

The Revelation

Lesson 13

The Story of the Revelation

The Continuation – Part 3

Once upon a time and long, long ago ...

When the LORD broke the *sixth seal*, darkness covered the earth. The sun's light could not be seen and when the moon came up at night, it was red. John saw what looked like stars falling to the earth like figs that fall off a tree when blown by a great wind. The clouds were churning like a roll of paper turning over and over and the mountains and islands began to shake and move. This scared everyone to death and they ran to hide in caves and behind rocks. They thought the world was ending and they begged the rocks to fall on them and kill them thinking it would be better than facing the anger of God. No one can stand the anger of God.

John then saw the four angels who control the winds and he heard another angel tell them not to blow on the earth, sea or the trees until 144,000 servants were stamped on their heads with the name of Jesus and God. They were twelve thousand men from each of the twelve tribes of the Nation of Israel.

After the stamping of the 144,000 men on earth, John turned his attention back to heaven and he was amazed when he saw that a great multitude of people had arrived carrying palm branches from every tribe, nation and language on earth. These people were thanking God for their salvation. An elder told John that they were the people who had washed themselves clean in the blood of the Lamb - the LORD Jesus Who died on the cross for them. They were all the Christians in the world who had finally arrived in heaven to serve God day and night. God will protect them forever!

Then, Jesus broke the *seventh seal* and there was silence in heaven for thirty minutes.

John then saw seven angels and they were given *seven trumpets*. These were the seven angels who have stood before the throne of God in heaven since the beginning of creation. Another angel came to the altar with a golden pan full of smoke. The smoke came from the incense in the pan that represented the prayers of the saints of God. He threw the pan to the earth and the thunder sounded, lightning flashed, and an earthquake occurred.

The angel with the *first trumpet* blew his horn and hail fell to the earth, lightning struck and killed a third of the trees and burned the grass. Blood from the dead animals ran over the ground.

The angel with the *second trumpet* blew his horn and John saw a huge rock that looked like a big mountain thrown into the sea. It killed a third of the marine life and their blood turned the water red. It also destroyed a third of the ships sailing in the waters of the Great Sea.

The angel with the *third trumpet* blew his horn and a star fell from heaven. It landed on the rivers and streams around the Great Sea and poisoned the waters.

The angel with the *fourth trumpet* blew his horn and the sky became obscure again; only a third of the light from the sun, moon and stars would shine down on the earth.

John then saw an eagle flying as high as it could in the sky. It screeched a warning to the earth saying, “Woe, woe, woe” to everyone on earth because of what was about to take place with the sound of the last three trumpets!

The angel with the fifth *trumpet* blew his horn and one of the stars that fell like a fig in the wind ended up being an angel with the key to the bottomless abyss. He opened the abyss and smoke belched through the water and into the atmosphere and darkness filled the air. Out of the smoke came locusts with stingers like scorpions. The LORD permitted the locusts to sting only humans for five months. They were not permitted to hurt any trees or green vegetation as most locusts like to do – only humans, but not one of the 144,000 who had the name of Jesus and God on their foreheads. The stings were so bad that all the people wished they could just die, but they could not. The locusts had a king and leader, his name was Abaddon or Destroyer! That story ends the first woe.

The angel with the *sixth trumpet* blew his horn and a voice from heaven commanded the release of the four evil angels who had been bound at the Euphrates River since the early days just after the creation. They had been locked up all this time but now it was their turn to kill one third of mankind. They would not do it alone. They had two hundred million soldiers waiting to help them. Their chests were the color of fire, their heads looked like lions and smoke, fire and burning sulfur came out of their mouths. Their tails had serpents' heads and they had the power to hurt people. All who were not killed by these angels and their army did not turn to the LORD for help, they worshipped demons instead.

An angel appeared to John with a little book in his hand. His voice sounded like the roar of a lion and when he spoke the thunder grumbled. John was told not to write what the thunder said into the pages of this book. The angel swore by the name of the Creator that when the seventh angel sounded, the mystery of God would be revealed as it had been through the Old and New Testament prophets. The voice from heaven told John to eat the little book. It would be sweet in his mouth but make him sick to his stomach. John ate the book and sure enough, it was sweet in his mouth but sour in his stomach. What did that mean? It was time for John to become a prophet and tell God's story while the two hundred million army was still killing one third of the people on earth. His message would be sweet for those who believed but sour for those who rebelled.

John started by measuring the Temple, the Altar, and those who were already in heaven worshipping the LORD, but he was not to measure the courtyard outside the Temple. The courtyard was still being controlled by the nations of the world. The courtyard was all of creation outside of the Temple. Down on earth, the nations of the world had their eyes on the holy city of Jerusalem and they tried to conquer it for forty-two months. But they would be hampered in that process by two witnesses of the LORD who had been looking after things on earth since creation. Other names for these two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands. They would be seen in the holy city of Jerusalem proclaiming the Gospel for twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty-two months. That time is also three and a half years. These two witnesses had the power to kill people with fire from their mouths, stop the rain, turn water to blood and strike the earth with problems of all kinds. When their twelve hundred and sixty days of witnessing were complete, the beast from the abyss killed them. Their bodies lay in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days and all the evil people of the world had a party, sending gifts to neighbors in joy over their deaths. At the end of the three and a half days, life came back into them and they stood up and all the world saw it happen! They rose into heaven and all the evil people of the world were struck with fear. An

earthquake struck Jerusalem. Ten percent of the buildings were destroyed. Seven thousand people were killed. But all the rest of the people in Jerusalem began to worship and give glory to the God of heaven. The Nation of Israel had finally accepted the LORD as Savior and that brought to an end the second woe.

The third woe began with the sound of the *seventh trumpet*. All of heaven rejoiced and the twenty-four elders fell to their knees and worshipped God. But on earth, the events of the *seventh trumpet* enraged the nations because of the wrath of God that would come upon them with this woe.

John had prophesied about the coming of the two witnesses and the salvation of Israel, but in this woe, the LORD told John about all the participants in the story that led to Israel's salvation. It started with the promise of God's covenant for the people of the world that was recorded and stored in the Ark in heaven. John heard the lightning and thunder grumbling over the promise and, as a result, another earthquake along with a great hailstorm fell on the earth.

The covenant of God was to run through a certain family and it was presented next as the *woman with twelve stars* that looked like a crown around her head. She was pregnant and about to give birth. That woman was the Nation of Israel and the twelve stars were the twelve tribes of that nation. The Child would be Jesus.

The next person presented looked like a *great red dragon* with seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns. He hated the woman and he hated the Child. He was not alone. He was created as an angel and he convinced one third of the angels to follow him in his devilish ways. He and his demons were waiting for the Child to be born so they could kill Jesus.

The woman gave birth to Jesus. The *great red dragon* could not kill Him. Jesus would then grow to be the ruler of the universe and He went to heaven to sit on His throne with God. The woman was then in trouble with the *great red dragon*. He could not kill Jesus, so he turned his attention to Jesus' family. The woman ran away to the wilderness for twelve-hundred and sixty days.

War broke out in heaven and Michael, a powerful angel fought with all of his angels against the great red dragon and all his angelic demons. The dragon and his demons lost and were cast out of heaven forever. They were thrown to the earth. A voice from heaven said, "No longer will the accuser of the believers be standing by the throne of God." For those believers already in heaven, all of the heavenly creatures rejoiced because the dragon did not win them over to his devilish ways. This red dragon was the devil and he is also called Satan. From the time he landed on earth, he knew that the time he had left to tempt the people would be very short.

The dragon turned his attention to persecuting the woman, but she was allowed to get away from him for three and a half years. The dragon tried to run over her with water, but an earthquake occurred and swallowed up the water. Because he could not hurt the woman, the dragon turned his attention to all the rest of the people who loved God and Jesus.

The dragon needed help so he enlisted the help of a *beast with seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns*. This beast had terrible names written on each head. The heads looked like leopards, the feet like bears' feet and the mouths like lions' mouths. The dragon gave this beast all his great power. One of the heads of the beast looked like it had died and come back to life and because of that and his great power, the nation he was leading became amazed and worshipped him. His language was terrible and nasty and he made it his job to make war with

those who believed in Jesus. The countries around the Mediterranean Sea, the Great Sea as it used to be called, were the homes of this beast.

But the dragon needed more help and a *second beast* came for that job. His home was on the land away from the sea. He had two horns and he acted as gentle as a lamb but his words were evil like the dragon. He had the authority of the *first beast* and he made his nation worship the first beast and an image of the first beast and he required everyone to mark a number on their foreheads or right hands - 666. He was evil, and he deceived the people.

John then saw the 144,000 Israelites again. They were standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. He heard harps playing and he then heard those Israelites singing a song that only they could learn. These Israelites were blameless, pure and untainted by the great red dragon.

Suddenly, John saw and heard an angel flying in the atmosphere who was proclaiming the eternal, everlasting Gospel message about Jesus to the whole world. Another angel appeared and told the world that *Babylon the Great* was about to be defeated. Then a third angel warned everyone in the world, “Do not worship the beast, do not worship his image, do not take his mark on your forehead or right hand. If you do, you will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur!” The whole world heard that Gospel message preached, not by humans, but by angels.

After the Gospel was preached to the world, John was told to write an interesting thing. “Blessed are those who die in the LORD from now on!” These will not listen to the message or fall for the tricks of the devil, but because they will not follow him, they will die. When they die, they will go to be with the LORD.

John then saw Jesus on a throne sitting on a cloud with a sickle in His hand. An angel encouraged Him to reap the fields of the earth and He did.

Another angel came out of the Temple with a sickle. He was encouraged to reap the vines of the earth and he did. His vines were to be thrown into the valley of Megiddo and the blood rose to the height of the bridles of the horses and flowed for two hundred miles through the Nation of Israel. The saved of the earth sang a song that was half from the days of Moses’ crossing of the Red Sea and half from the days of the blood flowing from Megiddo to the Red Sea. The song was about how great, good, glorious, holy, magnificent and manifest God was and is!

What will happen next? John saw seven angels coming out of the Temple in heaven and one of the four living creatures gave them the seven bowls containing the wrath of God! The third woe had ended.

And the awesome story continues!

The *seventh trumpet* had sounded and all of the personnel were introduced into the story. The three woes were exposed. The three woes for the people of the world had been presented. It was now time for the *seven bowls of wrath* to be poured and a few more participants to be introduced.

G. The Bowls of Wrath in Heaven (15:5-16:21)

1. The Angels from the Temple (15:5-6)
 - a) Seven Angels (15:5-6)

Rev 15:5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of

the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

The seven angels with the *seven plagues*, immaculately dressed in their heavenly attire, exited the “**temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven.**” What a title! From Genesis 1:1 to this verse we have learned about the Temple, the Tabernacle and the Testimony in heaven separately but never have we seen them all together in one title except here alone. Which came first? The Temple, the Tabernacle or the Testimony? We have already discussed this order before in the REVELATION in the *seventh trumpet*. Remember when the LORD began to show John the participants in the time of Israel’s trouble, He began with His original *testimony* stored in the Ark in heaven (11:19ff). In that passage I said the following.

The One (*Ark*) that John was seeing was the eternal Covenant (*testimony*) of God, untainted by the world and all its ills. This Covenant (*testimony*) contained the whole plan of God, everything from eternity past to eternity future. It was put in place on the first day of creation before the LORD hung a blue water ball out in the courtyard of His home and called it earth. (*See notes above for Revelation 11:19ff.*)

Do not be confused by the two words *testimony* and *covenant*; in the Scripture, depending on the translator, the words are synonymous. In Genesis we see the first part of the LORD’s *testimony* being fulfilled with Adam in the garden. Then we see the LORD’s *testimony* with Noah followed by the LORD’s *testimony* to Abraham, then Jacob, then Israel, then David and finally the Church. But, it is the same *testimony* being fulfilled with all. Here in the REVELATION, the *testimony* is still being fulfilled.

Along the way in the story, after the Nation of Israel was birthed and then retrieved from Egypt, the earthly Tabernacle was introduced to hold the earthly replica of the *Ark containing the Testimony*. This earthly Tabernacle was a replica of the heavenly Tabernacle that Moses was allowed to measure. The earthly structure was also called the *tent of meeting* in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

A dozen years after King David moved the capital of Israel to Jerusalem, he asked the LORD if he could build a permanent structure to replace the Tabernacle that had been in use for about 460 years. The LORD allowed him to design it, but He would not let David build it. The LORD designated the task for Solomon and the work on the Temple began 480 years to the day (Nisan 15th) after the Nation of Israel left Egypt. The word “**Temple**” in Hebrew is *hekal* and it means *palace*. The tent of the Tabernacle was done away with and the permanent *palace* took its place as the holder of the holy furniture, fixtures and utensils of the worship of the LORD and that included the earthly Ark replica.

Throughout the New Testament, from Matthew to Jude, the Greek word for “**Temple**” is *hieros* and it means *sacred or sanctuary*. For the most part, it matches the intent of the Hebrew word selected for use with the Temple of David and Solomon.

However, in the REVELATION, every time the word “**Temple**” is used, the Greek word is different. It is *naos* and it means *to inhabit*. It does not mean the *sanctuary or palace*; it means the *inhabitation*, or the place in the heavenly *tabernacle* where the *testimony* rests, the “**temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven.**” In other words, that title means *the permanent home of the testimony in the tabernacle*.

The seven angels came from the *permanent habitation of the testimony in the tabernacle* “clothed in linen, clean **and bright**, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.” They were dressed to the tee, righteous, pure and holy, symbols of the righteous, pure and holy wrath they were about to pour on the earth.

b) One Creature (15:7)

Rev 15:7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

We can only wonder which of the “**four living creatures**” had the privilege of handing the “**the seven golden bowls of the wrath of God**” to the angels. Actually, the creature does not matter. More important is that these bowls of wrath belonged to “**God, who lives forever and ever.**”

2. The Smoke from the Glory (15:8)

Rev 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

John noticed that when the seven angels exited the *habitation of the testimony in the tabernacle*, smoke filled the room. Entrance to the room of the *testimony* was blocked until the effects of the seven bowls were complete.

3. The Command from the Temple (16:1)

Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

From the smoke-filled room, John heard the announcement, "**Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.**" The room was not empty even though it was smoke-filled.

a) Bowl One (16:2)

Rev 16:2 So the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

In lesson 11, we clarified an important point about John’s use of the two words *earth* and *world*. When he speaks of the *world*, John means every square inch of the *world*. Sometimes he uses the word *world* as a metaphor for every person who lives on the *world* as in John 3:16, “**For God so love the world**” But when John uses the word *earth* he means a specific plot of land. In this case, when “**the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth,**” John means the land of the *Revived Roman Empire*. This is confirmed when the verse continues, “**and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.**” Everyone in the *Revived Roman Empire* will be required to have the “**mark**” in order to buy, sell or trade. That requirement was empire wide but could not be mandated worldwide by these *beasts* because they did not control the world. However, anyone outside the *beasts*’ empire who wished to buy, sell or trade with the empire will be required to obtain the same “**mark**.” In short, no “**mark**,” no

business dealings. It will not matter how much money rests on the table for a purchase, no 666, no deal. It will be upon all who have the “**mark**” that this first bowl of wrath will be poured.

b) Bowl Two (16:3)

Rev 16:3 The second *angel* poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.

With the tipping of the *second bowl*, the “**sea**,” the Great Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, will turn to blood. Before, in the story of the Revelation, a third of the creatures died. Here, every creature in that sea will die and its blood will permeate the waters all around the coasts of the ten nations of the *Revived Roman Empire*.

c) Bowl Three (16:4-7)

Rev 16:4 Then the third *angel* poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood.

With the pouring of the *third bowl of wrath*, all the fresh water “**rivers and the springs**” will turn to blood. They were poisoned with hemlock before; they are poisoned with blood here. Blood will be in the salt and fresh waters throughout the entire revived empire.

(1) The Angel of the Waters (16:5)

Rev 16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things;

What a wonderful addition at this place in the story! First, we see the “**angel of the waters**.” Who would have known? For 65 books of the Bible plus 16 chapters of REVELATION and 4 verses, we have heard nothing about this angel and his job. No doubt this angel was given this job on the second day of creation when the waters of the earth were divided to form the difference between the atmosphere and the oceans, sea, springs and streams. Without this verse we would never have known! Yet, it is amazing that the caretaker of the waters had the wherewithal to say, “**Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things.**” An ecological disaster had occurred on the land and waters controlled by the *Revived Roman Empire* but the angel given with the authority over those waters had absolutely no problem with the LORD’s judgment. The angel called them “**righteous**.” That which he was entrusted to protect through the ages was tainted and deadly and he called it “righteous.”

Second, we see why the waters of the *Revived Roman Empire* were being judged and it had to do with what it had done in the past with the Nation of Israel, the Church and its prophets.

(a) Blood of Saints and Prophets Poured (16:6a)

Rev 16:6a for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets,

The *Revived Roman Empire* with *seven heads* represents all seven nations that have wreaked havoc on all the saints and prophets of the LORD through all the ages. Of course, the word “**saints**” can rightly mean *Old Testament Israelites* and *New Testament Church Christians*. Notwithstanding, it will also mean all the blood of the “**saints**” of the tribulation

days, new Christians who were never part of the Church while it was still on earth. As for the word “**prophets**,” we must clarify that the word used here does not mean that these prophets told the future; rather, these prophets were the ones who told the message of the Gospel as recorded in the Word of God. In the Church, they are called preachers and ministers but in reality, it includes all saints of all time who have died for being an evangelist for the LORD.

Because of this empire, and its ancestor empires, and their thirst for the blood of those who belong to the LORD, these first *bowls of wrath* have been poured out and have devastated the water sources of the *Revived Roman Empire*.

(a) Blood of Saints and Prophets Drunk (16:6b)

Rev 16:6b and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.”

As in the days of the Exodus when all the water sources turned to blood, even the water stored in pitchers became blood upon the announcement of the plague. So, too, all the sources of water for the *Revived Roman Empire* will be turned to blood. If anyone with the “**mark**” desires a drink, it will be blood and only blood. As the verse says, “**They deserve it.**”

(2) The Voice of the Altar (16:7)

Rev 16:7 And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”

With the *Revived Roman Empire* covered in blood from the judgment of the LORD through the first three *bowls of the wrath of God*, the voice of the altar says, “**Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.**” In other words, the voice from the altar acts as a second witness to say about this empire, “**They deserve it.**”

d) Bowl Four (16:8-9)

Rev 16:8 The fourth *angel* poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.^{9a} Men were scorched with fierce heat;

No water to hydrate the body, what could be worse? Heat! Scorching heat with no water, that could be worse! With the *fourth bowl of wrath*, the sun began to bear down on the *Revived Roman Empire*. We would think that any decent, normal person would rethink a relationship with the Creator – but not the people of this empire.

(1) Blasphemous Men (16:9b)

Rev 16:9b and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues,

Rather than waking up to the reason for the wrath of the Creator, the people of the vile *Revived Roman Empire* cursed the Creator. He had the power to take the plagues away. He had the power to add to the plagues and make them worse. The people of this empire hated the LORD even more.

(2) Rebellious Men (16:9c)

Rev 16:9c and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

What possible comfort could these people of the *Revived Roman Empire* have from blaspheming God? How much wrath could they endure before they cried out to the LORD? At what point would they give God glory? They were rebellious; they would not give “**Him glory.**” The people would not turn from worshiping Satan and the image of the beast; therefore, it is time for the LORD of glory to pour the bowl of His wrath on the place of power in the empire.

e) Bowl Five (16:10-11)

Rev 16:10a Then the fifth *angel* poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened;

The *beast* was the united ten countries of the *Revived Roman Empire*. It had a human king who had a throne upon which he sat. But in this verse, the throne of the king was not the intent; rather, with the pouring of the *fifth bowl of wrath* the whole kingdom of the *beast* “**became darkened.**” Lights out! Day and night! In *bowl four* the sun scorched every person in the empire, lights on; in *bowl five*, the light of the sun did not shine at all, lights out. This contrast greatly affected the people. What did they do?

(1) Pain (16:10b)

Rev 16:10b and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,

How did continuous darkness cause “**pain**” to the point that the people would “**gnaw their tongues?**” It did not! The word “**pain**” is a mistranslation. The Greek word is *ponos* and it should be translated *concern*. This portion of the verse should read, “**and they gnawed their tongues because of the concern.**” They were concerned about the darkness. The Greek word comes from another word that means *to toil* or to work. The people of the *beasts’ Revived Roman Empire* gnawed their tongues (bit their tongues) because the darkness was hampering their daily work to provide for their families and it was of great concern to them. With only blood to drink as well as everyone being burned from the scorching sun and now living in darkness, it would seem that any normal population would realize the evils of their ways, but not these people who had the “**mark.**”

(2) Blasphemy (16:11a)

Rev 16:11a and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores;

Rather than giving glory to the Creator, the God of heaven, the people of this empire spoke blasphemous words about Him as they continued to have concerns about their work and nursed their oozing blisters on their scorched skin – every person in the empire without exception.

(3) Deeds (16:11b)

Rev 16:11b and they did not repent of their deeds.

Did the people of the empire change their ways? No! They kept doing what they had done since they took the “**mark.**” Because the people with the “**mark**” would not change their ways, the LORD would just help them along with the pouring of the *sixth bowl of His wrath.*