

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, July 30, 2017

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." (Revelation 15:1)

In previous sermons I have opened to this little body many passages related to this period of time -- seven years -- during which the earth and her inhabitants are transitioned from the dispensation of the New Testament Church to the dispensation of Christ's millennial reign. In those examinations of "The Revelation" or "The Apocalypse", I have articulated the conclusion that the seven years are divided into two periods of three and one half years. I have further maintained, utilizing my duty to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), that in the first half of this transition period the 144,000 redeemed Jews will be called forth and spend some time learning from the Church of Revelation (a term I coined for ease of reference) how properly to serve Christ as their Messiah and the **only** path to salvation. The division of the two periods occurs in the form of Christ's second advent, during which He draws up to God and to His throne the dead elect, and the living Gentile elect (Revelation 12:5). The 144,000 newly-sealed Jews are taken, then, up to the top of Mt. Zion, which has been reduced to a condition like unto a great wilderness (Revelation 12:6 & 14) where they will be supernaturally preserved throughout the second half of this transition period, while Antichrist leads the armies of the nations to slaughter all remaining Jews and utterly destroy Jerusalem. These armies will then be drawn north into the Valley of Megiddo (Armageddon), where Christ will meet them with a display of His military power like the earth has theretofore not seen. Upon completion of the slaughter -- and with it the conclusion of the seven-year transition period -- Christ enters the new temple (through the East gate) where the throne of His worldwide kingdom will be set up and He will dwell richly with the 144,000 redeemed of Israel while ruling the nations with an inflexible standard of righteousness.

Repetition is necessary for edification. The better you tender souls understand what Scripture instructs about that seven-year period, the more fully you can articulate the gospel to this dying and hopeless generation. This is true, of course, for all Scripture, which is why we are told:

"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little". (Isaiah 28:10)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, that terminates in the final millennium of the Adamic experience, during which He will be glorified in His saints (2 Thessalonians 1:10), is the greatest subject matter of all the Scriptures. Over the millennia, the greatest spiritual minds have searched it out -- but only very few men have been given to see the outcomes with any clarity. My hope and my sincerest sense is that this body of believers will be given from our Father a greater degree of light than any preceding generation; apart from those blessed prophets and apostles who were given visions so that they might record them for our edification. The Spirit moved in them to write those words, and the Spirit guides all God's elect -- according to His predetermined

providential schedule -- in how in-depth a knowledge each generation will have of the matters contained in this final book of the canon.

My duty to you, once I am given some clear view of these things, is to expound them effectually in your ears. So, let me provide the context of this vision we're going to examine. As this new scene opens to the eyes and heart of John the Revelator, it has similarities to a previous heavenly lens -- and critical differences that intimate how the players on the stage of this grand transition event have changed. It is -- I submit -- the opening of the final act of this trilogy: Seven seals; seven trumpets; seven vials. Since no serious student of this book is able to avoid the obvious symmetry of these three sets of horrors, it deserves a closer look. If I am going to give you confidence in reading and growing in your knowledge about this coming time, I believe I have to give you a clear understanding of what these three "complete" (as the number seven intimates) movements are and what purpose each will serve.

Each of these three phases of this seven-year transition period includes some textual reference to a scene corresponding to the events that either *are going to* unfold or *are* unfolding, and that helps to understand what the purpose is. For the first phase -- **the seven seals** -- the scene giving it context is described at length in Revelation chapters four and five. For the second phase -- **the seven trumpets** -- the scenes giving it context are found in Revelation chapters eight and ten. For the third phase -- **the seven vials** -- the scene giving it context are found in Revelation chapter 15. These are general framings, of course, because there are hints throughout the phases themselves that help the reader to understand both "what" and "why" the events are unfolding.

Further, I submit that these three phases have distinct purposes for the engagement of heavenly and earthly forces -- both good and evil. **The seven seals** are for the purpose of *presenting* - to all living people - those who in fact are God's elect souls alive for the engagements related to His Revelation. Having been presented, **the seven trumpets** then are for the purpose of *protecting* those blessed souls against the raging inhabitants who wish to destroy them -- like they did with Noah (1 Peter 3:20) and Lot (Genesis 19) -- that they might pluck just one out the hand of Christ. Once Christ has executed His second Advent ... has removed the Gentile saints from the reach of the earth's inhabitants ... and has ensconced the redeemed of Israel atop Mt. Zion beyond their reach ... the purpose shifts. Under **the seven vials**, the events accomplish two things in *preparation* for Christ's millennial reign: First, they prepare those of the earth for the final showdown that Satan has desired since before his fall; which showdown will be in the valley of Megiddo. Second, they accomplish a purging for the Jewish race that prepares the redeemed of Abraham's seed to dwell with God in peace once again. These summary concepts can be remembered by the "three Ps": Present -- Protect -- Prepare.

In keeping with that structural analysis of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, we are going to examine more intimately what is instructed about the engagement of heavenly powers to prepare the unregenerate inhabitants of the earth for Armageddon and the Jews for their full return to God.

Revelation chapters 15 and 16 set the stage for, and then provide a detailed account of, the movements of messengers and men to accomplish those things pronounced by the four and twenty elders, at the very moment the atmosphere was disrupted by a returning Saviour:

"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:18)

As Revelation chapter 15 opens, John tells us that this is "**another sign**" that he sees, requiring (from the definitions of those two words -- *allos* "another" and *semeion* "sign") the conclusion that it is not the first such experience, and that it is the introduction of a thing unusual and distinguished from other things. That is, while it might have some familiar characteristics it is not a mere repetition or restatement of a matter that he had previously viewed or on which he had previously reported. It is seen "**in heaven**", which Greek word (*ouranos*) includes anything highly elevated ... from a high mountain all the way to the place inhabited by stars and planets. It can be fairly concluded from other elements of the vision, however, that he is viewing this scene within the New Jerusalem and on the Mount Zion just below her -- all as I will explore in more detail.

And it is not an ordinary thing John is given to see. It is -- loosely translating the Greek terms in the text -- *megas thaumastos*, or ... **MEGA-TERRIFYING!** John is seeing a thing that passes human comprehension and therefore is worthy of the highest admiration from a pious mind. Daniel the prophet saw the same thing, and it was so overwhelming to him that he fainted:

"And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." (Daniel 8:27)

Similarly, consider what Isaiah the prophet's words express, when speaking of the reprobate Jews who observe from afar the honors heaped upon their 144,000 brethren even while horrors are being poured out upon their rebel heads:

"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: [thine eyes] shall behold the land that is very far off. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?" (Isaiah 33:17-18)

Like Isaiah's scene, there are here two opposing visions -- equally "**great and marvellous**" that John is beholding. This is a thing that I have to try to frame for you with some success. If you don't see this, you will only see a plastic view -- an impotent view -- of what I will spend today and next week (Lord willing) parsing out. Our generation has been desensitized, with the ability to experience fake presentations of macro-level terrors and fantastical majestic scenes. But to see a great terror on a movie or TV screen is not at all the same as experiencing it. To see on

screen, for example, whole cities crashing down as the earth is violently split beneath it -- that cannot compare to what system-overloading terror you would feel to actually live it!

John -- to understand this introduction with accuracy -- saw a preview of horrors, right alongside witnessing the wondrous beauties of this staging scene. John saw, as other prophets before him saw, a real thing that is coming -- as though he was right there (like is intimated at Revelation 1:10). *[Billions covered with open, running sores; oceans of dead marine life; every water source flowing with blood; boiling, rippling, scorched skin, inky blackness filled with screams of pain and rage, and the whole of mankind being moved of one mind; running pell-mell in militaristic fury -- every one looking very much like a zombie from the torturous plagues -- into an accumulating sea of humanity: screeching, writhing, bloodlust in their expressions.]*

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Revelation 15:2-3)

Yet, quite simultaneous to the terrifying sight of inexpressible anguish, John is given to gaze upon a scene of resplendent tranquility. Standing upon -- elevated above and unaffected by; "rising above", if you will -- this scene of destruction, is a celebratory crowd. Unaffected -- though fully aware -- the chorus of rejoicing, thankful blessed Jews focuses on two great events in this created experiment. These two events should, and to the elect of God most assuredly do, ground our hope in the perfect power and authority of God to deliver us (Hebrews 6:17-20); one past ... the other on the imminent horizon!

The sea of glass of Revelation 15 is the same sea of glass that Revelation chapter 4 displays -- with one critical difference: now it is ***"mingled with fire"***, reflecting what has been happening for the previous three and a half years as God's judgments have run freely through the heaven and earth to display His awful power in effectuating His redemptive purposes! Those standing on this sea of glass are the Hebrews -- ***"redeemed from among men" (Revelation 14:4)*** -- who alone of all families of the earth have the capacity to sing these two songs: ***"[T]he song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb"***. It was the Hebrews alone who experienced the mighty power of God in the deliverance from Egypt!

"The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it." (Acts 13:17)

While all of His saints are entitled to be comforted by this Song of Moses, it was first the song of the delivered Jews -- who God chose among all nations to be the standing symbol of all His elect.

Gentile elect were, as our dear friend Paul expostulates, "**grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree**" (Romans 11:17). But this time, of which we now take close note, is *after* those Gentile saints have been taken up -- and after the Jews have had the prophecy of that same Paul fulfilled:

"For if thou [Gentile saints] wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these [Hebrew saints], which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (Romans 11:24)

And who is the author and finisher of that grand redemption? Is it not the Lamb? Is it not that same Christ who those Jews' ancestors rejected as the Messiah? That truth having been brought to their delighted eyes, they now lift up their harps and voices to sing "**as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.**" (Revelation 14:3) Yes. In the previous chapter, this same song is what the redeemed Jews sing new when they have been put in preservation upon Mt. Zion (Revelation 12:6, 14; 14:1). The Song of Moses is old ... but having received saving faith in the Messiah, singing their praise and adoration to Him is new.

Two additional things are learned in examination of this description of the redeemed of Israel breaking forth in song about the Messiah, which is discussed in both Revelation 14:3 and 15:3. First, it is more evidence that the **only** righteous left in the earth at this point are the redeemed Jews. Consider this language in context:

"[A]nd no man [gender neutral, meaning nobody] could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." (Revelation 14:3)

This song is singing praise to the Redeemer; even Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. If there were any other elect in the earth, those would likewise learn and sing this song. But, as I have intimated many times previous, Scripture teaches that all other of God's elect (living Gentiles and all those who sleep in Christ) were put into possession of their glorious habitation when Christ came. **Only the redeemed Jews** remain.

The second additional thing to learn from these references to singing the "**song of the Lamb**" is to understand *what it is* about the Lamb that has praise from His servants at this precipitous hour. They evidently will be given to see the same terrible things John is seeing in prophecy, for they are standing "**on the sea of glass**" that is "**mingled with fire**", making those judgments of God in the earth fully visible to them ... and they give the same description of the scene that John gives; declaring: "**Great and marvellous [i.e., "mega-terrifying"] are thy works**" for which they also declare the ways of this "**King of saints**" to be "**just [i.e., a righteous display of His divine power] and true [100% sincere and real]**" (Revelation 15:3).

Then, with a shift in their focus, this band of redeemed Jews declare what they understand -- both from the instruction they received before the feet of the Gentile church (Revelation 3:9), and from the partial fulfillment of the prophecy about themselves that they have just recently experienced -- is most certain to come upon them and upon the remaining inhabitants, once these vials have done their work:

"Who shall not fear [i.e., have perpetual phobia of] thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." (Revelation 15:4)

From the plain language of the Scripture regarding the unfolding plagues under these seven vials, we know that it is not during the plagues that the earth dwellers will glorify Christ's name or come and worship before Him. It expressly tells us that even in their extreme pain they ***"blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory"*** (Revelation 16:9). So, when will it be that this fear and glorifying will come from all the inhabitants of the earth toward the reigning Lord and Christ? The prophet Haggai tells us:

"And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." (Haggai 2:7)

So, in their song regarding the Lamb of God, these Jews sing not only about the magnificent display of His power in executing His judgments pre-millennial, but they likewise lift up praise regarding the coming period to which what they are observing presently will lead -- the full and final enthroning of the King of kings in the new temple on Mt. Zion.

And speaking of which ... *which temple*, that is. The remaining four verses of chapter 15 are a single oracle. It opens and then closes with an express reference to the new temple. I preached on this temple in my April 9, 2017 sermon, and I do not seek to turn aside to that piece of work again today in any lengthy degree. However, it cannot be ignored since it clearly is wrapped intimately into the work of these seven vials. Let us introduce the words that need discussion:

"And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." (Revelation 15:5-8)

The temple is the centerpiece of this third act, as John is given to see it introduced. It is opened in an elevated place ("*ouranos*"), the seven messengers come forth out of it with these plagues, and the smoke from God's glory and power fills it. Yet, until this piece of dramatic work is done, no **earthly man** is allowed to enter it. When Ezekiel sees this same scene -- of God's glory entering the temple he is given to describe -- he expresses this in fuller terms:

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. ¶ And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever." (Ezekiel 43:1-2, 4-9)

Before I proceed, let me sharpen this focus. Revelation 15:5-7 appear to take place while the temple has been opened in the sky -- in the Heavenly Jerusalem that has come down in the sight of all the inhabitants of the earth. It sits just above Mt. Zion, onto which it will then -- in verse 8 -- come to rest.

Why would I conclude that from this language?

The language in verse 8 - "***the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God***" - to answer to Ezekiel's vision, must mean that glory comes "***by way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east***" in the temple of which Ezekiel was given the vision and dimensions, perched on top of Mt. Zion. The entities engaged in verses 5-7 of this text -- angels, and one of the four beasts -- are inhabitants of that Holy City, and could not be earth-bound ... being clothed in "***pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles***" ... reflecting the state of the **glorified saints**. Ergo, I conclude that they have concourse in the sky, before the temple then comes down to the earth where the redeemed Jews will have tabernacle, but not be "***able to enter into the temple [i.e., the holy place and the holy of holies], till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.***" (v. 8)

Dense stuff to be sure; and we're not done yet. There is a job to be accomplished -- grave spiritual work -- on the part of these redeemed Jews. The mechanisms by which that job is to be accomplished, though most amazing and terrifying, are secondary to the task itself. So, as I

examine with you some intricacies and relevancies of the specific events that fall out under the **seven vials**, the perfect expression of God's wrath in "**[consuming] them in [His] anger**" (Ezekiel 43:8), I am asking that you remain clear on what the work is. The 144,000 Jews -- being still in their flesh and bearing about the indwelling sin of that flesh -- must come to full and effectual terms with what their calling forth includes. While the grace of God is fully sufficient -- and while we know very well from this oracle before us they are willing -- these Jews are given an ultimatum that will determine their eligibility to dwell with God and Christ in His new temple. They have to purge!

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

The word "**able**" in Revelation 15:8 is the Greek "*dunamai*" -- interestingly, from whence the English word "dynamite" derives -- which means that they have power to enter in, or are *given permission* to enter in. Until these plagues are accomplished, these redeemed Jews cannot occupy the temple to have direct communion with God. Until the work of putting away every indicia of that gross sin against God, and being fully rid of every remaining vestige of those who promoted rebellion against the covenant, God will not be pleased to dwell with them.

Like many events in Scriptural expressions of Jewish history, when there was some open rebellion against God and His prerogatives in the affairs of men, a purging was required to allow those Jews to again be joined in peace with God. When Israel "**joined himself unto Baalpeor**" it took the slaughter of every Jew who did so to stay the plague. (Numbers 25:1-8) When the Children of Israel turned quickly to idols at the foot of Mt. Sinai -- even while God was delivering the law to Moses in the mount -- it took the slaughter of 3,000 souls to stay the destruction of them all. (Exodus 32:15-28). Consider also the plague of the fiery serpent (Numbers 21:4-9), the purging of the rebellion at Jericho (Joshua 7:10-26), the plague due to the murmuring of the people after Korah's rebellion, which cost 14,000 lives (Numbers 16:41-50), and the 70,000 lives cost for David's numbering of the people (2 Samuel 24:11). Peace with God for great rebellion has often required great purging -- and those types find their final and full expression in this most brutal purging of the unregenerate, rebellious Jews whose millennia of open blasphemy ... open adultery against her Husband ... has so long and so fully separated her from Him (Isaiah 59:2). This understanding of the opening scene allows for a better lens on what John was given to view while in the spirit.

Moving on, let us consider these "**seven angels**" that come out of this temple with the seven plagues who are described as "**clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.**" The use of the English word "angel" in scripture occurs 194 times; 95 times in the Old Testament using the Hebrew word "*malawk*" (mal-awk'), and 99 times in the New Testament using the Greek word "*aggelos*" ("ang'-el-os"). Both words allow for a three-fold understanding of the entity introduced: A messenger or representative, a member of the race

of angels, and/or the "theophanic angel", meaning Christ taking the form of an angel. The context and descriptors given in the introduction or actions are what reveal to the reader which is the intended usage.

To understand which use of that blessed word -- particularly when it is coupled with the word "**seven**" (representing "completeness") -- we should consider other passages providing similar descriptions. In the book of Revelation, we have six other events where a description similar is given to an entity either acting or being acted upon:

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." (Revelation 3:5)

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Revelation 3:18)

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." (Revelation 4:4)

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" (Revelation 7:9)

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 19:8)

and

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." (Revelation 19:14)

In each of these instances, the reference is to the covering of humans with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, either already in glory or awaiting those who, if they overcome, are put in possession of that glory. The language veritably demands the conclusion that the "angels" with whom we are dealing are not members of the angelic race, but are those blessed glorified souls who were expressly told:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." (Revelation 2:26-27)

The additional descriptor of a golden girdle covering both the loins and breasts of these messengers, does not require a different conclusion. As saints are required to have their ***"loins girt about with truth, and [have] on the breastplate of righteousness"*** (Ephesians 6:14), the scene depicts those who have overcome and are now in possession of the perfectly purified forms of this ***"truth"*** and ***"righteousness"*** while they are in the presence of him whose ways are declared in the same passage to be ***"just [i.e., righteous] and true"*** (Revelation 15:3).

Another descriptor that begs the conclusion that the participants in this holy and delightful scene are glorified saints is the opening of verse seven: ***"And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials"***. These blessed beasts, as I provided some extensive treatment of in September 2015, are expressions of the spiritual disposition of the saints of God -- discussed not just in Revelation but in the prophecies of Ezekiel as well. Indeed, in the passage I quoted previously in this sermon from Ezekiel chapter 43, I excluded verse three as it might have then clouded the focus. Here it is:

"And it [the shining of God's glory in the earth] was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face." (Ezekiel 43:3)

Those visions referenced by Ezekiel -- as coming back into his spirit with clear relevance while he observed the glory of God coming forth to enter into the new temple -- are the visions of the four living creatures (answering to the "four beasts" of Revelation) that he had previously expressed in Ezekiel chapters 1, 9 and 10 at least. Those passages are related, but far too lengthy to pour into this sermon word for word now. I encourage your reading of them to learn what I am telling you now ... they are an expression of how God's saints are viewed in spiritual terms while they do their work in the excited periods of providence about which Ezekiel and John write in eschatology. That spiritual nature does not change when their bodies of flesh are translated to glorified bodies. They continue to have those same spiritual characteristics; only now perfected.

So in this passage of Revelation 15, we see two expressions of God's redeemed engaging with each other to serve in the active role of administering the wrath of God onto the sons of men who are yet in the earth. Whether there are engagements with members of the angelic race or not -- as an effectual part of this scene -- it is evident that these redeemed saints are in a leading role in this third act. Where previous views of these blessed saints -- while yet in the earth -- intimated their active prayers to call down upon the earth's inhabitants the events of the **seven seals** and the **seven trumpets**, now they are directly engaged in unleashing the **seven vials**, while they occupy their glorified condition in the Heavenly Jerusalem above the trembling and rejoicing redeemed of Israel's seed.

Now let us close this first session.

"¶ And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. ¶ And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. ¶ And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. ¶ And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." (Revelation 16:1-21)

It is time to get serious now. What I have provided today by way of introducing this scene was relatively easy. When the whole of this matter gets introduced there are two significant words that express why I am asking all of you sweet souls -- every single one of you who have the capacity to take words in and chew upon them and test the flavor of them with the tongues of your mind -- to prepare yourselves for next week.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." (Revelation 15:1)

The things that are poured out upon the earth in this final act make up the "***last***" -- the most extreme ... the uttermost -- expression of God's wrath toward the unwashed population of Satan-deceived, Antichrist-led, and False Prophet-fueled anarchists. That God who created each of those bodies and souls will bring the very worst suffering that those human creations could experience. He knows the root of their phobias, and they will everyone be exposed in the most acute expressions of their terrors. We should understand that -- so that we would daily cry for deliverance from it.

Further, these two English words "***filled up***" is one Greek word that -- as my own heart and spirit can confess is the only way my fears could be more completely realized -- declares the wrath will be expressed to the fullest possible manner for each individual's capacity to experience it. As the cup of their iniquity has come to full, He will now cause them to drink to the very dregs.

The most extreme. The most complete. God's wrath will be finished.

So, I ask that while you spend the next seven nights -- until we meet again in this house next week (Lord willing) -- reading and re-reading this array of 21 verses in Revelation 16. If you wish to include the existing expositions in your reading, that will give you some flavor of what righteous men of past generations have seen in them. What I hope, however, is that as I speak of these things next week, the words will be familiar. As I express my understanding of them in their place of eschatology, I wish them to resonate because they have become your friends from many visits.

Thank you for your love of the King of this humble place. I love you.

Amen.