

The Revelation

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Revelation 16:1-12 Introduction

- A look at plagues and terrors...

<p>First, the ten plagues when Moses confronted Pharaoh with the wrath of God.</p> <p>(i) The water made into blood (Exodus 7:20-25). (ii) The frogs (Exodus 8:5-14). (iii) The lice (Exodus 8:16-18). (iv) The flies (Exodus 8:20-24). (v) The plague on the cattle (Exodus 9:3-6). (vi) The boils and sores (Exodus 9:8-11). (vii) The thunder and the hail (Exodus 9:22-26). (viii) The locusts (Exodus 10:12-19). (ix) The darkness (Exodus 10:21-23). (x) The slaying of the first-born (Exodus 12:29-30).</p>	<p>Second, the terrors which followed the sounding of the seven trumpets.</p> <p>(i) The coming of hail, fire and blood, through which a third part of the trees and all the green grass are withered (Revelation 8:7). (ii) The flaming mountain cast into the sea, whereby one third of the sea becomes blood (Revelation 8:8). (iii) The fall of the star Wormwood into the waters, whereby the waters become bitter and poisonous (Revelation 8:10-11). (iv) The smiting of one third of the sun and the moon and the stars, whereby all is darkened (Revelation 8:12). (v) The coming of the star who unlocks the pit of the abyss, from which comes the smoke out of which come the demonic locusts (Revelation 9:1-12). (vi) The loosing of the four angels bound in the Euphrates and the coming of the demonic cavalry from the east (Revelation 9:13-21). (vii) The announcement of the final victory of God and of the rebellious anger of the nations (Revelation 11:15).</p>	<p>Third, the terrors of this chapter.</p> <p>(i) The coming of the ulcerous sores upon men (Revelation 16:2). (ii) The sea becoming like the blood of a dead man (Revelation 16:3). (iii) The rivers and fountains becoming blood (Revelation 16:4). (iv) The sun becoming scorchingly hot (Revelation 16:8). (v) The darkness over the kingdom of the beast, and its agony (Revelation 6:10). (vi) The drying up of the Euphrates to open a way for the hordes of the kings of the east (Revelation 16:12). (vii) The pollution of the air and the accompanying terrors in nature, the thunder, the earthquake, the lightning and the hail (Revelation 16:17-21).</p>
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Vs. 1

- We meet the 7 angels in 15:1 and in 15:7 one of the four living creatures that surround the throne gave the angels 7 bowls of God's wrath. Now they are instructed to pour the contents of the bowls out on the earth.

Vs. 2

- The first plague is of sores, like Ex. 9:8-11 and the pains of disobedience to God in Duet. 28:35 and the sores of Satan in Job 2:7.

Vss. 3-7

- The second plague turns the sea into blood like that of a dead man. The third turns all the waters of the earth's rivers and springs to blood. Here is a repeat of Ex. 7:17-21 but on a world-wide scale. Gone are the limitations that hold the plagues to a given country or to a third of the earth (Rev. 9).
- In Hebrew thought, every natural force (wind, water, etc.) was believed to have an angel directing thing for God. Note that the water angel is not angry that his domain has been polluted. Instead he too remarks of the pure justice of the blood.
- Vs. 6 refers to those who have died in the persecutions. One is tempted to mark the beginning with the death of James, the brother of John, but there is the blood of the prophets as well. Here surely, he is thinking of the New Testament prophets (1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 13:1; 21:10; Eph. 4:11), but surely too, he is thinking of the Old Testament prophets, who were the remnant of the faithful, the true Israel in their times. Tradition held by the time of Christ, that all the prophets had been murdered for their faith and the speaking of truth (Matt. 21:33-46).
- The voice of the altar (vs. 7) may be either the angel of the altar or it may be the voice of the prayers that are sacrificed on the altar (Rev 8). Either way, God's justice is affirmed.

Vss. 8-11

- The fourth plague is the reverse of Ex. 10 where the sun is turned off. Here the sun is turned on HIGH! (global warming to the max?).
- The fifth plague was directed to the kingdom of the beast – Rome. Here again, the sun is turned off and the pain is unbearable.
- But now comes a repeated theme: the people cursed God, they did not repent. The whole purpose of the plagues is to give people a taste of Hell, to render appropriate justice, and to give people an opportunity to repent. Barclay: “The tragedy of life and of the world is not that men do not know God; the tragedy is that, knowing Him, they still insist on going their own way.”

Vs. 12

- The sixth plague dries up the Euphrates River. A major river is a natural barrier, no different than a mountain range. This act has been both a blessing and a threat in Scripture. In Ex. 14 and Joshua 3, drying up the Red Sea and the Jordan were great blessings. But in Is. 11:16, Jer. 51:36, and Zech. 10:11 it is a threat of God’s coming wrath. And then of course, there was the actual fall of Babylon....