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August 11, 2002

Glimpses of the Tribulation Period
Revelation 15-16

INTRO: We are now living in a period of time called by the Bible “the dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph. 3:2). This age of grace will end at the rapture. The rapture is when Christ will come in the clouds and catch the saints, and His waiting bride off the earth. After the rapture of the saints, there will come a time of tribulation upon the earth. This tribulation will last for seven years. During the tribulation, “the world will experience the severest travail, sorrow, war, destruction, and death in its entire history. So trying will this period of travail be that were it not for the sudden intervention of God in the return of Christ no flesh would be saved” (DeHaan 198).

1. I Thessalonians 5:9-10 says: “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul tells the church at Thessalonica that “God hath not appointed us to wrath.” That means the wrath of hell nor the wrath of the Tribulation. Sodom and Gomorrah could not be destroyed until Lot was removed. Tribulation cannot begin until believers are removed.
2. In II Thessalonians 2:1, the church at Thessalonica was told about the coming of the Lord and the gathering of the saints to Him. In vss 2-8, we find that the anti-Christ will not be revealed until the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world. That means that believers are gone when the tribulations starts.

Friends, you and I who know the Lord are told by the Father, “to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (I Thes 1:10).

I. THE WRATH OF GOD WILL BE FULL (Revelation 15)

1. Vs. 1, This verse is a summary of all that follows to the end of chapter 16.
 1. “Filled up” means finished or consummated. “To God the future is as certain as though it were past, so sure of accomplishment is His Word” (Lockyer 226).
 2. The seven last plagues are in vials that will be poured out on the earth (vs 7). These vials will cleanse the earth, preparing it for the millennium.
2. Vss 2-4, Song of Victory.
 1. Vs 2, The sea mentioned here is around the throne of God.
 1. The saints here are tribulation saints (6:9-11), who emerge victorious from a trial of fire:(20:4-7), these have “gotten the victory.”
 2. These saints have the harps of God.
 3. Pharaoh and his army was destroyed in the Red Sea, symbolic of a sea of fire. They did not pass through, they were destroyed. The Pharaoh of the times spoken of here in Revelation will be

cast into the lake of fire along with his cohorts (19:20).

2. Vss 3-4, Two songs are sung. The Song of Moses is a song of triumph over evil by God's judgments. The Song of the Lamb is a song of exaltation (John 1:29). Worthy is the Lamb celebrates the resurrection by which we have victory over Satan (1 Pet. 1:18-21). We are delivered. The "Lamb" is King of the Saints.
3. Vss 5-8, The seven angels will come out of the heavenly temple. In vs 6, the angels are commissioned and equipped. In vs 7, they receive the golden vials full of God's wrath. In vs 8, the temple is filled with the smoke of God's glory. Smoke is a symbol of God's presence. At this point, "God is about to deal with all earth rebels" (Lockyer 230).

II. REV 16:1, THE SEVEN VIALS OR BOWLS

1. Vs 1, A great voice comes out of the temple. God's holiness demands judgment upon an apostate world, thus He says: "Go.... pour out the vials of wrath upon the earth."
 1. The command of Christ for us is: "God ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This is a time of grace.
 2. In Rev 16:1, grace is withdrawn.
2. Vs 2, The first vial.
 1. The first vial is like the sixth Egyptian plague (Ex 9:8-12) which was the first to afflict the body of the Egyptians.
 2. The word used for sore is *elkos* which means an ugly ulcer that oozes and stinks.
 3. These sores will be unhealed (16:11). This will be much worse than the STD's of today.
 4. These sores will come upon all who are headed to hell.
3. Vs 3, The Second Vial.
 1. Under the second trumpet (Rev 8:8) only a third part of the sea becomes blood, but here the destruction is not partial but complete. Sea water is almost identical in composition to blood. The Angel adds a substance and blood appears.
 2. The blood of the martyrs will be avenged. The heathen will reap what they have sown. The heathen will be floating in blood.
4. Vss 4-7, the Third Vial.
 1. Vs 4, The sources of the sea are now polluted with blood.
 2. Vs 5, God's judgment is righteous. To reject grace is to invite judgment. If you reject God's grace now you will one day face His wrath.
 3. Vs 6, The apostates had shed the blood of the saints and now they must drink water as blood: bitter, nausea. They get what they have earned. Rom 6:23, "The wages of sin..."
 4. Vs 7, The angel and the altar represents the fact that all of heaven agree with god's judgment.
 1. On this altar, the prayers of God's saints are presented before

- God. The heathen rejoiced at death of the two witnesses (11:7-10). Now saints rejoice.
2. Under the altar, the souls of the martyrs cry out for vengeance upon their foes, the foes of God. (6:9-10).
5. Vss 8-9, The Fourth Vial
1. Vs 8, God intensifies the heat and light of the sun. This is literal and not symbolic. Sun gets closer as the heat is turned up.
 2. Vs 9, Trees and green grass were burned up under the first trumpet (8:7). "Now God applies His scorched earth policy to the bodies of men" (Lockyer 235). Ice caps will melt and great cities will flood (Job 38:22-23).
 1. Those who are scorched are those who have the mark of the beast (16:2). Earth Worshipers and sun worshipers drink of God's wrath.
 2. Just as Pharaoh's heart was hardened, even though he saw the power of God over His creation; so will man's heart be hardened during the tribulation. Heed the Word of God NOW!
 3. Instead of crying for mercy, they curse God.
 4. It is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance (Rom 2:4). Those who are not won by grace are likely to never be won at all.
6. Vss 10-11, the Fifth Vial.
1. Vs 10, The fifth vial of wrath is poured out on the throne of the beast, a mockery of God's throne.
 1. Satan's man is condemned and tortured.
 2. He will feel the stroke of divine vengeance.
 3. William Newell said many years ago that the beast's throne would be rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates River.
 4. The darkness spoken of will be as dark as that of the Egyptian plague. This suggests the blackness of darkness the beast will endure forever. Men loved darkness, now they have it.
 5. "Gnaw their tongues" speaks of the most intense pain and agony.
 - 1.) Pain over the defeat of their plans.
 - 2.) Physical anguish.
 2. Vs 11, The piling up of wrath or plagues fails to bring about a change of heart.
7. Vss 12-16, The Sixth Vial Kings of the east--Japan, China, India The Euphrates River.
1. Vs 12, The drying up of the Euphrates will allow the great Asiatic armies to march to Israel. East means rising of the sun pointing to the Asiatic people. The national symbol of Japan is a rising sun. This river goes right through Baghdad, Iraq. ILL: 9 boys to each girl in China.
 2. Vs 13, These frogs symbolize the filthy work of the unholy trinity. (Infernal trio).
 1. Frogs were regarded by the Greeks as the proper inhabitants of

- the stygian lake or river of hell.
 - 2. Just as frogs croak in the marsh, those unclean spirits will croak their lies.
- 3. Vs 14, The unholy three will use their powers to bring the nations of the earth together to battle against God.
 - 1. Lockyer calls this: "The final effort of hell to overthrow heaven" (241).
 - 2. They seek to destroy Israel and God himself (Psa 2:2-3).
- 4. Vs 15, **This is a parenthesis.**
 - 1. This message is to the tribulation saints, but it is a good message for us.
 - 2. Blessedness is associated with watching and shame with careless living.
 - 3. They are to keep their garments clean. So are we.
- 5. Vs 16, This will be a place of universal slaughter.
 - 1. The nations combine to crush Israel at the foot of Mount Carmel.
 - 2. Psa 83:1-5, God will intervene.
- 8. Vss 17-21, The Seventh Vial
 - 1. Vs 17, This vial commences a destruction greater than anything ever witnessed.
 - 1. The vial is poured in the air. All men breath. We have here divine judgment upon the life breath of the people.
 - 2. Also, Satan is known as the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2) and this judgment will end his power over the air.
 - 2. Vs 18, Lightning and thunders and voices are expressive of God's power in judgment.
 - 1. The greatest of all earthquakes will take place during the tribulation.
 - 2. All earthquakes before this one will be counted as nothing. 1812 Reelfoot.
 - 3. Vs 19, Jerusalem will be divided into three parts by the quake. Babylon (Iraq) will be destroyed (Jer 51:62-64). Cities of the world will fall.
 - 4. Vs 20, Under the sixth seal, these were moved out of their places (6:14)--now they flee away. This adds to the terror. Smoothing out of earth preparation for millennium.
 - 5. Vs 21, Enormous hailstones will fall from heaven. Hail is a sign of God's wrath (Isa 28:2).
 - 1. The hailstones will weigh about 100 lbs, Greek *lithinosa*, boulder.
 - 2. These judgments call forth blasphemy and not repentance.
 - 3. Men do not turn to God and repent.

CONCLUSION: Friend, now is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may be too late.