

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #43
6/27/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Sixteen - The Bowl Judgments
The Last Series of Judgments, The End of The Tribulation Period
The Work of The Evil Spirits of the Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath

As we continue our study of God's account of the Sixth Bowl of God's wrath being poured out upon this wicked world in Chapter sixteen we read verse twelve — **“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.”** — and skipped to verse sixteen — **“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”** By doing this we easily saw that the purpose of this Sixth Bowl of God's wrath is to draw the “God-haters” to the climactic battle of the war of Armageddon where Jesus Christ totally and finally destroys those who hate Him and have declared war on Him.

The first statement of verse sixteen says, **“And He gathered them together;”** meaning that Jesus is the **“He”** who draws them to that place. Understand, please, they choose of their own free will to come to the battle, but they come because Jesus is in control. He is even in control of those who reject Him though they would certainly reject this truth. Even if they protest and reject the truth, it does not change the truth. Some people have a problem with this and simply cannot understand how the sovereignty of God works in relationship with the free will of man. None of us have to understand it for it to be true. The fact is simple: it is true whether we understand it or like it or not. Jesus not only does this but He explains the “how” in His Word. If we are willing to read and study His Holy Word sufficiently we can learn answers to many of our questions. So now, we will attempt to do just that as we consider verses thirteen and fourteen and pursue the truths found therein.

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.

The first thing before us concerns the spirit-world and spirit-beings.

John saw something very strange and has a difficult time trying to describe what God showed him. By saying, **“And I saw three unclean spirits”** he tells us he sees something that is not human or earthly. This is somewhat like, but different from, what John previously saw, as recorded Chapter nine, when God gave Satan a key to His prison where He had held some of the most vile of the rebellious angels captive. When Satan released them from that **“bottomless pit”** and those evil spirit beings came forth it was also beyond John's vocabulary to describe them and when we read that passage we read about some very strange, powerful, evil creatures. The “three unclean spirits” we read about here are also of that invisible spirit world. Before we go any further it would probably be helpful if we review a few things we have already learned about these evil spirit beings.

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #43
6/27/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Sixteen - The Bowl Judgments
The Last Series of Judgments, The End of The Tribulation Period
The Work of The Evil Spirits of the Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath

First, what is the origin of evil spirits? Where did they come from? In Revelation 12:4,9, we read about the rebellion of the **“great red dragon ... that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan”** against God. In verse four we read that **“...with his tail (he) drew the third part of stars (angels) of heaven and did cast them to the earth.”**

Like Satan, who was Lucifer, the beautiful, talented and powerful angel, all angels or spirits are created beings (Ezekiel 28:15) and, therefore, accountable to and under the authority of God, even if they rebel against Him. We do not know how many of these spirit beings God created. Apparently they have a will and some have chosen to rebel against Him. Those were cast out of heaven, became followers of Satan and are most commonly known as **“demons,”** or little devils, and probably number in the thousands. They constitute one third of all of the angels God created. They were made to be servants of God, but chose to follow Lucifer and became his servants and slaves.

Second, what is their nature? Having been created good and pure as God's servants to **“minister to them who are the heirs of salvation”** (Hebrews 1:14), they chose to serve Satan and become the enemies of both God and His adopted children, those saved by His grace. Of course, their nature is now the very opposite of that which God intended and for which He created them. Choosing to disobey their Creator, they made themselves evil. Though their nature changed they retained many of the characteristics described below which were given to them by their Creator. From the point of their rebellion forward, they use those God-given characteristics against the One Whom they were created to serve.

Third, what are their characteristics? **First,** they are spirit-creatures. They do not have physical bodies and are not subject to the “laws of nature” that limit the activities of creatures with physical bodies in a “time-material-space” environment. Not having physical bodies, they are not visible to man's eyes and not restricted in their movements. Also, not having their own physical bodies they often seek to take over and control the bodies of men and use them for their own evil purposes.

Second, they are extremely talented and powerful with some being more powerful than others. In fact, God describes their levels of power as in Colossians 1:16 where He refers to the **“thrones, dominions, principalities and powers”** and in Ephesians 6:11-12 where He commands us to **“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”**

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #43
6/27/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Sixteen - The Bowl Judgments
The Last Series of Judgments, The End of The Tribulation Period
The Work of The Evil Spirits of the Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath

Though they have these awesome characteristics, they are not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. They are not divine though their powers and abilities exceed those of man and they are to be greatly feared for they, like the devil, **“go about seeking whom they may devour”** (1 Peter 5:8) and are wicked, powerful enemies of man.

Third, they reflect the evil, wicked nature of Satan in everything they are and do. They are rebellious against the authority of God's throne (Isaiah 14:13-14) and, being foolishly arrogant, think they can supplant God. Besides reproducing Satan's rebellion, they also reproduce Satan's basic, inherent nature of deceit. Having so foolishly deceived himself into his own destructive destiny by his pride and arrogance, the devil is the originator of all lies and forms of deceit. In fact, Jesus said he is **“a liar and the father of it”** (John 8:44). Any form of rebellion, deceit or expression of a lie is an indication of the activity of the devil and his demons, even when such expressions flow from “good, well-intentioned people.” For example, Jesus so identified the words that came out of Peter's mouth in Matthew 16:23 when He said, **“Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”**

In addition to the devil's ability to reproduce his deceit and lies through men, with man's consent, he also is able to pervert man's natural desires and drives into self-destructive lusts which God identifies as the starting point of sin when He tells us in James 1:14-15 **“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”** God furthermore tells us in 1 John 2:16 that, having allowed this to happen, the things of the arena of this frightful activity, this world in which we live, becomes a place where previously good things are perverted. **“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”** In 2 Corinthians 2:4 God identifies Satan as **“the god of this world”** and tells us that he **“has blinded the minds of those who believe not.”** Additionally, in Ephesians 2:3 God tells us that all of us have lived under the control of such lusts and have been **“children of wrath,”** or the children of the devil. That is specifically the way Jesus characterized the religious leaders of His day when He said, **“Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of our father ye will do”** (John 8:44).

This is all extremely sobering and frightening and God expects us to take very seriously the warnings He has given to us. The passage we are studying chronicles the activity of Satan and his slavish evil spirits during the period

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #43
6/27/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Sixteen - The Bowl Judgments
The Last Series of Judgments, The End of The Tribulation Period
The Work of The Evil Spirits of the Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath

of Tribulation, after the church has been raptured away from this earth and into heaven. Satan is already effectively and actively expressing himself. In fact, the next major point in our thinking clearly sets forth that reality. The greatest difference between what Satan is now doing is not in his methods, but in his freedom. Now, God restricts his activity. During the Tribulation Period God gives him the freedom to act and show what he is really like.

Fourth, what is the manner in which Satan most effectively operates?

What he is doing today is an indicator of what his activity will be like during the Tribulation Period, particularly as described here in Revelation 16:14. God tells us that **“They are the spirits of devils, working miracles.”**

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.

Here we are told what the **“three unclean spirits”** of verse thirteen do. They seduce men into rebellion against God by **“working miracles.”** This is an extremely effective way to attract foolish men to the place of their own destruction. In order to do this these **“evil spirits”** must conceal their real identify and deceitfully appear to be something other than who they really are. Few men are so foolish as to openly and willfully follow the devil and his **“evil spirits;”** therefore, neither the devil nor his **“evil spirits”** ever present themselves as who they really are. They are always deceitful and always appear to be **“servants of God”** rather than servants of Satan.

In writing Second Corinthians Paul dealt with and exposed such dangerously deceitful **“evil spirits.”** He tells the people to be alert **“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices”** (2 Cor. 2:11). Continuing he wrote, **“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ;”** (2 Cor. 2:17) and we **“...have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”** (2 Cor. 4:2-4).

Describing Satan's method of controlling men and using under the influence of the **“evil spirits”** he wrote **“...such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no**

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #43
6/27/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Sixteen - The Bowl Judgments
The Last Series of Judgments, The End of The Tribulation Period
The Work of The Evil Spirits of the Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath

marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Of course, this is frightening! These things were already happening when the New Testament was being written (2 Peter 2:1) and the believers were alerted and instructed that they *"...not believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). Jesus had also warned about this methodology of Satan in Matthew 24:24 when He said, *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."* Furthermore, through Paul, God described exactly what would happen during the Tribulation Period when He allowed Satan to manifest his true nature:

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

There are many other places in the New Testament where God gives us more information about the manner in which Satan and his **"evil spirits"** operate. If anyone is deceived today by Satan's **"evil spirits"** it will be in spite of God's clear descriptions of his methodology and warnings. Even today, in spite of Paul's warnings to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:27-32) and the writer's efforts to present God's Word to you, there is clear evidence that some are being deceived by Satan. As Paul warned the elders from Ephesus, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, ... For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:28-30).