

Additional Notes on Revelation Chapter 16

After listening to the reading of this chapter here are a few comments that I have found relevant.

1. Remember, we already "saw the end" in Revelation 6:12-17. But here John takes us over the same material in greater detail again. This reminds us that Revelation is not strictly chronological in its arrangement. Revelation 14 seemed to describe the consummation of all things, ending with the fury of the Battle of Armageddon. Again, John will go back and describe God's judgment in more detail. This idea of stating and re-stating in more detail is common with prophecy, and with Hebrew literature in general.
2. We note the severity of the bowls of judgment and wonder that the once gracious and patient God who forgave our sins and offered Grace through Christ Jesus, should now unleash such fury. In many respects those who receive this fury are little different than we were at one time; and the Lord and all of heaven pours out vengeance on those who chose the side of evil.
3. "Seven angels having the seven last plagues." This idea is found also in Leviticus 26:21: *Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins*. These seven last plagues are God's judgment on a disobedient and contrary world.
4. There are two NT words for **Anger** in Greek: *Orge* and *Thymos*: *Thymos*, used 11 in the NT is used in 10 instances out of 11 in Revelation. *Thymos* refers to a burning, flashing hot anger or "rage." Elsewhere in the NT there is righteous anger which comes forth out of a settled disposition.
5. A multitude on the sea of glass. This scene may echo remind us of the "fires" of judgment. It seems to mirror the divine purposes which have come into effect. The *sea like crystal* may be a depiction of the Holiness of God as previewed in Chapter 4. These standing upon the sea are those who are victorious over the beast even through their faithfulness leads to death. They are the tribulation martyrs, described in Revelation 7:9-17. The songs of praise as appropriate to all worship songs are always directed unto God and never toward us as individuals. "Your name; Your ways; Your Holiness; Your Worthiness" etc. extol God's greatness and worthiness.
6. 1. (5-6) Seven angels, are distinctively clothed in pure bright linen, they have their chests girded with golden bands. These have just emerged from the heavenly temple. A sash at chest denotes Judges, A sash at the waists denote priests. They hold golden bowls. These are a shallow bowls (saucers also used for incense libations.) These bowls can be quickly emptied.
7. 16-1 God directs these judgments alone from his temple. These savage judgments fall upon the natural world.
The bowl judgments are the third woe spoken of in Revelation 11:14. Images from Israel's Exodus are prominent in the bowl judgments; boil, blood, darkness. (Exod. 7-10) Those who believe that the Book of Revelation has been already fulfilled in history have a hard time with this. In Poole's commentary he suggests meanings as, *upon part of the earth, etc*. If earth doesn't mean earth, then no one can tell what it means, and God may as well not have written it. (Guzik)
8. Both the oceans and the fresh waters are fully contaminated and poisoned to life. In the earlier Revelation 8, 2nd trumpet judgment the third part of oceans and fresh water was ruined. When these judgments come, the time must be very short until the return of Jesus. With ecological disaster such as this, the human race cannot survive long.
9. Next the fourth bowl produces Scorching Heat; Atmospheric Solar Events. Intolerable temperatures. The fifth Bowl results in a plague of darkness. With total darkness upon the face of the earth it is hard to find a natural explanation for it other than the supernatural blanketing of the rays of the sun, as in the days of Egypt in Exodus 10:21-22. ("Judgment may produce a carnal repentance - a repentance that is of the flesh, and after the manner of the sinful nature of men. It is superficial and has not affected the heart.)

10. Demonically inspired armies move toward a final confrontation with an all or nothing resolution. These demons may be likened to the "lying spirit" who led Ahab into battle (1 Kings 22:19-23). The sixth bowl. Armies amass for the final battle. Does the opposing camp actually think they can triumph? Or is it just a crazed all or nothing suicide effort? The great river Euphrates: The Romans considered the Euphrates River a secure barrier against invasion from the empires of the east.
11. In that day it was 1,800 miles long and anywhere from 300-1200 yards wide. Why do these armies come? Is it to wipe out Israel? Is it to rebel against a European-based world leader (the Antichrist)? Ultimately, they come to do battle against God and His Messiah (Psalm 2). If they are from India, China or other countries of the East.
12. (Ezekiel 38 and 39). The battle of Gog, Magog and her allies come against Israel.
There are two great end-times battles spoken of by the prophets. The battle of Ezekiel 38 is a battle directed against Israel in which Israel is given the victory. The second battle is Armageddon, in which the Antichrist leads the world system against a returning Jesus (Revelation 17:12-16, 17:14, 19:19).