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A0617 – April 23, 2006 – Rev 16:10-21 – The 5th, 6th & 7th Bowls

Revelation 16:10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast, and became (aorist middle) his kingdom became darkened (perfect passive participle), and they were gnawing their tongues because of the pain (ponos related to ponerous in verse 2), ¹¹ and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and because of their sores and they did not change their minds (metanoeo) from their works.

The ***throne of the beast*** is the throne of Satan and was given to him at the mid-point of the Tribulation. Before this, Rev 2:13 says that Satan's throne was in the city of Pergamum, that was 96AD. After that it moved to Rome as I'll explain next week and sometime in the future it will move to a rebuilt city of Babylon and remain there during the first half of the Tribulation but at the mid-point it will move to Jerusalem when the Antichrist stops the sacrifice and grain offering and sets up of the abomination of desolation (Dan 9:27). What Satan is trying to do is establish his throne and his king in the location where God will establish His throne and His king; Jerusalem. And so the ***fifth...bowl*** will be ***poured out...upon*** Jerusalem. Pentecost said that this "darkness...isn't localized just in Jerusalem because the darkness seems to begin with his throne and spread out over his kingdom." Since "his kingdom is a universal kingdom" it will spread out over the whole earth but at the same time the fourth bowl will be scorching men with heat and so they are still being scorched even in darkness and yet now they have the added difficulty of not being able to see and so they stumble around. The result will be abject terror. It's so terrible that they ***gnaw their own tongues because of the pain***. So, the darkness causes some kind of pain. We don't know how darkness could cause ***pain*** but this darkness does and it causes them to react by doing very odd things (also cf Dan 4:31ff). Of course, this again is very similar to one of the Exodus plagues where all Egypt was covered with thick darkness, a darkness which the light of a candle could not penetrate (Exod 10:21ff) but it remained light in Goshen where the Israelites lived and so we have the principle of perfect discrimination. So, I surmise that the darkness will only overtake those who worship the beast and have taken his mark

since the believers reject his right to rule. And so this plague will darken most of the world as Egypt was darkened.

Verse 11 shows that the intention of this plague was that men would repent but it didn't work and they continue to rebel against God. Since they *blaspheme God* it shows that they know that these plagues are coming from God and are not just natural disasters or men causing them. We also see from verse 11 that the bowl judgments overlap since they still have the sores that broke out in the first bowl (16:2). So, these judgments are coming in rapid fire succession and plague is piled upon plague. This is a nasty picture of what will happen to rebels who harden themselves in unbelief.

3. The Sixth Bowl: Euphrates (16:12-16)

Revelation 16:12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, that the way of the kings from the rising of the sun (kings of the east; cf Rev 7:2) were prepared. ¹³ And I saw 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 spirits like unclean frogs: ¹⁴ for they are spirits of demons doing (miraculous) signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them for the war of the great day of God the Almighty (pantokrator). ¹⁵ Behold I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who is alert [keeping alert; watching] and keeping his garments, that he not walk naked and they see his shameless acts [shame]. ¹⁶ And they (singular verb with a neuter plural subject from verse 14) gathered them to the place being called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

The *Euphrates river* was the boundary between the east and what we call the Middle East.¹ First mentioned in Gen 2:14 this is its last mention.

This river is difficult to cross but in the future it will be supernaturally dried up in preparation for the kings of the east to assemble at Armageddon for the final war. This plague reminds us of God drying up the Red Sea so the Israelites could cross and in which the Egyptians drowned. Since the rivers were turned to blood by the 3rd Bowl the *kings of the east* will march across dried blood which looks forward to their bloody defeat. According to Jer 51:36 the crossing point may be at Babylon which sits on the eastern side of the Euphrates.

The question always arises as to who are *the kings of the east* or literally *the kings from the rising of the sun* (which takes place in the east; also cf Rev 7:2)? My answer is a general one, “they come from beyond the *Euphrates*.” So, they come from “Pakistan, India, China, Japan, etc. etc. etc.” Notice they are *kings* plural so that this is a coalition of

kings from that area of the world. It should not be confused with the king of the north (singular) and the king of the south (singular) who advance against the Antichrist (Daniel 11:40-45; Ezek 38-39). I think that battle will happen near the end of the 1st half of the Tribulation when Israel is dwelling peacefully in her land under Antichrist's protection (Dan 9:27a). But the **kings of the east** are gathering **for** a different **war, the war of the great day of God Almighty** (v 14). This **war** occurs at the end of the 2nd half of the Tribulation when Israel is under persecution. The Antichrist will already have worldwide dominion and this coalition of kings will begin to march toward Jerusalem where he has set up the tents of his royal pavilion (Dan 11:45). To get across the Euphrates God will supernaturally dry up the bloody river (Isa 44:27). So, God is setting a trap here making it easier for His enemies to gather against Him (Ps 2:1-3)

In verse 13 John sees coming **out of the mouth of the dragon and the beast and the false prophet three spirits like unclean frogs**. Here is the unholy satanic trinity sending out **three spirits** to deceive the kings of the earth to gather against God and His people Israel. The **dragon** is the Anti-Father, the **beast** is the Anti-Christ, and the **false prophet** is the Anti-Spirit (cf Rev 20:10). This is the first time the **false prophet** is mentioned but he is the same as the "beast coming out of the earth" in Rev 13:11. He is the propaganda machine for the Antichrist who deceives the whole world by doing signs and wonders so great they almost deceive the elect. But here, each member of the unholy trinity is involved in the propaganda that will deceive the kings of the earth into gathering against God Almighty. The **three spirits** are **like unclean frogs**. So, they are three demons. They are likened to **frogs** because **frogs** were considered unclean by Levitical law. The figure of the frogs also reminds us of the 2nd Exodus plague which caused all Egypt to stink terribly (Exod 8:6ff).

Verse 14 tells us explicitly that the **three spirits...are spirits of demons** and what they do is (**miraculous**) **signs**. Of course, **miraculous signs** are meant to deceive. The signs are meant to authenticate the message that comes from the unholy trinity which is to gather, much like those in the days after the Flood who gathered to build the tower of Babel. The kingdom of Satan is gathering to form a united front against God by His permission (similar to 1 Kings 22:21). And while they think they are gathering for the great day of Satan the verse tells us they are actually gathering **for the...great day of God the Almighty** (*pantokrator* – all-power/might) (they are successful in deceiving and gathering, cf Rev 19:19). So, the omnipotence of God is emphasized because even the world's armies cannot overcome Him. So, this gathering is preparatory for that **great day**. The **great day of God** reminds us of "the day of the Lord". The broad day of the Lord includes the 7 year tribulation and the 1,000 year kingdom. The dark phase of that day

refers only to the 7 year tribulation (Rev 6:17) but whenever the adjective *great* is added it refers to the day of the second coming of Christ. Both Joel and Malachi mentioned this day calling it “the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Joel 2:31; Mal 4:5). This refers to the same day, the day of the Second Coming of Christ to earth to destroy His enemies.

In verse 15 we have a parenthetical remark that seems out of place. ***Behold I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who is alert [keeping alert; watching] and keeping his garments, that he not walk naked and they see his shameless acts [shame].*** The coming of Christ *as a thief* is also a common theme in the Bible.

Matthew 24:43 "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. ⁴⁴ "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.*

and earlier in Revelation to the seven churches, Christ said,

Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Some people would like to say the similarity of these verses forces us to see the church going through the Tribulation but that is absurd. Context militates that the church be removed from earth before the hour of trial (Rev 3:10). Thus, they cannot be in the hour of trial.

The point of verse 15 is that one needs to be ready for Christ’s coming and to be ready one must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The alert one’s will be clothed with salvation before Christ comes. As such they will be blessed because they will enter Christ’s kingdom (Dan 12:11-12). They need to hold on tightly to their salvation in this hour which will produce fruit worthy of reward. The one who walks about naked is the one who is not clothed with the righteousness of Christ at His coming. As such only his shameless acts will be revealed and that means bad news because he will be killed either at Armageddon or during the judgments during the 75-day interval (Dan 12:11-12) and will enter Sheol awaiting the Great White Throne judgment after the Millennium.

In verse 16 the location of gathering is given. ***And he gathered them to the place being called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*** The singular ***he*** is used in the Greek but with a neuter plural subject (*pneumata* of verse 14) showing that the spirits who come forth from the unholy satanic trinity are working in a concerted effort. They are one in deception and goals and yet three in person (a distortion of but counterfeit of the Trinity). The ***place*** of gathering ***in Hebrew*** is ***Armageddon***. This is a transliteration of the Greek word. There has been a lot of debate about where this is since *har* often refers to a mountain. But Megiddo is not a mountain. In fact it is in the valley of Esdraelon (Jezreel). However, *har* can also mean “hill country”. So, most likely, this is the “hill country of Megiddo”. Many battles have taken place on or near the hill country of Megiddo (Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chronicles 35:22; Zechariah 12:11). This will probably be the assembly point for the armies of the world as they gather and are deployed throughout the land of Israel but the concentration of the deployments will be around Jerusalem where the decisive battles will be fought (Joel 3:2).

With that said I want to back up to verse 14 and the ***war of the great day of God Almighty***. Notice it is a ***war*** and not a “battle”. A war is the overall campaign which is composed of several battles (e.g. Civil War – the Battle of Bull Run, the Battle of Gettysburg, et. al). So Armageddon is not one battle but a war or campaign composed of a series of battles for world dominion. Some commentators see the Campaign of Armageddon lasting for the entire 2nd half of the Tribulation (e.g. Pentecostⁱⁱ) Others see them as small battles all fought under the seventh bowl in Israel. It’s difficult to say but the drying up of the Euphrates will certainly encourage others to come and gather at Armageddon for the great day of God Almighty.

4. The Seventh Bowl: Air (16:17-21)

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air, and a great voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, "It is taking place!" (perfect active not aorist as in other similar cases, e.g. 11:15; 15:1).¹⁸ And their came lightnings and sounds and thunders and a great earthquake came, such as had not come since man had come upon the earth so terrible an earthquake so great.¹⁹ And the great city came into three parts and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the wrath of God.²⁰ And every island disappeared (feugo) and mountains were not found.²¹ And great hail as a talent is came down out of heaven upon mankind, and mankind blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, for the plague is great even very much.

While most don't think about it, the *seventh bowl is poured out upon the air*. The *air* is what we breathe and everyone needs it and so this *plague* will be much more extensive and catastrophic than any of the others. The *great voice coming out of the temple from the throne* is either the Father or the Son because no one else can enter the heavenly *temple* at this time (15:8). And the *great voice* says, "It is taking place!" This is a perfect voice not an aorist as in other verses (11:15; 15:1). It looks at the events of the 7th Bowl as developing over time up to this culminating point. Everything has been leading to this great judgment.

In verse 18 we have another storm theophany, the fourth in the series of Rev (4:5, 8:5, 11:19). It is the finality of God's wrath. There are many things that take place under the 7th Bowl, the first two are mentioned here in chapter 16. First, *a great earthquake so great and so terrible* beyond human comprehension. Something the world has never seen. So great and terrible that the entire earth's surface is changed dramatically in preparation for the kingdom. Second *great hail so great a hail*. Something the world has never seen.

First, let's deal with the *great earthquake so terrible and so great*. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy of **Haggai 2:6** "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.'" Its effects are described in verses 19 and 20. They are five-fold. *First, the great city was split into three parts*. This refers to Jerusalem (11:8). Jerusalem will be split into three geographic divisions. At the same time the earthquake will split the Mount of Olives (which is east of Jerusalem) in half from east to west and one half of the Mount will move north and the other half south and as a result a great valley will open up in between (Zech 14:4). *Second, the cities of the nations fell*. This refers to all the *cities of the Gentile nations*. This refers to Moscow, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Sydney, New York City, Rio de Janeiro, et. al. Every city on earth will be leveled. This is why the *earthquake* is described as *so terrible an earthquake so great*. The destruction is beyond human comprehension. *Third, Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the wrath of God*. Of course, *Babylon* refers to the re-built city of Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates River in modern day Iraq (see Lesson 50: Rev 14:1-8 "Victory of the Godly"). This city which began at Babel has corrupted the world through every possible avenue; government (politics), religion, and economy (materialism) (cf 18:5). At this point God will remember that it is time to utterly annihilate this kingdom and all her progeny. Her final judgment is described in Rev 17-19. *Fourth, in verse 20, every island disappeared or fled*. There are ~120,000 islands in the oceans of the world. Under the 6th Seal a great earthquake "moved" every island (Rev

6:14) but this earthquake will be much greater and it literally causes all the islands of the world to sink beneath the ocean's surface. *Fifth, mountains were not found.* So, this is a leveling of the earth's surface in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom. When the mountains are leveled the majority of the earth's surface will be land just like it was before the Flood. This will accommodate the rapid population growth in the kingdom since longevity of life is increased. These radical changes to the topography all occur at the time of this great earthquake. But this is just the beginning because after the Millennium the present earth and heaven will flee away (Rev 20:11). So here we have the beginnings of the fleeing of this creation and the establishment of the New Heavens and New Earth. But the partial results at this time are stupendous and descriptions of the millennial earth throughout the Bible support these radical topographical changes to present earth and heaven.

CHANGES TO THE EARTH'S SURFACE, CLIMATE, ET. AL.

1. Jerusalem will be the highest point on earth (Zech 14:10)
2. All Israel will be a plain (Zech 14:10)
3. Water will flow from the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 47:2)
4. Free flow of moisture across the earth's surface (to do that you have to level the mountains) (Zech 14:8)
5. There will be no deserts (Zech 14:8)
6. The land will produce multiple crops per year (Zech 14:8)
7. Longevity will increase greatly (Isa 65:20)
8. The wolf will lie with the lamb (Isa 11:6)
9. A child will lead a calf and a young lion (Isa 11:6)
10. A nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra (Isa 11:8)
11. The lion will eat straw (Isa 11:7)

All this will take place because of the massive topographical changes at the time of this earthquake but that's just the beginning of the 7th Bowl.

So, in verse 21 we have the second major aspect of the 7th Bowl, *great hailstones very great* such as no one has ever seen.ⁱⁱⁱ They are the size of *a talent* or your Bible says 100 pounds. In John's day the *talent* weighed between 108 and 130 pounds. And these are coming down upon *mankind*. I take it that *mankind* throughout the bowl judgments refers only to the unbelievers and I get that from verse 2 in this chapter. So, I think God is going to use perfect discrimination during the bowl judgments so that not even one of them affects the believers who remain alive at this time on earth. These *hailstones* are huge. The largest recorded hailstone weighed 1.67 pounds and was about 6-7 inches in diameter. So what we have here is almost unimaginable. I talked to Mike Suenram about

this and he's a pilot and he told me about blue ice which supposedly falls off of airplanes sometimes. It's usually about 6 inches in diameter and he said these things go right through roofs and knock over trees. So, I had him calculate the diameter of a 108 lb hailstone and a 130 pound hailstone because that seems to be the size of these here. The 108 lb hailstone had a diameter of 17.8 inches and a 130 lb hailstone had a diameter of 19 in. He said a chunk of ice that size would pulverize a house and the only protection from something like this would be a concrete bunker. So, this is an extreme plague and that's why the Greek is very redundant and emphatic in its description of the hail. It literally says ***the plague is great so great*** and this reminds us of the 7th plague in Egypt (Exod 9:18ff). That hail killed men and beasts in the field and this one is going to do a lot more than that.

Now, verse 21 shows the response: ***mankind blasphemed God***. So, they shook their fists at God in defiance because of the extreme plague He sent upon them. But that's what you get for rejecting grace. And so these men's hearts are so hard they won't break no matter what you send on them and they will gather at Armageddon and take their stand against God and His Son (Ps 2:1-3) but the Warrior-King will return with His armies for the great and terrible day of the Lord.

ⁱ The river east of the Euphrates is the Tigris. The area between the Tigris and Euphrates is called Mesopotamia from two Greek words, *meso* "in the middle" and *potamus* "rivers", and thus means "between the rivers".

ⁱⁱ "I take it that this is a final battle in a campaign, that I call the campaign of Armageddon...The campaign of Armageddon includes the invasion by the kings of the south and the kings of the north; they are destroyed in the middle of the tribulation period. The campaign continues with the occupation of the land of Israel by antichrist, and after his reign for three and a half years he is attacked in what I consider the conclusion of the campaign of Armageddon. I notice in the text I am using they don't refer to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, but the war which is the preferable word because a battle is a single meeting between two armies; a campaign or a war is a series of battles, and since this is a war, I think it is viewing this as a part of all those military movements of the last half of the tribulation period."

ⁱⁱⁱ Pentecost said, "God is showing that He is Creator and He's sovereign over creation and all creation is subject to Him. And that's why I think it's significant that so many of these judgments are in the natural realm, because God revealed Himself through creation, men rejected that creation, so God is climaxing His revelation through creation again."

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