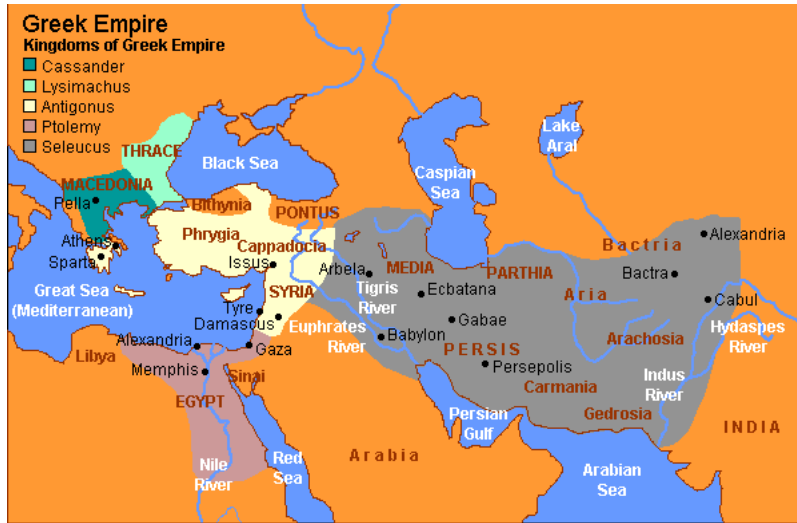
4.2 The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

4.3 According to tradition some seventy scholars were selected and assigned to a library in Alexandria Egypt where they translated the Hebrew of the Old Testament to what is commonly called "The Septuagint."

4.4 Many believe there were 72 scholars who worked some 37 years beginning in 284 B.C.; the work being completed in 247 B.C.

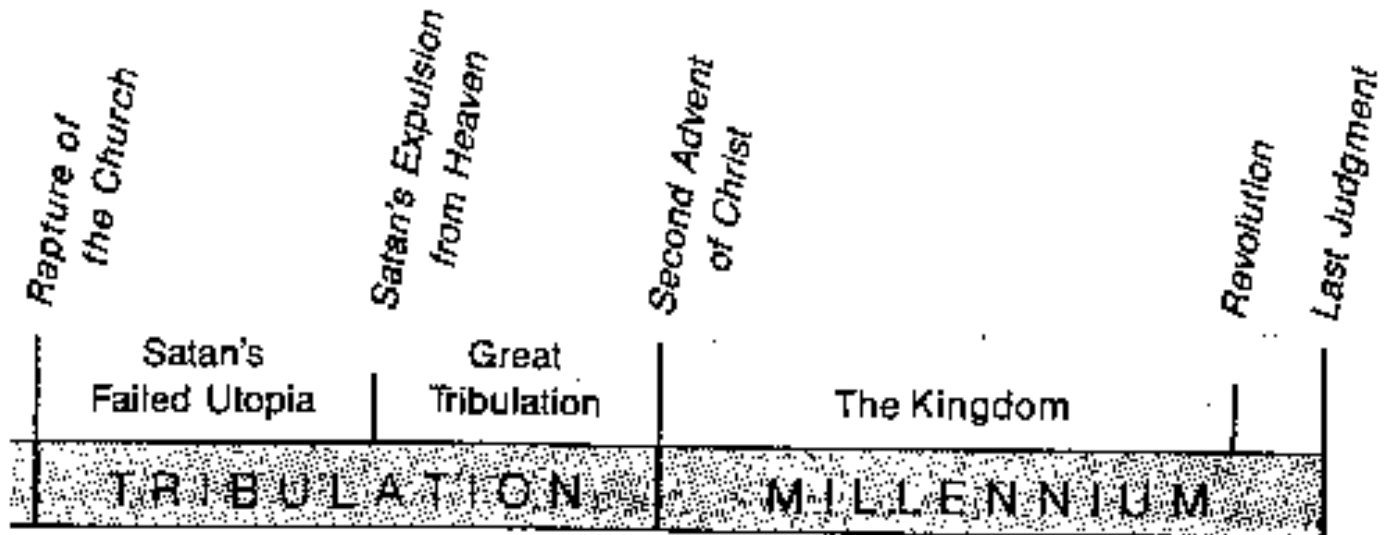
4.5 In general most of the numerous Old Testament quotations in the New Testament agree with the Septuagint, and the vocabulary of the Greek Old Testament was greatly influenced by the LXX.

4.6 New Testament writers were no doubt greatly influenced in their choice of theological terms. Ptolemy reigned over Egypt at the time of the writing and in fact was very influential in authorizing the work.



5. Confirmation that the vial judgments occur late in the great tribulation is affirmed by the Scripture; the first vial judgment falls on those who are worshipers of the beast's image.

6. The image is erected in the middle of the Tribulation, this event ushers in what we call the "Great Tribulation" - the last half of the seven-year period preceding the second coming (Compare Rev 13:14-15 with Dan 9:27).

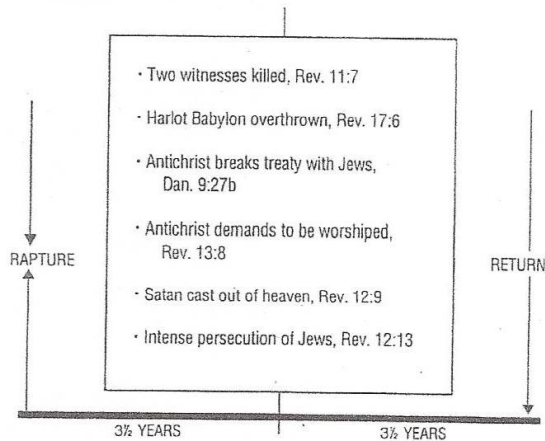


NIV

Rev 13:14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

Rev 13:15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

THE MIDPOINT OF THE TRIBULATION



Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

6.1 Almost everyone seems to comply with the demand that all men worship the beast and receive his mark. The exception is specified in Rev 13:8.

7. The vial judgment, therefore, follows this edict. The only ones who escape the judgment are those who have refused to obey the edict of the beast, i.e., those individuals who trust in Christ.

8. From Rev 13:7-8 it would appear that only a small fraction of the earth's population resists the blandishments of the beast.

NIV

Rev 13:7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

Rev 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast-- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

9. The warning given in Rev 14:9-11 is now reinforced in a preliminary judgment which anticipates the ultimate doom of the beast worshipers.

NIV

Rev 14:9 A third angel followed the first two angels and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, Rev 14:10 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

10. What specific form and the nature of the sores is unknown but what is evident is that God supernaturally protects the believers from this horrible plague, just as He did when a similar plague was inflicted on Egypt in the days of Moses. Exo 9:8-11

11. Let's see how Rev 16:2 looks by way of an expanded translation.

Expanded Translation:

Rev 16:2 The first angel left the other six, headed toward planet earth where he poured out his bowl upon the land; ugly and painful sores broke out on the unbelievers, i.e., those who had the mark of the beast and worshiped the Antichrist's image.

12. Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 16:3.

KJV

Rev 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

NIV

Rev 16:3 The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.

Principles:

1. The second vial is poured out upon the sea with the result that the sea becomes as blood (literally "it became blood as of a dead man"), and every living soul in the sea dies.
2. As in the second trumpet in Rev 8:8, the analogy of our second vial is clearly like the first of the ten plagues in Egypt (Exo 7:20-25).

Rev 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

2.1 The first of the ten plagues killed all the fish in the Nile River and made the water not potable.

Exo 7:20 Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood.

Exo 7:21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

Exo 7:22 But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

Exo 7:23 Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart.

Exo 7:24 And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

Exo 7:25 Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

3. Walvoord has written of these verses: "In all these cases it is possible that the sea does not become literally human blood but that it corresponds thereto both in appearance and loathsomeness."

4. This judgment may only then be similar to that of the second trumpet where one third of the sea is turned to blood and one third of the creatures of the sea die.

5. Here the judgment is universal. The reference to the sea in Rev 8:8-9 may be limited to the Mediterranean.

5.1 As we earlier noted many teach that the second trumpet is limited only to the Great Sea-the Mediterranean though such is not by any means clear from the Scripture.

Rev 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Rev 8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

6. Wycliffe writes of Rev 16:3 "... a major portion of the earth would be involved in this judgment as most of the earth is covered with water."

7. Another judgment follows rapidly on the heels of the terrible malignant sores.

7.1 The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man. Every living thing in the sea died. Everything in this case!

8. Let me read you what Hal Lindsay published in 1973:

"Throughout the Book of Revelation God has been taking carefully measured steps of judgment against the world. You may have been thinking: "Isn't God cruel to bring such terrible judgments on the world!" But you know, one of the reasons the Book of Revelation describes the terrible things which God will allow is to so shake up man so that he will see his need for God right now. The judgments all through the Revelation have increased gradually in measured progression; but now all the stops are pulled out. The reason I say the judgments are carefully measured is because the same type of judgments take place in a less intense form earlier in the Book of Revelation.

"For example, the judgments of Revelation 8 are similar to those of Revelation 16, except less harsh. In Revelation 8:8 and 9 only a third of the sea became blood and only a third of the marine life died. But in Revelation 16 all marine life is going to be wiped out. We can only speculate as to whether a direct judgment of God or a tremendous nuclear exchange will affect marine life to this extent. We don't know which it will be, but whatever it is it's going to destroy all living things in the sea."

9. Now let's see how our verse three looks in expanded translation.

Expanded Translation:

Rev 16:3 The second angel followed the first; he poured out his bowl on the seas of planet earth, and they turned into coagulated blood; the congealed blood suffocated every living thing in the sea.

10. The third angel is featured in Rev 16:4-7.

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