

The Book of Revelation

By

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE WRATH OF GOD

"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" (vs. 1).

We have already seen how that the trumpet judgments were in answer to the prayers of GOD's people (8:3). The plagues of Egypt were GOD's answer as Israel **"sighed by reason of the bondage."** When **"God heard their groanings"** He remembered His covenant and had respect to them (Exodus 2). So here the temple brings to mind the Jews as they groan and cry to GOD for their Deliverer to rend the heavens and come down and save them from the fearful ravages of the antichrist.

Grievous Sores

"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" (vs. 2).

"The days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them" (Jeremiah 23:7, 8). In Jeremiah, the deliverance from Pharaoh is put along side the deliverance in the latter days. GOD wrought a great deliverance as they came out of Egypt, but a deliverance so great as to outshadow the former is to take place in the future.

When God plagued Egypt, He sent boils **"with blains"** or blisters that even the **"magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils"** (Exodus 9:11).

The time when GOD first brought Israel into Canaan and the time now future have many things in common. Then there were boils; here there are noisome and grievous sores. Today GOD sends His rain upon the just and the unjust, and often His people must suffer with the ungodly, but in Egypt GOD **"put a division between my people and thy people."** And so here; only those who took the mark must suffer.

Water to Blood

"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" (vs. 3).

In Egypt, **"He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish"** (Psalm 105:29). Under the second trumpet, only one-third of the sea became blood. Some of these judgments are upon the kingdom of the beast only. If that be so here, then **"the sea"** probably refers to the Mediterranean sea only.

What a horrible stench as the waters of the great sea become clotted and thick like the blood of a dead man. This will hinder commerce and stop the battleships that are in that quarter. Tons and tons of dead fish and whales and other sea creatures will be washed ashore to rot and decay and fill the land with a stench almost beyond the endurance of human nostrils.

More Blood

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood" (vs. 4).

Under the trumpets, one-third of the drinking water became bitter and poisonous. In Egypt they **"dugged round about the river for water to drink: for they could not drink of the water of the river"** (Exodus 7:24). Here the drinking water becomes blood and men will go mad for thirst.

"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" (vs. 5).

There may be more of the things of our daily life in the care of angels than we ever dream about. In this book, the angels care for the winds, the waters and have power over fire.

Here the angel ascribes righteousness to GOD for causing men to thus suffer. Some tell us that GOD is too righteous to make a hell. But after the heavenly beings have been watching the government and judgments of GOD for untold ages, they unite in the cry, **"Holy, holy, holy."**

Righteous Judgment

We take it for granted and know that sometime GOD will judge the world, the fallen angels; and that we are to judge ourselves, but seldom do we realize that GOD is also being judged. Throughout the universe are millions of intelligent beings, and everyone is capable of rendering a decision. As they watch the judgments of GOD, their hearts respond in judgment of those acts. GOD says there is a hell, but men judge GOD unrighteous to make a hell. But when these same men get on the other side, they will see things from GOD's angle and will then judge Him righteous.

It is impossible for anyone to please everyone now. People are like children in the market places. If we pipe, some will not dance; if we mourn they will not play funeral (Luke 7:32). But not so with GOD throughout eternity, for there will not be one cry of injustice.

"That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Romans 3:4), That is, when men and angels see the judgments of GOD, they will judge them in their own heart and GOD will always win and be counted as righteous.

So here when the waters are turned to blood, the angel judges GOD's acts and pronounces Him righteous.

We may wonder how a wife can be happy in Heaven knowing her husband is in hell. As the smoke of the torment of the great whore rises up; as her husband who once worshipped at the shrine of error, slips into the lake of fire, there is a shout of joy from the battlements of glory, **"Alleluia... for true and righteous are his judgments"** (Revelation 19:1-2). This is the voice of **"much people in heaven."** In that throng is the wife who once pleaded for his salvation, but she now joins in the Hallelujah chorus at his destruction. She loved him truly, but GOD loved him more, and if GOD's love is satisfied, she will also be satisfied, for when we get to Heaven and look at GOD's judgments from His angle, all will be well.

The Standard

"For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" (vs. 6).

Little do we realize, as we move among our friends and neighbors, that **"with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"** (Matthew 7:2). If we show mercy, we **"shall obtain mercy"** (Matthew 5:7). **"For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things... And thinkest thou this, O man... that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"** (Romans 2:1, 3).

So in our passage in verse six. They have been killing GOD's people, so it is only right that they be given the fruit of their doings and be compelled to drink blood.

"And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments" (vs. 7).

Here again we see the fearful state of earth dwellers.

For centuries, that altar has been crying to GOD for mercy toward sinful men, as it upheld the blood of atonement. Now men have gone beyond mercy and even the altar acclaims GOD righteous for thus judging them.

Great Heat

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun: and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire" (vs. 8).

Under the trumpets, one-third of the sun was darkened, thus hindering the ripening of fruit and grain and filling the world with a dark chilly coolness. Here the heat of the sun is increased until

men are scorched and blistered with heat.

I was one time in a state where hot winds were common. There was no relief even in the shade; the hot dry winds even seemed to be more tormenting there. So here, there will be scorching heat, sunstroke and terrible thirst for the waters are thick, clotted and unbearable to drink. Malachi speaks of this day as one that "**shall burn as an oven**" (Malachi 4:1).

Some desire to wait for trouble to bring them to repentance, but here, in the most awful sufferings, they "**repented not.**" Rather are they like Pharaoh, whose heart grew harder with each trial, for they even "**blasphemed the name of God**" (vs. 9).

Darkness

"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" (vs. 10).

In Egypt there was "**darkness which may be felt**" (Exodus 10:21). Here the prophetic earth, which is about the Mediterranean sea, is effected and men gnaw their tongues even while using that same unruly member to blaspheme the GOD of Heaven.

In place of repentance, they blaspheme GOD for their troubles. "**A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it**" (Proverbs 26:28). Let men turn from another and it will increase into hatred. As Ahab walked among the grapes in Naboth's vineyard, lo, there stood the prophet Elijah. Immediately Ahab cried, "**Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?**" And although men are reaping the harvest of their own sowing they blame GOD for "**their pains and their sores.**"

What a fearful time this will be. No wonder our Lord spoke of it as a time of trouble "**such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be**" (Matthew 24:21). The fierce heat; the bloody waters; the terrible thirst: the great ulcers; the black darkness, and still no repentance.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (vs. 12).

The mighty Euphrates; has long been a barrier between Palestine and the east. Its eighteen hundred miles of water from ten to thirty feet deep and from 900 to 3500 feet wide, makes an obstruction that is passable only under the greatest difficulty.

The mighty city Babylon will be built along its banks; drawing its water supply from up stream and dumping its sewerage below. Imagine the fearful state of this great city when this source of their water is cut off . . . Fires raging, but no water to fight them; thirst mounting, but little water to cool the tongue; sewerage backing and piling high, with sickness taking a fearful toll.

They look to this river to supply their every need and bring in the products of the outside world as great ocean liners ply their trade. But alas, even the ships lay stranded and helpless along the dry river bed.

GOD dried up the Red sea for Israel to pass through.

Egypt may have thought their gods were on their side as those banks of water stood high, permitting them to enter and pursue their fleeing slaves but, alas, it was only a trap for their destruction.

Kings of the East

And so here, as the kings that are east of Palestine, such as Japan, China and India, line up their countless hoards for the battle of Armageddon, their great problem will be for bridges, pontoons, floats, ferries, and ships. With what joy will they hail the glad news, "**The Great River Euphrates**" is dried up; and, they rush through, never to return again, for their carcasses will fertilize the plains of Jezreel and their blood will flow even unto the horses bridles.

Behind the Scenes

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."

"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (vs, 13, 14).

In every Gospel message there is One just behind the scenes to bear the message home to the heart of the hearer; it is the office of the HOLY SPIRIT to "**guide you into all truth**" (John 16:13). Here are evil spirits whispering into the hearts of the kings of the earth and convincing them that they can fight against the GOD of Heaven and win.

How much that we do of our own free will, is indeed planned in the spirit world. "**In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.**" Let a humble soul yield to his GOD and a supernatural hand will guide his every step. Let the kings of the earth yield to their demon-possessed emperor, and the "**spirits of devils**" will gather them to the great battle of that day.

Supernatural Guidance

"Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" Ahab asked this question as Jehoshaphat paid him a visit. Jehoshaphat would go but first he wished to be sure of the will of the Lord, so, "**Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord.**"

Ahab then called in all his modernistic preachers - four hundred of them - and with one accord they prophesied peace to the king. Jehoshaphat did not like the looks of that bunch, so he asked for a Fundamentalist preacher, and Micaiah was called in. And then was revealed a most startling thing that had taken place in Heaven.

Ahab had killed Naboth for his vineyard. The dogs must lick his blood on the spot where Naboth had died. It was now time for Ahab to be led to his death, but how get him to that spot?

Things were happening up in Heaven. The angels were called in. The Lord sat upon His throne and asked for a plan to get Ahab to Ramoth-gilead. One angel after another presented his plan, but it was rejected. Finally a spirit stood before the Lord, **"I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets"** (II Chronicles 18:21).

"Go out, and do even so," said the Lord. Down on earth, as four hundred prophets stood before the king, little did they realize that just behind the scene there was a lying spirit to put evil into their yielded minds.

And so, in a time just ahead, the spirits of devils will whisper into the ears of the kings of the earth and gather them to their own destruction in the place where GOD has so long foretold they must fall.

Admonition and Warning

Over and again our Lord pauses in the midst of some revelation of fearful events and utters a warning, an admonition or a comfort to His own. **"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments"** (vs. 15).

Here is a timely warning to all to watch lest at any time our **"hearts be overcharged with... [the] cares of this life"** so that day come upon us unawares (Luke 21:34). How careful should the child of GOD be to keep his garments unspotted from the world. How diligent should he be in studying GOD's word for it is by the **"washing of water by the word"** that his garments are made spotless and without wrinkle before his soon coming Lord (Ephesians 5:26-27).

Armageddon

But the note of warning is sounded as our Lord hastens on to describe the gathering of the kings of the earth **"into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon"** (vs. 16).

Often has this valley been the scene of combat; often has its soil been soaked with human blood. And yet again will it be the scene of mortal conflict as **"multitudes, multitudes"** will gather in this **"valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision"** (Joel 3:14).

Mass Meeting

Let us imagine ourselves in that time. Every church is crowded; every hall is filled with a living mass of humanity. Excitement runs high as a little aeroplane alights outside and a man enters the room and walks down the aisle. His every manner is one of pride and defiance. He is clothed in gaudy garments; a great monogram of the beast is on his breast and tattooed on his forehead is a mark that seals him as a child of hell. He enters the pulpit and addresses the audience.

"For millions of years this earth has been the scene of ceaseless combat; for countless ages, men have fought and struggled upward. In recent years, man's progress has been more rapid as he has been carried along on the bosom of evolution. Up and ever up through the stone age, the iron age and now into the marvelous achievements of our superman, the emperor of the entire world.

"But not without a struggle has this progress been, for throughout these years we have been hindered by those who have yielded allegiance to the GOD of Heaven. But no longer will we permit such interference from the outside. Men are able to run this earth; men have achieved this greatness, and now by order of our great emperor, who was killed and is alive again, we are going to drive GOD off the earth."

"And we can do it," he shouts as he gives illustration after illustration. "Haven't we killed thousands of His followers; didn't we stone Stephen, behead John the Baptist and crucify Jesus of Nazareth? Haven't we always been able to kill His followers at will? Too long have we been lenient: too long have we permitted this opposition, and now for one last drive and we will have the earth to ourselves."

"We now have Him almost licked. His two witnesses fell before our Emperor; in fact He has been driven off the earth, excepting a very small plot of ground in Jerusalem. Only one more struggle and we will hold the entire earth. Let every man show his colors; let everyone lend himself to our great Emperor and he will gather an army such as has never been mustered before."

A fiery hot speech and just behind the scene the spirits of devils whispering into the ears of the audience, "You can do it! Go on and you will win." Excitement mounts to white heat as men pledge their allegiance and vow their part in that great struggle.

"I would go," says a thin little man, "but I have stomach trouble."

"Forget your stomach," cries half a dozen angry voices. "**Let the weak say, I am strong**" and go anyhow (Joel 3:10).

"It is Done"

As the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, there is a "**great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done**" (vs. 17).

What solemn words are these. Once before, similar words were uttered as our Lord hung on the Cross, "**It is finished.**" Not that He had already died, but soon, very soon He would dismiss His spirit and all was ready to complete that act.

Now the great crisis of human history has come and men's long war with GOD must speedily come to an end.

"**And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great**" (vs. 18).

At sometime, no doubt during the flood, our earth experienced a terrible judgment that shook it out of place. If we go to a school room and look at a "globe" of the earth, we see that it is tipped twenty-three degrees. This tipping is what causes winter and summer. If our earth were setting straight; if the geographical and magnetic pole were together, weather on this earth would be

quite different.

Earthquake

A time is coming when the earth "**shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.**" When this happens, it may be jostled back in place again bringing a perfect climate for the kingdom Age (Isaiah 24:20).

This is the time when men will flee to the "**holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth,**" and cast their idols of silver to "**the moles and to the bats**" for the Lord "**arisseth to shake terribly the earth**" (Isaiah 2:19-21).

The surface of the earth will be changed in preparation for the perfect climate and conditions of the Kingdom Age. "**Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.**"

No longer will there need be a Gulf Stream to keep England from becoming a cake of ice. The Mount of Olives will break up and fall apart "**toward the east and toward the west.**" No longer will there be the hill country of Judah, "**for the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.**" No longer the great depression of the Dead Sea, which now lays over one thousand feet below the sea level for, "**it shall be lifted up**" (Zechariah 14:4, 10).

"And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail" (vs. 21).

There is no repentance for those who have permitted themselves to be sealed for hell, with the mark of the beast; even as there is no loss of those who have been sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT for eternity.

~ end of chapter 16 ~

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