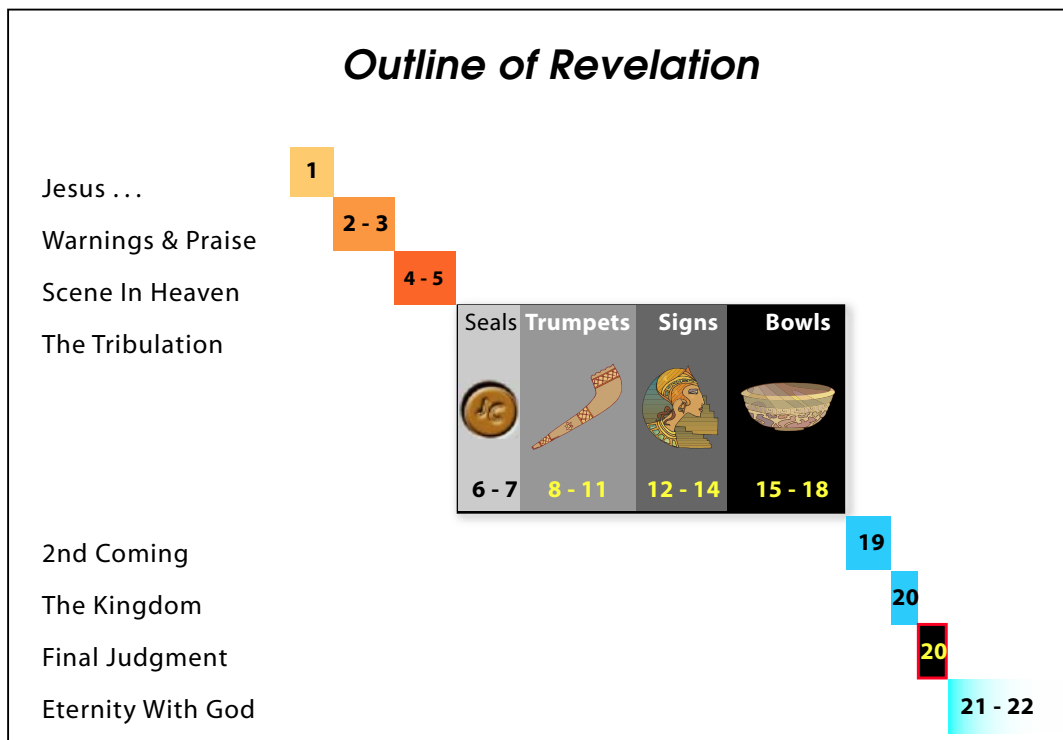


Armageddon Is Coming

DR. J. Vernon Mc Gee once said, “This world in which we are living is under the judgment of God. It is hard for even believers to accept that fact. After almost a century of insipid preaching from America’s pulpits, the average man believes that God is all sweetness and light and would not discipline or punish anyone. Well, this book of Revelation tells a different story.” And it does. Yes, God is holy, but our world is not. We know this is true. God has already awakened us out of our sleep when He said in Romans 1:32 that although the world has a sense of good and evil and a sense that they “are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” People like to sin, and they want others to sin, too. Our world loves sin, but our Creator does not. This study in Revelation describes the end - the seven plagues which will occur before Armageddon. God is going to defeat Satan and sin.

SEVEN BOWLS. Revelation 15 introduces us to the seven bowls which are seven plagues. Each of the seven bowls will be poured out by a holy angel. What a stunning truth - God will be using His holy angels to destroy Satan, the Antichrist, the false prophet, and a rebellious world. God’s angels will remove evil from this world. Why? Because evil cannot bring holiness. We should not be surprised that our world cannot solve the problems of evil which are war, violence, incest, theft, murder, abortion, lying, and other such acts. How can those who are evil know how to be holy? When men and women reject the Bible or the words of God, how can they really know what is “ethical” or “moral”? The truth is simple. Men and women will always establish standards that agree with their flawed sense of good and evil. But only

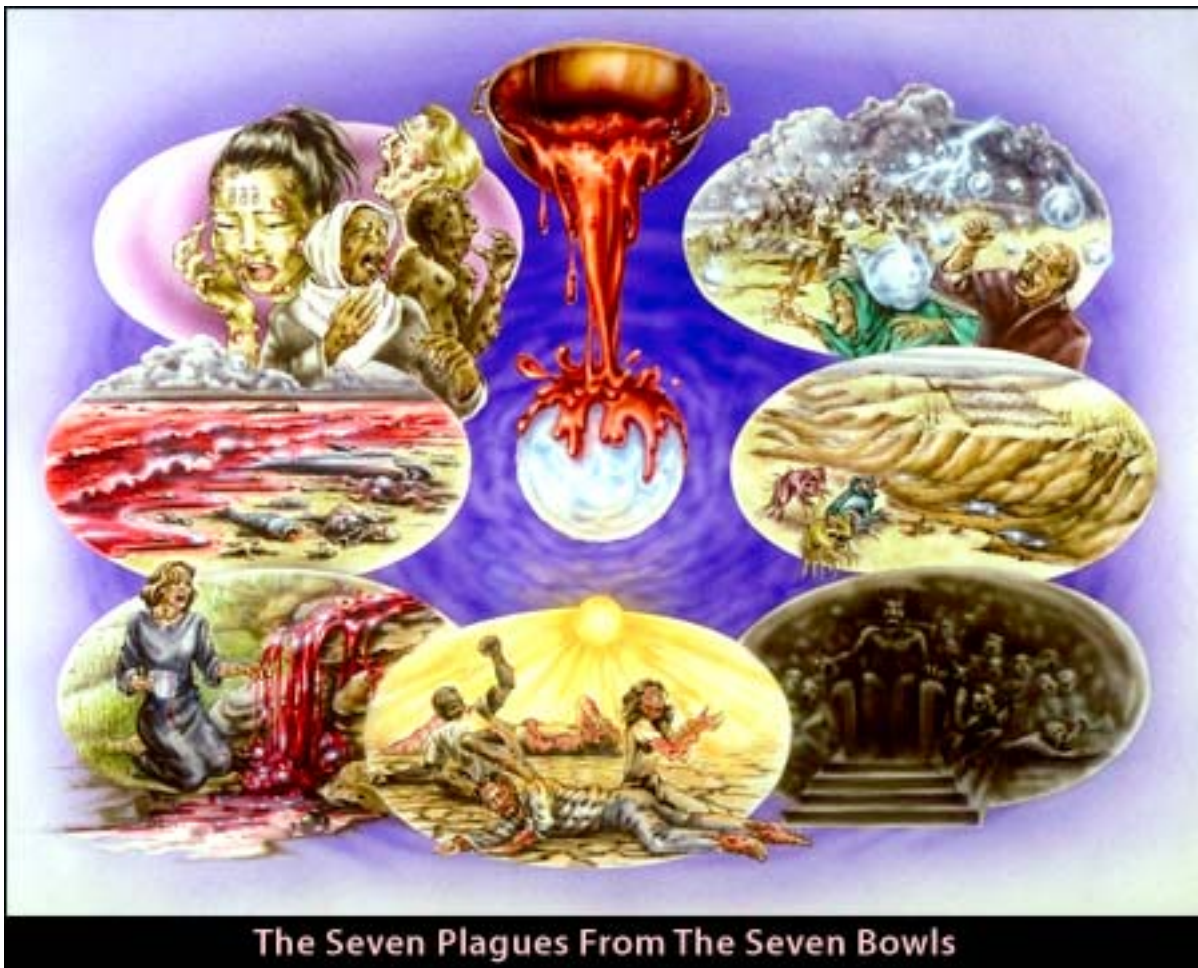


a holy being can understand true holiness. When God is constantly rejected, there is only one way to bring holiness - remove the evil that will not submit to Him.

1ST BOWL - NON-HEALING SORES. So the seven angels are called forth to pour out the seven bowls - the seven plagues.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." So the first angel went and

heal. God used this plague or one like it on the Egyptians at the time the Israelites were freed from Egypt (Ex. 9:9). The Egyptians experienced boils which gave them open sores, and they responded in anger. Just like the Israelites in Egypt, God will spare those who believe in Jesus and follow Him. It is difficult to understand why the men and women who will experience these sores will not repent. Revelation 9:20-21 told us that after the seven trumpets, men and women did not repent. Instead they were angry. They will be angry again.



poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. (NASB) Rev. 16:1-2

The first angel will come and pour from his bowl a plague on the earth. The plague will be a horrible sore that will not

2ND BOWL - SEA OF BLOOD. The second bowl - the second plague - turns the sea into blood.

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

God did not turn the oceans surrounding the land of ancient Egypt into blood. He did not need to. He only had to turn the Nile River into blood to prove to the Egyptians that Moses was speaking for Him. But near the end of time the world will not listen and so God will be removing the stench of sin from His nostrils at the same time He is creating a stench with dark-red dead blood like that of a dead man. Yet God will still be giving each person an opportunity to repent.

3RD BOWL - BLOOD EVERYWHERE. The third bowl turns all of the fresh water into blood. Now those who are living inland away from the coast lands and sea ports will not escape God's judgment.

Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." (NASB) Rev. 16:4-7

Men and women who believe in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation will be murdered, persecuted, and insulted. This has always been true and will get worse. God will eventually avenge their deaths on an unbelieving world and the Anti-Christ. Is God unjust? The answer comes from a holy being, "They deserve it!"

4TH BOWL - FIERCE HEAT. The next angel will bring a plague that the world has not experienced before.

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory. (NASB) Rev. 16:8-9

The plague will be a horrible heat that even those living in the hottest desert will find it intolerable. The heat will be

extremely intense and excessive, and the sunburns will be severe. Many people will probably have second and third degree burns. Air conditioners will probably fail, and life will be very miserable. The ice caps at the North and South poles and on the mountains will probably melt. The ocean water will rise and the destruction will be extreme. Have you noticed that each plague is getting worse?

5TH BOWL - TOTAL DARKNESS. The fifth plague will bring darkness over the entire planet.

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds. (NASB) Rev. 16:10-11

This darkness is different from the plague that God brought on the Egyptians. This one will cause pain. The world will be drinking bloody water, smelling the stench of death everywhere, suffering from their sunburns and third degree burns, and experiencing a painful, total darkness. Each plague will be worse than the one before. Each plague will be sending the message, "I am God - repent of your rejection of Me." Each message will say, "I am God, the end is near." They will respond by blaspheming God. Now that is arrogance and pride. They will refuse to submit. They would rather suffer and die than to admit that they are sinners and in the wrong.

6TH BOWL - DRY EUPHRATES RIVER. The plague from the sixth bowl will dry up the Euphrates River.

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. (NASB) Rev. 16:12

The Euphrates River flows down from the snow covered mountains in Turkey and descends 1800 miles (2897 Km) into the desert through the country of Iraq and down to the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates River flows between the



modern city of Baghdad and the ancient ruins of Babylon which are located about 70 miles southwest of Baghdad. Saddam Hussien of Iraq was re-building the ancient city of Babylon before the Gulf War occurred in the 1990s. Photos of United States soldiers entering the rebuilt city of Babylon can be found in publications and on the internet. The city is partially rebuilt and ready for the Tribulation Period. Israel is southwest of the Euphrates River.

The intense heat from the fourth bowl plague will probably melt all of the ice and snow on the mountains, and the Euphrates River will probably be flooded. So God will perform a miracle in order to help Satan, the Anti-Christ and false prophet prepare for Armageddon, and fulfill prophecy. God will dry up the river and enable the world's armies to cross the river bed.

Earlier in Revelation 9 we saw four demons imprisoned at the Euphrates River and an army of 200 million demons

come to power and kill one-third of the world. Now here in Revelation 16:13-14 we find three unclean spirits at the Euphrates River.

And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. (NASB) Rev. 16:13-14

John sees that the three spirits are described as frogs which come out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. And we are told in verse 14 that these three spirits are actually demons which perform signs and wonders. Their mission will be to gather together the kings of the world to make war against God. Satan will probably be

hoping that the world's forces will help him defeat God.

COMING LIKE A THIEF. In the next verse, Jesus tells us that He is coming quickly.

“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.” (NASB) Rev. 16:15

What does He mean that He is coming “like a thief?” Some say that no one can know when Jesus is coming since a thief does not announce his plan to enter your house and steal. One who did would be a stupid thief. Years ago our home was robbed by a thief. I wish the thief had told us he was coming. Then we would have been ready for him with some policemen!

Jesus does not mean that His coming will be a surprise to Christians. In 1 Thessalonians the Apostle Paul was trying to assure the Thessalonians that they will not be surprised as to the time of Jesus' coming.

Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” Then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness . . . (NASB) 1 Thess 5:1-5

Paul writes, “But you are not darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief.” Christians have already been given signs about the coming of the end times (Matt. 24:3-14). Paul was encouraging the Thessalonians to not worry that the Day of the Lord, which starts with the rapture, would surprise them (1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:1-3).

There will also be no surprise for men and women who will become Christians in the tribulation. During the Tribulation they will not be surprised about what is coming next

(Rev. 6-20) because Jesus has given us warning signs. They will be studying their Bibles, but the world will be clueless, except for a few. Yet they will not know the exact time that Jesus will return to defeat the world forces.

In Matthew 24:42 Jesus said this about His Second Coming to His disciples.

Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. (NASB) Matt. 24:42-44

This is what Revelation 16:15 means. The world forces will be surprised. No army in the world wants to be surprised by the enemy, but Jesus will surprise them. That is the message.

SEVENTH BOWL - ARMAGEDDON. The world's armies will be gathered to defeat God. The world's best will be gathered in the Plain of Megiddo against the divine BEST. They will be waiting for the greatest war men have ever known - the war at Armageddon.

And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-magedon. (NASB) Rev. 16:16

The war starts when the seventh bowl is poured out on the air.

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.” And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. (NASB) Rev. 16:17-18

This time the bowl is not poured on the oceans, seas, rivers,



sun, or stars. It is poured on the air. It is poured out on the world. A loud voice will cry out just like Jesus did, “It is done” - “It is finished.” And immediately the world will know that God has come to make war.

The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe. (NASB) Rev. 16:19-21

They will quickly realize that they are in trouble when the cities of the world are destroyed, including Jerusalem and Babylon the Great.

In Revelation 11:8 Jerusalem was called the great city, so it seems that God is referring to the holy city. The world wide earthquake will be so powerful and massive that buildings, bridges, and other structures around the world

will be destroyed. The topography of the world will also be impacted. Every mountain will be flattened - islands are sea mountains. And God will cause massive, 100 pound (45.4 Kg) hailstones to fall.

The Guinness World Records state that the heaviest known hailstone is 1 Kg or 2.2 lbs. This occurred in the Gopalganj district of Bangladesh on 14 April 1986. God will bring hailstones so massive that the world will know they have a supernatural origin. They have come from God.

The conclusion of the battle will be given in Revelation 19. The next few chapters will provide some details that God does not want us to miss. The details are about Babylon and its doom.

CONCLUSION. What a love story! Jesus came to set us free from our sin because He loves us. He came to make us holy because He wants to be with us. God has proven that He loves us when Jesus died for us. God will prove that He loves us when he removes evil and fulfills His promise to Israel and to us when He sets up the 1,000 year kingdom. This is when Jesus will eat and drink again with His disciples.

And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” (NASB) Luke 22:15-16

You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (NASB) Luke 22:28-30

The time is coming when we will be with Jesus. It will be a holy time. It will be a time to love our Savior and to feel His love for us. With the close of Revelation 16, this reality has come nearer.