

The Seven Vials

16:1-21

Introductory Notes

- The Seven Vial judgments are poured out on the earth as the Tribulation draws to a close.
- These judgments are of a scope and scale beyond anything we have seen before.
- I think the timing of these judgments is at the very end of the Tribulation.
- I think it is also important to bear in mind that God is working through these cataclysmic judgments to also prepare the earth itself for the Millennial Kingdom, which will in now wise be desolate.

Outline

- The First Vial (Sore) - vs. 1-2
- The Second Vial (Sea to Blood) - vs. 3
- The Third Vial (Freshwater to Blood) - vs. 4-7
- The Fourth Vial (Burning Sun) - vs. 8-9
- The Fifth Vial (Darkness) - vs. 10-11
- The Sixth Vial (Drying of Euphrates) - vs. 12-16
- The Seventh Vial (Earthquake, Hail, etc.) - vs. 17-21

Notes

- vs. 1 - voice - I think it is God speaking
- vs. 2 - noisome and grievous sore - literally an evil ulcer. Harkens back to the 6th Plague in Egypt in Exodus 9:8-12
- vs. 2 - note the target of the First Vial: those that had the mark of the beast.
- vs. 3 - became as blood - hearkens back to the 1st Egyptian Plague in Exodus 7:14-24. In the 2nd Trumpet (8:11) 1/3 of waters are poisoned. Now its universal. I also think it is important to note that it is "as" blood, so may not be literally blood.
- vs. 3 - blood of a dead man - normally blood gives life (Leviticus 17:11), but the allusion here is to coagulated, worthless blood.
- vs. 4 - rivers and fountains of waters - now the fresh water is affected as the sea water before.
- vs. 5 - angel of the waters - Either God has an angel assigned to water or this is the angel speaking who has affected the waters.
- vs. 5-7 - these verses reinforce that God is just and right in executing judgment.
- vs. 8 - the sun - which formerly had been darkened (8:12). Talk about global warming!
- vs. 9 - they repented not - nothing will cause them to turn from sin to God. This is not predestination but rather extreme ends of human depravity.
- vs. 10 - darkness - hearkens back to the 9th Egyptian Plague in Exodus 10:22. This is an unnatural darkness, as it seems to also cause tremendous pain.
- vs. 11 - still no repenting...

- vs. 12 - Euphrates - one of the major rivers in Middle East, flows through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. Something about the drying up of this river allows forces from the East (Iran?, China?, etc.) to move through in preparation for Armageddon.
- vs. 13-14 - unclean spirits - demons, or likely demon possessed individuals, that aid in herding all the world's forces to Armageddon.
- vs. 15 - Christ here cannot keep silent. The idea is that His coming is unexpected ("as a thief") and having consequences ("keepeth his garments", etc.)
- vs. 16 - Armageddon - "Mount of Megiddo", located in the Jezreel Valley in Northern Israel. Since ancient times an important and strategic location on trade routes.
- vs. 17 - into the air - I think this represents this final judgment as worldwide.
- vs. 17 - Note that God Himself speaks to say it is over with this judgment.
- vs. 18 - earthquake - the entire Earth is shaken. This whole verse points to the whole planet in uproar and turmoil.
- vs. 19 - great city - I think this is Jerusalem, see 11:8.
- vs. 19 - Babylon - next week, just hold on!
- vs. 20 - it appears the entire Earth is reshaped.
- vs. 21 - talent - here, slightly over 100 pounds.
- vs. 21 - men blasphemed - not mention of nor repenting, only their anger towards God.
- John Walvoord notes that the next event, chronologically, is Christ's Second Coming in 19:11. The next couple of chapters are not parenthetical, but do step away from the narrative a bit to focus on the fate of Babylon.