

Lesson # 54 The Seventh Bowl Judgment Revelation 16: 17-21

Date: May 13, 2012

Revelation 16: 17-21 (ESV)

¹⁷The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. ¹⁹The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. ²¹And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

I. It is Done

v. 17

As this 7th angel pours the contents of the last bowl into the atmosphere of earth, it represents the final plague (Rev. 15:1) in the 3 series of 7 judgments that began the Tribulation period almost 7 years earlier. It is the worst one yet and brings final physical judgment as well as preparing the world's geography for the return and reign of Jesus Christ, which is now "at the door".

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This will be the absolute worst calamity ever experienced on earth, with the possible exception of Noah's flood. As the bowl is turned over into the air, a voice from inside the Temple, from the throne of God says, "It is done!" This is without a doubt the voice of God, and the Greek is describing a completed action with ongoing results, similar in nature to Jesus cry from the cross, "It is finished!" The main difference is that one cry signaled salvation for sinners and this one, doom for the unrepentant.

II. The Worst Earthquake in History vv. 18-19

Just as the 7th Seal judgment and 7th Trumpet brought violent thunderstorms, this one does the same but this bowl judgment will be the big one – certainly the atmosphere of the world will be lit up by lightning and thunder will be almost ceaseless. Accompanying that will be "a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake." This may mean more than tectonic plates rubbing together, and is very likely the fulfillment of **Haggai 2:6** & **Heb. 12:26-29**. Massive, world shaking – so intense that the world is reshaped in order to leave it in a state suitable for Christ's return & His millennial reign.

Again, this is not depicting a local earthquake, and is probably way beyond the Richter scale. Earth has experienced huge earthquakes before, so if this one is the worst every, it cannot possibly have taken place in AD 70 as Preterists claim.

The result locally (in Jerusalem – v. 19) is that the “Great City” is split into 3 parts. Some say this city is Babylon, the Antichrist’s capital, but that is mentioned as “Babylon the Great” in the same verse as a separate entity. Jerusalem will play a key role in the Millennium, and is being shaped by this earthquake geographically & geologically so that it is left standing as the highest place on earth, where Jesus’ throne will be stationed – see **Psalm 110:2; Isa. 3:2; 24:3; Micah 4:7 & Jer. 3:17.**

Zechariah 14:4-10 gives us more detail:

- Mount of Olives splits in two – v. 4
- A new valley is created that runs east / west – v. 4
- A spring of water will flow year round from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean & Dead Seas – v. 8
- The desert will blossom like a rose – Isa. 35:1
- Jerusalem will be elevated, surrounded by a flat plain – v. 10

So Jerusalem is enhanced by the earthquake as a result of this final physical judgment. However, other cities in the world do not fare so well. “The cities of the nations fell” – meaning literally falling, so massively that off the scale destruction should be expected. We have seen on the news what a single, large, localized earthquake can do – imagine earthquakes worldwide all at the same time as earth is quite literally torn apart!

Babylon is centered out, “remembered by God to be made to drain the cup of the wine of the fury of God’s wrath”. This is mentioned here only in passing but John will describe this in more detail in Rev. 18. ②

III. The Leveling of Earth

v. 20

Verse 20 says that “every island will flee away”, likely as a result of the earthquake and subsequent Tsunamis as islands are pulled underwater and their inhabitants drowned. In the ocean, all islands are virtually the tops of undersea mountains (ie. the Hawaiian Islands are the tops of volcanoes). These mountains will be flattened along with the mountains on land. See **Isa. 40:1-5.**

Imagine the fury that will be capable of flattening the Rocky Mountains and the Alps, many thousands of feet high, reducing them to rolling hills at best. Commentators like Henry Morris believe that this will restore earth to the sort of topography that existed before the flood[Ⓞ]. All of earth will thus be made accessible to all who dwell on earth during the Millennium.

IV. Hailstones and Depravity

v. 21

Finally, lest we forget the massive thunderstorm that accompanies the earthquake, John points out that the largest hailstones ever known are generated by the storm. The 7th Egyptian Plague was hailstones (Ex. 9:23-26),

heavy enough to kill men and beasts and to break trees. Hail mixed with fire was a part of the 1st Trumpet (Rev. 8:7), and in Joshua 10:11, God sent great hailstones to kill the Amorites, and more were killed by the hailstones than by the Israelite army. It would take great force to kill a man with hail, but these Revelation hailstones are reported by John to be 100 pounds each! The heaviest scientifically measured in history are about 2 pounds each and would do great damage. We have all seen what golf ball sized hail will do to a car body (4 – 5 ounces), so getting hit with a 100 lb. hailstone would be like getting hit with a bomb – not just weight but gravitational speed – @ 200 ft / sec / sec – you would be flattened like a pizza.

So do the people now repent? You know the answer to that question already. Verse 21 – “They cursed God because of the hail.”

Finally, these hard-hearted committed sinners, even under the final signs given by God, refuse to be convinced and to cry out to Him for mercy, and they remain committed to the worship of the Beast and the rejection of Jesus Christ – to their eternal peril.

God’s eternal wrath and judgment is inescapable for those who refuse to worship Jesus Christ. Only those who call out to Him in repentance (Rom. 10:13) will be saved, and only those who are saved are no longer under His wrath (Rom. 8:1).

Next lesson – Lesson # 55 Rev. 17:1-6 The Woman & the Beast

① Henry Morris, The Revelation Record, p. 321