



– an uncluttered approach –

# SIMPLIFYING REVELATION

- Chapter 14 ended with a judgment scene.
- Chapter 15 begins with a new series of signs.
  - V 1, “...I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous...”
  - Immediately he tells us about seven angels bringing “the seven last plagues.”
  - These would be the completion of God’s wrath upon the righteous.
  - That said, the “great and marvelous” sign is not merely the plagues, but also the victory of God’s people in contrast with the defeat of the wicked.

*standing on the sea of*  
**GLASS**



...those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark, and over the number of his name...

**(REVELATION 15:2)**

- 15:2 speaks of a sea of glass mingled with fire.
  - There was a sea of glass in 4:6, before the throne. There the image carried the idea of purification (purified through water).
  - The same would be true here – purification.
  - The fire may represent persecutions, but equally, it could be purification.
    - “...*fire will test each one’s work...*” (1 Corinthians 3:13)
    - “...*that the genuineness of your faith ... through it be tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Peter 1:7)
  - Those who have victory over the beast are pictured standing on the sea of glass (**15:2**).
    - In ch. 13, the beasts were introduced by the dragon.

They persecuted God's people, even provoking some to blaspheme.

- In the midst of that, victory was promised to those who endured (13:10, 18).
- 15:3, now God's people are pictured singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.
  - # 820 in our song books:
  - *"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye;  
To Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie.  
We will rest in the fair and happy land, by and by,  
Just across on the evergreen shore;  
Sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, by and by,  
And dwell with Jesus evermore."*
  - This image brings together both God's people of the OT and the NT.
  - Singing saints in heaven were mentioned in 5:9-10 and 14:3.
  - The words here are different than what appeared in 5:9-10, but the message is the same.
  - We serve a great God, His words are

marvelous, and He is worthy to be praised.

...the temple of  
the tabernacle  
of the testimony  
in heaven was

OPEN

heavenly  
TEMPLE

- 15:5 – the *“temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.”*
  - By its description, this temple or tabernacle is not on the earth – it is in heaven.
  - Despite the fact that it is opened, no one would be able to enter this heavenly temple until after the plagues were complete.
- V 8 – *“The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were complete.”*
  - This draws from the imagery in the OT about the building of the tabernacle (Ex 40:34) and Solomon’s temple (1 Ki 8:10; 2 Chr 5:14).
  - In both cases, the glory of God came upon the

structure, and then it was consecrated for use.



- Display the effect sins has on the earth

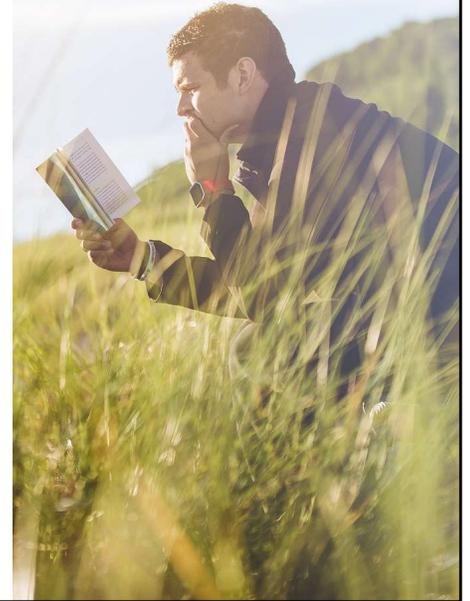


- God's effort to convict the wicked of sin



- God's wrath showered on the wicked

## 3 GROUPS OF SEVENS



- We said early on that certain numbers would repeat in the book.
- John has recorded **3 GROUPS OF SEVEN** – the 7 seals, 7 trumpets & now the 7 bowls.
  - The **SEVEN SEALS** (6:1-8:1) were a vivid display of the effect sin has upon God's creation.
  - The **SEVEN TRUMPETS** (8:2-9:21; 11:15-19) revealed God's effort to convict the wicked of their sin and cause them to repent.
  - The **SEVEN BOWLS** (15:6-16:21) show God's wrath against the wicked, for they refused to turn from sin.
- The intent of the seven bowls is not to provoke repentance.
  - That was the purpose of the seven trumpets.
  - The bowls represent God's vengeance upon those who oppose the Lamb and His people.

- In Revelation 6:10, the slain saints cried out, *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*
- The time of waiting is done.
- In Revelation 13:10, John wrote about the retribution upon the wicked for their actions against His people:
  - *“He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”*
  - The saints were to patiently wait for God to exercise justice.
  - Now, in the seven bowls, the enemy of the elect have the plagues they brought upon the righteous revisited upon them.

# 7bowls 7PLAGUES

## BOWL 1

• a foul and loathsome sore

## BOWL 2

• blood of a dead man

## BOWL 3

• more blood

## BOWL 4

• scorched with fire & heat

## BOWL 5

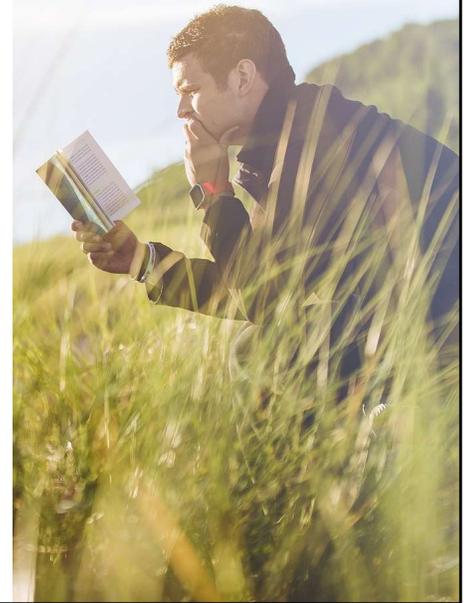
• darkness and pain

## BOWL 6

• way of judgment prepared

## BOWL 7

• Armageddon – It is done!



- The **FIRST BOWL** (16:2) reveals “...a foul and loathsome sore...”
  - They had already chosen the foul and loathsome sore for themselves, it just presented itself as self-gratification and pleasure before.
  - The devil is good at hiding the true nature of sin. God visits their sin upon them in all it’s putridity.
- The **SECOND** (16:3) and **THIRD BOWLS** (16:4) involve blood and more blood.
  - These are not about destroying the seas and rivers or the creatures in them.
  - The image is about returning upon the wicked what they did to the righteous (v 5-6).
  - A voice from the altar acknowledged the righteousness of God’s judgment (v 7).

- The retribution for what had been done to God's people continues in the **FOURTH BOWL** (16:8-9).
  - Hebrews 11:35-37 speaks of various ways God's people were afflicted and put to death.
  - Historical records speak of Christians being burned at the stake.
  - Now, in this fourth bowl, the wicked are scorched with fire and great heat.
- The **FIFTH BOWL** (16:10-11) shows a powerless enemy before God and His agents.
  - Things are hopeless when an enemy soldier is able to walk right into the throne room and pour out a bowl on the throne.
  - The end result is darkness & pain. Sin leads to darkness and pain.
    - They did not repent (11b; cf. 9:20-21).
    - Rather, they blasphemed God (they blamed God).
  - The dragon & his beasts warred against God's people, but at no point did they have an effect on the Lord's throne.
  - The Lord is able to bring great affliction and eventually destruction to the beast's kingdom.
- The **SIXTH BOWL** (16:12) is poured out on the great river Euphrates, to prepare the way for the kings of

the East.

- God used Assyria & Babylon against Israel & Judah respectively in the OT.
- The figure of the Euphrates was used in 9:14 to indicate that God was the source of judgment against the unrighteous.
- Revelation 16:13-14 speak of Satan gathering forces together for a final battle against the Lord.
  - Unclean spirits go forth from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet.
  - Like frogs – perhaps a loose reference to the plague of Egypt.
    - What is the connection?
    - Uncleanliness & destruction.
  - These evil spirits are used to deceive and entice men.
    - Kings of the earth – leaders of nations;
    - And the whole world – all peoples.
  - The place of the battle is identified in v 16 as Armageddon (which is a reference to the Mount of Megiddo at the foot of Mount Carmel).
    - Megiddo was an important location in the ancient world.
    - It is mentioned in the Bible 12 times.

- Perhaps the most important reference to Megiddo in Scripture is the death of Josiah, king of Judah (2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35:20-25).
  - Josiah confronted Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo as he was on his way to the Euphrates to aid the Assyrians who were in battle with the Babylonians.
  - We don't know why Josiah went out to stand against Necho, but the end result was his death.
  - This would prove to be a crushing blow to Judah. He had worked diligently to turn the people back to God, tearing down their high places and re-establishing the Passover.
  - He was the last good king in their history. Not long after his demise, the Babylonians were on Jerusalem's doorstep and eventually their city and temple would be destroyed and the people would be killed or taken as captives.
- It might seem fitting then, a symbolic type of reciprocation or retribution, that the

site which brought great sorrow and mourning among God's people of the Old Testament through the death of their righteous king, be used as a figure for the defeat of the enemies of God's people.

- In the midst of all this preparation by the devil, there is what might be considered a parenthetical statement in verse 15.
  - It is the Lord speaking to His people.
  - In the midst of a wicked and tumultuous world, we should not become distracted and discouraged by the mounting up of enemies against the Lord.
  - We must keep our focus on the Lord's return.
  - We know not the day nor the hour – it is as a thief in the night. It will be unexpected.
  - Thus, we must keep ourselves ready and waiting; watching for the Lord's return.
  - We are told to keep our garments; we must continue to walk in the purity of God's way.
- The battle of Armageddon has been characterized by people as a huge, apocalyptic, age-ending battle. And certainly, with the

preparation we have seen on the devil's part, we should expect it to be a monumental event.

- The **SEVENTH BOWL** (16:17) is poured out “...into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’”
  - What’s done?
    - The battle of Armageddon.
    - Despite all the preparation the dragon made, a word from the Lord and the battle is over.
    - Satan and his armies are no match for God.
      - The dragon tried to get the Child (12:1-5), he failed.
      - The dragon tried to get the woman (12:6-16), he failed.
      - The dragon tried to get the offspring (12:17). Though he had success against them (13:7), it would only be for a time (13:10; 14:12-13).
      - The dragon brought forth the beast from the sea, but it had a mortal wound (13:1-3).
      - The dragon brought forth the beast from the earth, but it was inherently inferior to the Lord (13:18), 666.

- Time and again, the dragon and his cohorts are shown to be inferior to the Lord and fall before Him.

...noises and  
thunderings and  
lightnings ... a  
great earthquake...



## A Great **Earthquake**

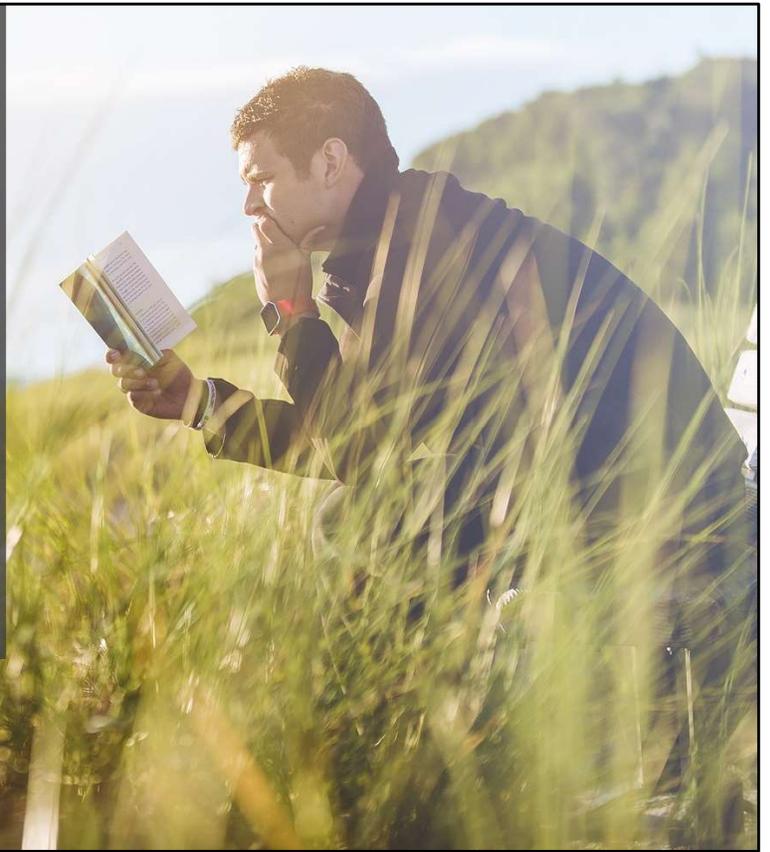
- Chapter 16 closes with the language of judgment.
  - Noises and thunderings and lightnings... (v 18)
  - A great earthquake (the biggest earthquake ever) (v 18)
  - The nations of the earth, pictured in Babylon fell (v 19).
  - The islands fell away, the mountains disappeared (v 20).
  - Hail fell from heaven to bring destruction (v 21).
- We've seen comparable images used to picture judgment 3 times previous:
  - 6:14, *"...the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up and every mountain and island was moved out of its place."*
  - 11:19, *"...there were lightning, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail."*
  - 14:8, 10, *"...Babylon is fallen, is fallen ... he shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God ... He shall be tormented*

*with fire and brimstone...”*

Next week...

- ❖ The Great Harlot
- ❖ Babylon Is Fallen
- ❖ Reaction to Babylon's destruction

REVELATION 17-18



Ch. 17-18, the judgment against Babylon is discussed in greater detail.