

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #46
7/18/2007

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 Seventh Bowl Of Wrath, The Last Judgment: Part 1

We turn our attention to verses seventeen through twenty-one, the account of the Seventh Bowl of God's wrath, the last judgment just prior to our Lord's return as described in Chapter nineteen and elsewhere. There are twelve separate details or aspects, each of them important, and we will focus our attention upon them in the order in which they are presented.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial (1) into the air; and there came (2) a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, (3) It is done.

18 And (4) there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and (5) there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And (6) the great city was divided into three parts, and (7) the cities of the nations fell: (8) and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And (9) every island fled away, and (10) the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men (11) a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and (12) men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

We have already seen some characteristics which are unique to the Bowl Judgments and distinguish them from the two previous sets of judgments, the Seal Judgments and the Trumpet Judgments.

First, the function of a bowl, as pictured in the **Bowl Judgments** is to hold something, to be a container. **It appears that bowls or vials are pictured here because Christ has reached down into hell, into "the lake of fire and brimstone," to get a sample of the contents of hell.** He then pours it out upon the earth so that the wicked can actually experience a sample of what awaits them unless they repent of their sins and trust Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Hell, or the **"lake of fire and brimstone,"** is eternal. Whatever is experienced by those sentenced to spend eternity there will never end, nor will the sufferers ever find any relief. Before a person is cast into hell he will receive a resurrected, changed, body which will not be mortal like the body a person has here on this earth (John 5:28-29). It is logical that the resurrected body of **"those resurrected unto damnation"** will receive a body uniquely designed for suffering even as those who experience the **"resurrection unto life"** will receive a body uniquely designed to enjoy heaven.

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Second, we have learned that the Bowl Judgments are cumulative.

The effects of the judgments continue and are stacked upon each prior judgment. They are not isolated events which happen and then are finished.

Third, we have learned that the Bowl Judgments are ascendative.

Each judgment is worse, more severe and more intense than the one it follows. This is in addition to the cumulative effects of the judgments. Therefore, as each person who has the **“mark of the beast”** is attempting to deal with the pain and trauma of one devastating judgment, he finds that he is confronted with something even worse and more debilitating.

Fourth, we have also learned that the Bowl Judgments have a fulfilling nature. God has given predictive information about each of these judgments, either through the spoken word or through a previous event.

The first aspect of this Seventh Judgment Bowl is when **“the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air.”** Previously, all of the water on the earth, both the salt water and the fresh water, was affected by the second and third **Bowl Judgments**. We also saw the earth, the land, affected. Here we see that the **“air”** is affected, all of the **“air”** surrounding the earth. If anyone with the **“mark of the beast,”** somehow, by some unknown means, escaped the trauma wrought upon the water and the land, such a person would not be able to escape this because every person must breathe **“air.”** As a result of what this angel does, the entire atmosphere of this earth becomes toxic.

The second aspect is **“a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne.”** During these seven years John has heard a number of voices making pronouncements, but this is different. Prior to this he has not heard **“a great voice out of the temple of heaven,”** particularly a voice **“from the throne.”** It is surely the very voice of the Lord Himself. John recognized this as something very special. Only Jesus could know what was about to happen and make the pronouncement that is the next aspect.

The third aspect is before us in the form of a pronouncement, “It is done.” HE, Jesus Christ, is the One Who is in command of all of this. This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He is the One, the only One, Who has the authority, the right, to open the seals on that scroll, the title deed to all of creation. Now, it is HE Who tells us that **“It is done,”** finished! Life, as we have known it on this earth, is finished when these judgments are completed and HE returns in glorious victory over all of HIS enemies.

The fourth aspect is something John hears, “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings.” What John hears is a warning that introduces a horrible judgment.

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Three times previously, Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19, John had heard these ominous sounds and they had always introduced times of judgment. This time is like the previous times except that it introduces a greater and more devastating judgment than anything ever known to man. The reasons for that are given in the introduction above. To more fully explain this, Jesus tells John that a judgment is about to happen unlike anything that has ever happened on this earth before.

In the introduction to this lesson it was pointed out that these **Bowl Judgments** have some characteristics which distinguish them from the two previous sets of judgments, **the Seal and the Trumpet Judgments**. These **Bowl Judgments** are far worse than the previous judgments in the sense that (1) they are **samples of hell** being poured out upon this earth, and (2) they are **cumulative** in that their effects never cease, and (3) they are **ascendative** in that the severity of their effects increases with each judgment, and (4) they are **fulfilling** in that God has given predictive indication of their nature previously. The **fulfilling** nature, which characterizes these judgments, is evidenced in the fact that every time an earthquake happens somewhere on this earth it should be seen as a sign by God of what He is going to do with this **Seventh Bowl Judgment**. If people would only take God at His Word and think logically, every time an earthquake occurs and is measured on the Richter Scale men would say, *“This is nothing compared to what is coming.”*

Just this week, we heard the news that an earthquake, measured at 6.8 on the Richter Scale, produced devastation, death and fear in northern Japan. Pictures of some of the damages were quickly shown around the world. The largest Nuclear Power Plant in the world was damaged and radioactive material was leaked into the ocean prompting anxiety around the world. Buildings, highways and railroad tracks were distorted and destroyed as if they were parts of some toy set that a child had grown tired of and destroyed. And, as earthquakes go, this was a rather minor one. Thousands of similar quakes occur each year in various places around our world. Each of these should be seen as a sign pointing to what we are now reading in God's Word.

Therefore, the fifth aspect of this Seventh Bowl of Judgment is presented by God in the following statement: **“There was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”** While, in this passage, God only tells us five aspects of this earthquake. He gives us many more details of it in other places in His Word, particularly in the Old Testament, but what He tells us here is awesome and describes events and effects beyond anything we have ever known.

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In this passage God tells us that: **“And (6) the great city was divided into three parts, and (7) the cities of the nations fell: (8) and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And (9) every island fled away, and (10) the mountains were not found.”** The earthquake itself is the fifth aspect of this **Seventh Bowl of Judgment** with the effects, as described in verses nineteen and twenty, being the next four more aspects of this judgment. We consider these four aspects in the order they are given to us.

The first effect of this earthquake centers our attention upon “the great city,” which is Jerusalem. Though some identify **“the great city”** as **“Babylon,”** we know that God means Jerusalem **“the great city”** because in Rev. 11:8 He was referring to Jerusalem when He used the same expression. Verse nineteen describes three separate effects of this **“great earthquake.”** **First,** God tells us how it affects Jerusalem. **Second,** God tells us how it affects the cities of the world. **Third,** God focuses our attention on **“Babylon”** and tells us that He remembers Babylon and gives to her **“the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”** God's explanation of what He means with this phrase will require two Chapters, Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen, to describe what He does to **“Babylon.”**

First, we will focus on how this earthquake affects **“the great city,”** Jerusalem. Jerusalem with Mt. Zion has a very special place in the plans of God. As John McArthur points out, though this earthquake affects her, she will not be destroyed. Rather, she will be made more beautiful than ever and prepared for the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord. Jesus gathers His enemies to come to their destruction at Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). They come from all corners of the earth, even though they are all suffering the effects of the previous Bowl Judgments, boiling over with anger and hatred towards Jesus. Deceived by Satan, and his **“AntiChrist”** and **“False Prophet,”** millions of Christ-haters scramble toward Jerusalem, to their date with destiny as determined by Jesus. Once in Jerusalem, for a while they will be allowed to show their barbarism and vent their anger upon the inhabitants. But, Jesus has set a limit to the work of these savages. Through the prophet Zechariah God tells us: **“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle”** (Zech. 14:2-3).

The wicked will briefly think they have won, but, like all arrogant fools, they will learn that Jesus is in control of even their anger and certainly their destiny as He prepares Jerusalem for the Millennial Kingdom.