

The Revelation – God’s Wrath Unleashed

This week we will continue our series of lessons on the Revelation by looking at the first five of the seven vials full of the last plagues. Let’s begin with Revelation 16:1-2, which says:

- (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.
- (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.

Now remember that the other two sets of plagues appeared to cover the entire tribulation period as they ended with the events which precede the second coming of Christ and appear to coincide with each other. This third set of plagues, however, appears to truly be the last plagues, those which occur right at the very end. This first plague is clearly after the midpoint of the tribulation period since we’re told that it only applies to those who have the mark of the beast.

Looking at this a little closer I first want to focus in on the word noisome. The Greek word is *κακός* and literally can be thought of as making one effectively worthless. So those who have the mark of the beast at this point will have sores come upon them which renders them incapable of work. The sore is also said to be grievous. It is viciously hurtful.

Now there’s no indication here as to how long these sores will last. It may be for a short period, and Antichrist will most likely have an explanation for why it happened. Perhaps he will claim that there was some problem with the marking system. Maybe he will even blame it on those pesky Christians who consider him to be the Devil.

The second plague is found in verse 3 of this same chapter of Revelation, which says, “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.” Notice that, unlike in previous plagues where only a portion was affected, every living soul in the sea dies in this plague. Once again, though, just as Pharaoh’s heart was hardened in the Exodus Satan will have an explanation for this event.

Verses 4 through seven contain the fourth plague. This Scripture says:

- (4) And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.
- (5) And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.
- (6) For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.
- (7) And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

Now this third plague is said to be a righteous judgment for those who are upon the earth. The water supply has become polluted with blood so that it is unusable with any existing water system. It would appear here that, although it's not specifically told in this plague, there is still a separation between God's people and Satan's people. The people who are being judged here are those who have followed the Devil and are in opposition to God and God's people.

The fourth plague is found in verses 8 and 9, which says:

- (8) And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.
- (9) And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Once again it looks like the effect of this plague is only felt by those who are opposed to God. It's amazing how that God protects his people during times of tribulation, just as he protected his people during the plagues of Egypt. He didn't take them out but left them there under his protection as a witness against the people being judged. With all of this Antichrist continues to get the people to blaspheme the name of God and to blame God for all of the problems of the world. Hey, doesn't that sound familiar? Aren't there a lot of people out there today who want to blame Christians for all of the world's problems? Isn't this just preparation for this time?

The fifth plague is found in verses 10 and 11, which says:

- (10) And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,
- (11) And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

This plague appears to be even more specific. It is aimed at the seat of the beast, his capital city. There is a darkness which is beyond darkness which comes, a darkness in which people can't see their hand in front of their face. Electricity is useless, and no candle or other light source can be lit. The darkness is so great it hurts, and the combination of the pain and the darkness causes the people to go insane. In all of this they continue to defy God and God's people.

Yours in Christ,

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