

Session 14: Seventh Bowl: Earthquake, Hail, and the Fall of Babylon (Rev. 16:17-21)

Tonight, we are on the fourteenth session of this series. It is the final one. We were aiming for twelve, but we ended up going extra; so there are fourteen teachings on the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls of Jesus' end-time judgment.

We are on the most severe and therefore the most effective judgment that Jesus has planned in natural history. You have to say natural history, because human history will go on for billions of years. Natural history will end, because the age to come brings in a supernatural dimension with the coming of the Lord. It is fair to say this is the most dramatic, radical, successful, and effective intervention—negative judgment intervention—of God in history.

INTRODUCTION: WE KNOW THE END OF THE STORY

The seventh bowl in Revelation 16:17–21: what it says is that there is something bigger going on. It is the song that we sing here at IHOP–KC: “I know the end of the story.” This is not the end of the story, because there is something bigger going on that is bigger than this weekend, this summer, or this year.

Revelation 16 gives us insight into the negative dimension of what is going to happen. This negative dimension is actually positive, because it is God intervening in a thorough way. He has thought it through with detail. He is intervening in a radical way that will be effective to transform human history. It will create a shift in history where it will never go back to the way it was before.

This bowl tells us God cares. It tells us He is decisive. It tells us He is active. He is intervening.

This plan will succeed. The thing that amazes me about the seventh bowl is that all the others the Lord began, if you will, with a blank whiteboard. There is no one in heaven who told Him what the seventh bowl should be. He devised it entirely so every single facet is a revelation about His wisdom and His love. It has many implications that go beneath just a casual reading. It goes beneath the surface.

Every one of these dimensions of the great earthquake—natural history ends with a great earthquake and a hailstorm. Those are the two features that are violent

against the kingdom of darkness. The greatest earthquake in history and 100-pound hailstones are coming from heaven, hitting the whole earth; then the destruction of Babylon, the Antichrist's empire; and his capital city is completely destroyed, never ever to rise again. Again, God began with a blank whiteboard, so to speak, and He devised the idea of a great earthquake. I would have never thought of that as the way to end natural history. He came up with the idea of 100-pound hailstones.

He came up with the idea of allowing Babylon, the city of Babylon, to exist and to survive throughout the whole Great Tribulation, but at the final moment He destroys it suddenly and permanently. Many in the nations were beginning to believe the city was invisible. Nothing could touch it and God says, "You wait. I have not forgotten Babylon." In His final stroke, He destroys it suddenly and permanently. It is one of the cities that will never rise again in the Millennial Kingdom.

Beloved, we know the end of the story. It is a great gift of God that He gave us the picture. We meditate on the picture and we gain insight into God's wisdom, we gain insight into God's love, and we gain insight into how extreme a measure was needed because of the measure of sin and iniquity that was abounding in the earth.

Revelation 16:17–21: "The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying 'It is done!'" Verse 18: "There were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake, as had not occurred since men were on the earth."

Verse 19: now it describes what happened with this great earthquake—"Now the great city"—Jerusalem—"was divided into three parts." It was not totally destroyed. The great city Jerusalem will be rebuilt in the millennial kingdom when the Lord returns. It is divided in three parts. This is radical. This is very destructive.

It was like the Lord is planning like the demolition of a great building—strategically demolished it. The Lord is strategically dividing this city for His purposes. Moments later, the millennial kingdom begins and the city of Jerusalem begins the restoration process. You can be sure those three parts—those rebuilding the city will say, "Lord, that was perfect. I mean it was absolutely perfect."

He will smile and say, “I know. It was strategy that I used that earthquake to shift this city and reconfigure it.”

It became more intense than a great city falling into three parts. “The cities of the nations fell” (v. 19). There is an escalation of the severity of the judgment. Then it goes on to the next level. “The great Babylon, the great city of Babylon, was remembered before God” (v. 19, paraphrased).

The nations were beginning to think God forgot her or she was invincible. It’s as if God says, “No, no. I have been storing up wrath for this one city in a particular way, and I will give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God” (v. 19, paraphrased). What a sentence—the cup of the wine of the anger or the fierceness of His wrath.

Verse 20: we are still talking about the impact of the earthquake. “Every island fled away” (v. 20)—that means the sea covered it. The water level in the sea rose to where the islands are covered. That might be temporary. That does not mean they are gone permanently. They fled away because of the rising of the seawater. “The mountains were not found” (v. 20)—again, part of that is the rising of the sea and part of that is the leveling of mountains.

There is a tremendous shift in the geography; the topography of the earth is radically shifted in the seventh bowl. Now it goes on—it moves off the earthquake and its impact, which was verses 18, 19, and 20. It moves on to the second dimension of the seventh bowl: the great hailstones from heaven. “And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent” (v. 21). That is approximately 100 pounds. A talent was 100 to 120 or 130 pounds, depending on which place was weighing them. 100 pounds is close enough. Some translations just put “hailstones of 100 pounds.” These hailstones you think would have killed everybody, but men lived and they “blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, since the plague was extremely great” (v. 21, paraphrased).

SEVENTH BOWL HAPPENS WHEN GENTILE ARMIES GATHER IN JERUSALEM

Let’s go to paragraph C. The context of the seventh bowl is the sixth bowl. We looked at that last week. In the sixth bowl, what was happening was that the nations of the earth were being gathered to Jerusalem. We are talking about all the

nations of the earth. Their armies are being gathered. They are travelling and being set up in a military way in order to go to war against Jesus.

We looked at that last week. The next event that follows after the seventh bowl—because the seventh bowl is disrupting all the military plans—is that they get organized. They are getting set up, and they are not expecting this—the greatest earthquake in history that shakes every single city and hailstones that completely disorients the battle plans. It makes them invalid, the battle plans. “Wait. Everything is different now.” What happens is the next event after the seventh bowl: the battle itself—Jesus riding on the white horse, entering into Jerusalem in the battle context that Revelation 19 describes.

JESUS WILL DESTROY THE FINAL ASPECTS OF THE ANTICHRIST EMPIRE

Paragraph F. David talked about the whole great tribulation and the three judgment series. There are three judgment series. Each has seven. There are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls. There are three judgments series with seven judgment events each. Particularly it is the seventh one with the earthquake and the great hail.

Those are the two outstanding distinctive features of the seventh bowl: the greatest earthquake in history and the 100-pound hailstones. The great impact is that it shifts the topography of the earth, and it destroys permanently the city of Babylon so it will never, ever rise again. Those are the two impacts. The two features are the earthquake and the hail. The two great impacts are—the city of Babylon never will rise again. Many of these other cities will rise again that are falling. They will be rebuilt. But Babylon never will be. And it shifts the topography and the context. The whole social context of the earth is shifted by this earthquake and hailstorm.

Paragraph F. Psalm 2:8–9: David saw this 1,000 years before Christ when he prophesied in Psalm 2:8–9: The Father said to Jesus, “I will give You the nations for Your inheritance.” Here is what the Father said to Jesus, and David overheard it and recorded it by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration: Jesus, when He inherits the nations—one of the first things He is going to do when the nations are finally His (He does it in the most dramatic way in the seventh bowl) is He breaks the nations. He breaks all the infrastructures of the nations, all those that are built on unrighteousness. Not all of the infrastructures of all of life will be—whichever

ones are built on sin, He will break them with a rod of iron. This is most graphically described in the seventh bowl.

HE WILL DASH THE NATIONS TO PIECES LIKE A POTTER'S WHEEL

He will dash the nations “to pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Ps. 2:9). The picture is that a clay pot is on the table, and a mighty soldier takes a rod of iron and hits the brittle clay pot, and it shatters effortlessly. It breaks into 1,000 pieces suddenly, instantly, effortlessly. It takes no effort for a great soldier to take a rod of iron and hit a piece of brittle pottery. It will instantly shatter in 1,000 pieces.

It is interesting—we do not think much about this, but when Jesus comes back to openly manifest His leadership over the nations, one of the first things He does (this is in the negative sense, but He does it for positive reasons)—He breaks the nations and shatters them.

He dashes them to pieces. He is doing it through the earthquake and through the hailstones. The infrastructure of society around the earth is being dashed to pieces. Only the evil part is being dashed to pieces. There will be places in the earth where righteousness will have a stronghold.

It is talking about the evil that has been established. The infrastructures will be so infiltrated by the values of the Babylon false religion. The values of tolerance that seem so good are built on evil, filthiness, and impurity in the name of humility, dignity, and tolerance. The infrastructures from the tax codes, to the library systems, to the education systems, to the media—I mean, all through society will be corrupt with the values of Babylon.

It’s as if the Lord is saying this: “It will be far more efficient and effective to bring the whole infrastructure down and raise it up from scratch. It will be far more effective than trying to redo every single one of them.” He sends an earthquake that shakes all the great cities of the earth, causing the water level of the ocean to rise so high that all the islands disappear for a season.

All the mountains are leveled. (I am sure that is relative from one area to another.) It will be different. Jesus will take the hailstones and dash the infrastructure of society. He will start from scratch, except that there will be strongholds of righteousness in parts of the earth. Those places—wherever God has established something born of the Spirit, it will continue.

THE BOWL Poured INTO THE AIR

Let's begin with the bowl poured into the air. This has left commentators a little uncertain, because it does not clarify what this looks like. The bowl is poured into the air? There is no great clarity, but we do know this. It is the most severe of the seven bowls. So we know that whatever it is, it is more severe than the scorching heat of the fourth bowl.

It is more severe than the sores of the first one. It is more severe than the deep darkness that actually creates pain in the fifth bowl. What is it? Nobody knows. What some suggest, and which I think is the best suggestion that I know of—go back to Zechariah 14, because this passage is talking about the exact same timeframe of the seventh bowl.

In Zechariah 14—many of the features of the final battle, the final events related to the seventh bowl, and the battle itself that ends the Armageddon campaign are described in Zechariah 14. Zechariah 14 describes a plague. It is a plague that strikes only the people who fought against Jerusalem. It does not strike anyone else. So it is possible that it is some type of germ that is carried in the air—that has a biological foundation to it, or some kind of germ—that is a judgment of God carried in the air.

That is a guess. We know the plague is real. We are suggesting the plague of Zechariah 14 might be the bowl that is poured into the air in the seventh bowl here. Let's read this in Zechariah 14:12–15. Just imagine this. This is real. “This shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths” (v. 12). They are standing up. So it is instantaneous, is the idea here. Verse 15: “Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel”—and it gives several other animals as well.

That is my guess. It is an educated guess. I got the idea from others, but it seems right to me. Or at least the best from the Bible interpreting the Bible—is what I can figure out as the most severe of all the judgments poured into the air. It possibly has something to do with germs carried in the air.

THE TEMPLE AND THE THRONE

Paragraph D. Now there is a voice—“the voice of God came out of the temple and the throne” (Rev. 16:17, paraphrased). That is interesting. Only twice in the book of Revelation are the temple and the throne brought together in the same description in the same phrase. The temple speaks of the prayer and worship movement in heaven and earth.

There is worship and prayer going around the throne right now in the temple. There is prayer and worship going on in the earth. It is really one worship movement from the Holy Spirit’s point of view. Those who worship in heaven are under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Those who worship in the earth—the Holy Spirit wants them to come under His direction. It is one movement from His point of view. The prayer and worship movement, the temple, and the throne speaks of the authority of God.

So the prayer movement and the authority of God is combusive. (That is probably not the best word.) When prayer and authority meet in the perfect will of God, it explodes—this intervention of God against the Antichrist. Combusive is not the best word, but it comes together in a holy synergism.

IT IS DONE

Paragraph E. The voice—I am assuming it is Jesus, because He is saying the same thing He said on the cross, “It is finished. It is done” (Rev. 16:17, paraphrased). It is interesting that when He bore the wrath of God on the cross to accomplish our salvation, our redemption, He said, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30).

After three and a half years of ministry on the earth, He bears the wrath of God in His body. Now He is releasing the wrath of God after three and a half years of the Tribulation at the end to transition history to His return.

It is done. It is sure. It never has to be redone. It is not incomplete. It is not uncertain. It is totally effective. It is permanent. It will never, ever need to be redone. When God says it is done, it is done. That gives us not just the assurance that victory is coming, but victory is permanent forever. It is done. The whole thing is over. Yes.

THUNDERINGS AND LIGHTENINGS

Paragraph F. Lightning and thunder break out of the throne. It says, “Noises, thundering, lightening” (Rev. 16:17, paraphrased). It is interesting that at the conclusion of each of the three judgment series—the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls of wrath. Each of them are three distinct judgment series. Some commentators will put them together and say they are all saying the same thing in different way. I do not think that is the right approach to it, though I appreciate the guys who write that. I think there are three clearly distinct judgment series. Each of them ends with a short season of an intensive storm that actually breaks out on the earth.

This intensive storm marks the escalation, the intensity, the shifting of God’s purpose to the next degree of intensity. After the seven seals, there is a storm breaking out. The Lord is telling the earth—just like when Jesus died on the cross; there was a storm that broke out. It is the shifting of God’s purpose. It is escalating to the next level of God’s purpose.

That happens in each one of these shifts of the judgments of God. There is an intense, short season of storm activity on the earth. It is terrifying. This is not a small thing, because it is part of the judgment of God against the kingdom of darkness. There is a terrifying dimension to it. In 1 Samuel 7:10 when the enemies came against Israel—the Philistines—God released thunder so terrifying that it confused the entire army. The army was in total confusion and panic. They fled because of the thunder. When God wants to thunder, He can confuse the army. There is a great army gathering around Jerusalem.

I guarantee you there will be confusion and terror in that thunder and in that storm. It is a storm that starts at the throne of God, because the thunder and lightning is around the throne. The energy of God and that dramatic dimension of the thunder and the lightening break into the natural realm. Again, it happened at the cross when Jesus died. It happened at Mt. Sinai when Israel came into covenant with God at Mt. Sinai. The storm manifestations around the throne of God broke into the earth, signifying the radical shift and the escalation of God’s purpose.

This is real. This is not just figurative. I read some commentators who make it like poetry. I say, “No, that storm is real.” It will terrify the nations.

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE

Roman numeral III. The first of the two features is the great earthquake. The second are the hailstones. This is the big one. People talk about, “Hey, was that the big one?” There is a big one. No matter what earthquakes happen and no matter which one happens tomorrow or the next day, it is not the big one.

HAGGAI PROPHESED THAT GOD WOULD SHAKE EVERYTHING

Paragraph B. Haggai prophesied—this is about 2500 years ago—he prophesied about the big one. As a matter of fact, many of the prophets did. This is a major theme in terms of God’s end-time purpose, because it is going to remove the bad, and it is going to clear the way for the good. It is not just removing the bad. It is clearing the way. I am talking about in real time and space in the earth, for new cities to be built and new structures to be put in place.

It says in Haggai 2:6, “I will shake heaven.” Heaven means the atmosphere above us in this context. Sometimes heaven means the third heavens, where God’s throne is. In this context it means the sky. It means star, sun, moon, signs, and all kinds of disturbances. “I will shake the heavens, but I will shake the earth. I will shake the sea” (v. 6, paraphrased). Beloved, when God shakes the sea, that is intense. Verse 7: “I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations.” “Desire of all nations” is one of my favorite titles of Jesus in the Old Testament. His name is the Desire of all nations. Though one group of the earth is blaspheming Him—they hate Him—another group of the earth is seeing His glory and they desire Him. They want to be a part of what He is a part of.

The saints that are around the throne are saying, “Great and marvelous” (Rev. 15:3). They are saying, “Your ways are marvelous. You fill us with marvel. We desire to be near You” (v. 3, paraphrased). That is one of His names. He is the One the nations really desire, but they do not know it. When He reveals His judgments, they will see Him as the desirable God, the One they really do want. He is the answer to the cry in all the nations for justice. He is the One they desire. They do not know that.

Haggai 2:22: “I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms.” This is in its most complete sense. The literal Antichrist kingdom—He “will overthrow the throne” (v. 22), singular, that has all these nations attached to it, aligned with it. “I will destroy, across the whole earth, the strength of the Gentile armies” (v. 22, paraphrased). It says “kingdoms,” but it is a war time in

context. “I will destroy all the military might of the gentiles in one stroke” (v. 22, paraphrased).

Haggai had prophesied that 2,500 years ago. Israel (the devout Israel), those among the nations who are God-fearers—there are not so many of them, but there are some in the land for sure.

They are really counting on Haggai 2. They are counting on this prophecy coming to pass. Of course the way it happens is in Revelation here in the seventh bowl.

HEBREW 12 INTERPRETS HAGGAI 2

In Hebrews 12, the writer of Hebrews gives us an apostolic interpretation of Haggai 2. It is 500 years later. It is in the early church, one of the apostolic leaders—we do not know who wrote Hebrews. This passage gives an apostolic interpretation—meaning not only it tells us what Haggai 2 is about, but then adds some more details to it. If you really want to tap into the Haggai 2 prophecy, which is really the seventh bowl, you want to study Hebrews 12 because it gives us some of the purpose behind the seventh bowl. Without some of these other passages, you might be left thinking, “God, it just seems like You are mad and that is all there is to it.”

It’s as if He says, “No, I am removing the bad and making way for good, in a way that is successful and permanent”—meaning it will not be a temporary fix, where in 100 years wickedness is raised up in the nations again. This is a successful, permanent change in the nations.

In Hebrews 12:26, the writer of Hebrews is interpreting Haggai 2:22: “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens” (Heb. 12:26, paraphrased). In other words, he is quoting Haggai 2. He says, “Let me give you the behind-the-scenes insight.” In verse 27 when God says, “Yet once more,” what he means is what is on God’s mind. “I know by the Holy Spirit that God is going to remove the things that can be removed. He is going to remove the things that cannot stand up under His scrutiny. Then the things that cannot be shaken by the judgment of God—there will be things on the earth that cannot be shaken” (Heb. 12:26–27, paraphrased).

There will be things established in righteousness that the judgments of God will not shake. Those things will remain. Some of those things will be on the earth when the Lord returns. Some of those things are the things you are developing in

your life right now. They are called eternal rewards. There are things that you are doing right now in these days, that when the full judgment of God is released and the age to come, those things will remain and stand true.

Your humility, your obedience, your godliness: those things will remain through the judgments, even at the judgment seat of life. Your love, humility, and servanthood will stand true and will not be shaken. It will only be revealed.

Verse 28: so the writer of Hebrews essentially is saying, “Since this is what is going on”—he says, “Guys, let’s go for it. Let’s seek God with fear and trembling, because it is inevitable that everything that is false is going to be removed” (v. 28, paraphrased). There is no point in going on a fantasy delusion about vanity that somehow you are going to be this, that, or the other in the flesh. Vanity and futility is going to be exposed and removed. Let’s build on righteousness, the Sermon on the Mount, the kingdom of God. Let’s not take a few years’ parentheses, a side journey to go do our own thing in the flesh. It is not going to make it. It will not last. Let’s not even go on a parenthesis. Let’s just go steady with God.

GOD WILL REMOVE EVERYTHING THAT HINDERS LOVE

This passage—the seventh bowl, as terrifying as it is, it assures me that God will decisively intervene and remove everything that is built on sinfulness and pride. He will confront it. I say, “If it is that clear and that sure, why do I even want to go there? Why do I not just build the things that remain?” Again, humility, righteousness, servanthood, building the Word of God into my heart—those things will stand up when the transition of the age happens. We will take those things with us. You will not take your résumé with you, your money with you, your popularity with you, your mailing list, your CDs, your books.

You will not take those things with you. You will take your humility, your godliness, and your righteousness. In as much as the Spirit built those things, there will be remembrance and reward for those things. It is the life in the Spirit that will make it through the great shakings, of which the seventh bowl is the most graphic example. There is going to be this great earthquake. It is going to hit Israel and every nation. There is quite a bit about the impact of the great earthquake on Israel. We know that the city is going to be divided into three parts. Jerusalem will be one of the least severely shaken cities.

How do I want to say that? Of all the cities of the earth, it will probably be shaken the least, compared to some of the major cities of the earth. They will fall completely and be decimated.

Some, like Babylon, will never rise again. Jerusalem will be divided strategically into three places. Other things will happen as well.

THE EARTHQUAKE IN JERUSALEM WILL ENABLE THE JEWS TO ESCAPE Interestingly, paragraph D, Zechariah 14:4–5: it says this. It is talking about the great earthquake: “In that day Jesus’ feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives will be split in two” (v. 4, paraphrased). You know the Mount of Olives is right there—Jerusalem. It will split from east to west. It will make a very large valley. Look at this. Verse 5 (paraphrased): “Then you shall flee through the valley.” Like—what? When I began to read this some years ago, I said, “Flee? Who would want to flee through the valley if Jesus is standing on it? I do not want to run from it. I want to run right to Jesus.”

What it is describing is the unsaved remnant of Israel, because the Church has been raptured at the seventh trumpet. Just days before this—actually, before all these events take place—the nations have gathered around the city of Jerusalem. They are warring against them. I call them the unsaved remnant, meaning they are going to be saved when they come face to face with Jesus and figure out who He is. They have not died. They cannot get saved after they die. Jesus is coming; they can still get saved. Jesus came the first time, He preached, and they could get saved. When He comes the second time, they can get saved.

Some people are thrown off by that. They think, “No, when the Lord comes, you cannot get saved.”

I respond, “No, you are confusing that. When you die, you cannot get saved afterwards. If you are alive in the flesh, you hear the gospel; you can get saved.”

In this age or in the millennial kingdom they will be like that. Many will get saved. These unsaved remnant of Israel—they have not taken the mark of the Beast; they were not followers of Jesus, and therefore were not raptured. They are being attacked by the Antichrist. Their backs are against the mountain. They are trapped in a military way against the Mount of Olives, in the same way that Israel was trapped against the Red Sea when Pharaoh’s army had them against the Red Sea. The Antichrist armies have them trapped, a whole group of them.

The Lord comes in on the white horse. They are effectively saying, “We are not fully connecting the dots yet. We know You are powerful.” That is obvious, but they do not fully grasp it. Jesus commands the mountain and it splits like Moses split the Red Sea. It’s as if they say, “Intense! You know what, they split through the valley.” They say, “What was that?” because they cannot quite get it.

In Zechariah 14:5: “Then you shall flee through My mountain valley.” Zechariah 14 says, “Yes, you shall flee” (v. 5). I respond, “Why would you flee if He is there?” It’s because they have not put it all together, and they are in the most intense military attack. Suddenly—not the Red Sea—the mountain splits. It is a parallel deal. It will all connect really soon after this.

They will connect the dots. They have not yet. They take off (run off), and they are saying, “Ah, that was intense. I am encouraged. I do not know who that guy is, but I am encouraged because it seems like something good is going to happen.” They might know Zechariah 14. Maybe they will, maybe they will not. I do not know.

Jesus has marched up through Edom. It says in Isaiah 63. We have gone over that a few times. He arrives at Jerusalem at just the right time in this military context to cause the Mount of Olives to split in order that they can escape. That is the bizarre part that most do not get.

They figure when the Mount of Olives splits, everything is over there. There are more dimensions to the battle that are about to unfold. It is a part of the battle intervention by the Captain of the host, Jesus. They actually flee. They escape successfully. They make note of it and it ends up leading to their salvation in a really short amount of time.

WE ARE STANDING AT THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Paragraph F. Mark 11:1. I just have to throw this in. It is not that important to the seventh bowl. When Jesus gave the famous teaching in Mark 11 in verse 1 and verse 23—when Jesus gave the famous teaching—look at verse 23, “I say to you, whoever says to this mountain.” He points to this mountain. It just so happens in this context, you can see in verse 1—He is pointing to the Mount of Olives.

They are saying, “Wow, He is giving us a figurative teaching.”

He is essentially saying, “I am. I am talking about the mountains in your life. What you do not know is that I am actually talking about this mountain. Wait and see. See Zechariah 14, and get the details if you cannot wait until I return.” I love that! He points to this. Nobody gets it, I am sure. He looks up, winks to the Father, feels the Holy Spirit, and says, “Ah, Lord, I can see it now. When I speak to this mountain and it splits . . .”

THREE IMPACTS OF THE SEVENTH BOWL

Okay, back to the seventh bowl. Then what happens is in verse 19: there are three impacts, and there are three of the consequences of the great earthquake. Three of them are described: first, the great city, Jerusalem, is divided into three parts. Second, and more intense, cities fall—that is worse than being divided into three parts. Third, and even more intense, Babylon is completely obliterated. There are three different descriptions of the impact of this great earthquake found in verse 19. The great city, Jerusalem—there are two great cities in the book of Revelation. Babylon is called the great city and Jerusalem is called the great city because, in paragraph G, history from God’s point of view is the tale of these two cities.

GREAT CITY JERUSALEM

History unfolds as a conflict between Jerusalem and Babylon. It is manifest through—all the different major conflicts in history, from God’s point of view, have been a conflict between these two cities. It comes to a head again at the end. One reason we know that the great city is Jerusalem is because it is unnamed. Some say it is Babylon. They think John is saying, “Babylon will be divided into three parts, the cities of the earth will fall, and then Babylon will be remembered” (v. 19, paraphrased). I do not think he is saying that. I do not think he is repeating Babylon twice.

This is a progressive description of intensifying judgments. Besides, in Revelation 18, when Babylon falls, it does not fall divided into three parts. It is suddenly and permanently and totally destroyed. It is not a three-part destruction, and then it gets rebuilt later. It is suddenly destroyed, it is totally destroyed, and it is permanently destroyed. There is not a three-part strategy in the fall of Babylon. I believe it is talking about the city of Jerusalem.

DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS

In paragraph H, I give a little bit more on that—the city of Jerusalem. Revelation 11:13 tell us about the earthquake that happens to Jerusalem. It tells us a tenth of the city fell. It is divided into three parts. It gives us a little more insight.

“A tenth of it fell” (v. 13, paraphrased) means it completely collapses. The earth caves in, the buildings fall in, but nine-tenths of it stays intact. That is the least severe of the major cities. 7,000 people die (v. 13). That is a large number, but compared to what is happening in the other cities—I am assuming that is a small number comparative to the magnitude of this earthquake in other cities.

An interesting thing that happens—this is at the very end of the great earthquake that hits Jerusalem—is that people in the city of Jerusalem magnify God. We are talking about the Antichrist raging against them. The rapture has happened. There are God-fearers who have not said yes to Jesus. They would have gone in the rapture, the seventh trumpet, just days earlier.

They see these things happen, and they begin to glorify God instead of blaspheming God like many others in the nations do. There are still people responding to the Lord at the very end here.

Zechariah 14:9–11. I know those who are just new at the whole study of the end times—you are thinking, “Well, I really do not care about all this stuff.” You really do. Let me tell you why you do. Because again, Jesus began with a blank whiteboard, so to speak. This is an insight into how decisively and how thoroughly and successfully He is going to confront sin in human history. It gives us insight into the One we love.

Number two: as we understand what the Bible says about the end times—because we do not want just conjecture. It is okay if you have a little conjecture, as long as you call it conjecture.

Just like I have opinions, but I call them opinions. It is okay to have conjectures as long as you identify it as opinions and conjecture. Whatever the Bible says about the end times, the more you understand it, the more that the fog lifts in your understanding to see the whole big picture.

I want to know everything the Bible says about it. The more I know, the puzzle becomes clear then. The more I know about this, then the more I understand about

other passages that some of these details are a part of. I say, “Oh, I get that Jerusalem earthquake. That makes more sense in Isaiah 28 when I am reading.”

If you are one who really wants to understand what the Bible says about it, you want to get any fact that is clear and substantial, because it clarifies other parts of the story of the storyline of the end-times. Again, if the Bible tells us the storyline, we want to know it, because God did not waste time. He did not say, “I am going to give you some details. They are really irrelevant, but I am going to give them to you because I love to tell stories.”

That is not what is happening. God does love to tell us stories about His heart and His love, but He is not just story-telling. He is giving us significant details that will matter to the Church in that generation. I want to know it. The more that I understand it, the fog lifts, the puzzle becomes clear, and all the other passages make sense too. Because we love this Man Jesus, and this is His plan. We care about understanding this.

I want to know how decisive and how thorough and how intentional He is about intervening to confront sin. This is the Jesus we love. Of course, if you know nothing else, the very fact He came to the cross tells you He is intentional about confronting sin. That was really intense—that God became a man and went to the cross and took the wrath of God for us. There is nothing more intentional and radical than that.

In Zechariah 14:9–11—I will not go through it, but it describes the topography of Jerusalem after the earthquake hits. It tells us some different dimensions. I find it not just interesting—it is interesting, but it is more than interesting. It is insightful and important information if you want to know the whole storyline of what God is saying about the end times. I do not mean every detail. I mean if you want to know the main themes of the storyline.

GREAT BABYLON

Paragraph I: great Babylon. This is the Antichrist headquarters. Revelation 18 elaborates on the city being shaken and burned with fire, because when this earthquake hits, it is going to create fires everywhere. The whole city is going to be a firestorm. Probably it is related to oil being involved in the earthquakes and the fires. That is a guess.

Revelation 18 gives us more insight into this city being suddenly, totally, and permanently destroyed. Fire is the main feature that is emphasized in Revelation 18. In Revelation 16, the passage we are looking at now, it is the earthquake and the hail. Revelation 18 is the fire, because when the earthquake hits, the fires break out. When the hailstones come, they will destroy other things that will create fires. The hail would be good (because it is water) to put out the fire, but it is frozen water, so it does not help with the fire at all. It actually creates more trouble.

WAS REMEMBERED BEFORE GOD

Paragraph J. The reason it says that Babylon will be remembered before God—that is a very key phrase, because Babylon will be the last major city to go down of the Gentiles. The other cities have been affected. Babylon has withstood the seals, the trumpets, and the six bowls up to this point and time. Babylon has a testimony: she is invincible. When you read Revelation 18, she basically says, “I am a queen. I am not a widow. I cannot be defeated” (v. 7, paraphrased). She has this invincibility image about herself, and no doubt she has propagated that image around the nations.

It’s as if God says, “Just know the fact that she stood through the Great Tribulation does not mean she will make it through at the very last moment. At the final stroke of judgment, I am taking her out suddenly, totally, and permanently. I have not forgotten Babylon. I have especially assigned her destruction in a way to shake the whole earth.” She will have the image of invincibility, but God says, “Do not worry. Do not worry. She is going down.”

I believe we are in those decades. I believe we could be three, four, five decades away, maybe sooner. I feel like we are some decades away. The saints—we do not need to invest our life in Babylon, in that value system. I am telling you, it is going down. God has remembered Babylon. It is going down. I do not want to invest my life into that value system at all.

GREAT HAILSTONES

Let’s go to Roman numeral IV: the great hailstones. Well, they are going to weigh about 100 pounds. This is intense. It is just a real dilemma. The hail is 100 pounds. Picture a big bowling ball. How much does a bowling ball weigh? Eight pounds? These weigh 100 pounds or so. I do not know exactly, but they are big, but I do not bowl. I do not want to get hit by one, that is for sure.

Anyway, a bowling ball is really heavy. This thing is heavier than that. They are coming down from the sky—100 pounds, like blocks of ice, crashing down. They are destroying buildings, bridges, and all kinds of houses, the landscape—everything is coming down worldwide.

People will run into shelters, but the earthquake is destroying the shelters. They say, “Whoa. The shelter looks horrible.” They go out: “The hailstones are coming. Go back in.” Where are they going to go? “Let’s go to the mountains and hide in the caves.” No, there are earthquakes leveling the mountains. There is no escape. There is no way out.

If they go into shelter from the hailstones, the earthquakes are bringing the shelters down, or shaking them, but they will not all come down. Men live through this, because men are still alive at the end to blasphemy God. Many survive this. It is terrifying.

MOSES’ LAW REQUIRED THE STONING TO DEATH OF IDOL WORSHIPPERS

Paragraph B. Very significant. Moses’ law (the law of Moses—well, it is God’s law, not Moses’, as He is the One who communicated it), the law of God required that anybody that was an idol worshipper, which is the same thing as a demon worshipper, must be stoned. Anyone who blasphemies God must be stoned.

If you have been following the study here in Revelation 16, they have been blaspheming God with greater intensity as the bowls unfold. What is happening—Jesus is stoning the Antichrist worship system on a global level and eradicating it from the earth Himself. As the lawgiver He is stoning the idolatrous Antichrist worship system and driving it off the earth. He is obeying His own laws.

ISAIAH DESCRIBED THE FINAL END-TIME JUDGMENTS MANY TIMES

The interesting thing, paragraph D, Ezekiel 38:22. The interesting thing in this passage is that there has been a drought in the land of Israel for three and a half years, it says. The two witnesses, like Elijah did—remember Elijah called a drought in his contest against Jezebel, which is a picture of the harlot Babylon. The two witnesses call a three-and-a-half-year drought in their resistance to the Antichrist and his false religion (Rev. 11:6).

It is the same story being told again. There has been a three-and-a-half-year drought on the land. That drought is followed by a rainstorm. I do not know that much—all the details of what that means—but three and a half years of no rain, and suddenly, flooding rains coming. There are all kinds of dimensions, I am sure—I mean, dynamics of complications. Ezekiel 38:22, talking about that same hailstorm: “I will rain down on him (Antichrist), on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.”

The word “peoples” and “nations” are interchangeable in many places: “I will rain down on many nations who are with him.” These are the people identified with the Antichrist. “It will be flooding rain. It will be great hailstones. It will be fire and brimstone. I will rain down. I will do on those cities what I did on Sodom and Gomorrah” (v. 22, paraphrased). In Jude 7, the apostle Jude is saying that what God did in Sodom and Gomorrah is an example of what He is going to do again in history. He is going to do again in the cities of the earth what He did in Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is going to be flooding rain, hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Again you might be struck with the cruelty of this, but these are reprobate—meaning, they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

They are in a position of hardness of heart. They have no desire to repent. They hate Jesus with a perfect hatred. They will not repent. They blaspheme Him.

REMOVING EVIL SO LOVE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL ABOUND

What I see in this is not cruelty. I see resolve to act in the case of justice and love to remove evil off the earth so that love and righteousness can fill the earth. They must be removed, because they are acting in their own free will. Jesus will not put His hand in their heart, turn the switch and make them decide. They have chosen to hate Him perfectly. He says, “Because you have chosen that, you must be removed. Because you will not remove of your own free will, I will drive you off the planet and everything associated with you so love and righteousness can fill the earth for 1,000 years.”

After the 1,000 years on—forever and ever in the new heaven and new earth. Righteousness and love will fill the earth. This is about a decisive intervention: God doing something against injustice, against evil, and against everything who sins against love.

THE LORD SHALL GO FORTH AS A MIGHTY MAN

In paragraph E—I am just going to take you through this real quickly. In Isaiah 42:15: when Jesus comes back, He is going to lay waste the mountains. I mean, that is intense. Can you imagine what it means to lay waste the mountains? It is the seventh bowl here. When Jesus comes back like a mighty man of war, He is going to destroy all the mountains. That is how much He is going to shake the earth.

ISAIAH SPOKE OF GOD’S UNUSUAL ACT IN HIS END-TIME JUDGMENTS

Paragraph F. In Isaiah 28—it is a great one; let’s look at paragraph H, which is Job 38:22–23. Here is what God asked Job. It’s as if He said, “Job, I have a question.” Job was challenging God’s wisdom. God asks, “Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail?” (v. 22).

It’s as if Job responds, “I do not even know there is a storehouse for hail.”

God says, “I have reserved the storehouse of hail, the treasury of hail. I have reserved it for the time of trouble. I have reserved it for the day of battle” (vv. 22–23, paraphrased). The Lord has reserved 100-pound hailstones for the day of battle when He confronts His enemy on a global level.

God says, “Job, remember that. I am storing something up for the great day of battle. Wait and see” (vv. 22–23, paraphrased). There are a lot of verses here for your own personal study and edification. I will just end with that.

Let’s stand before the Lord.



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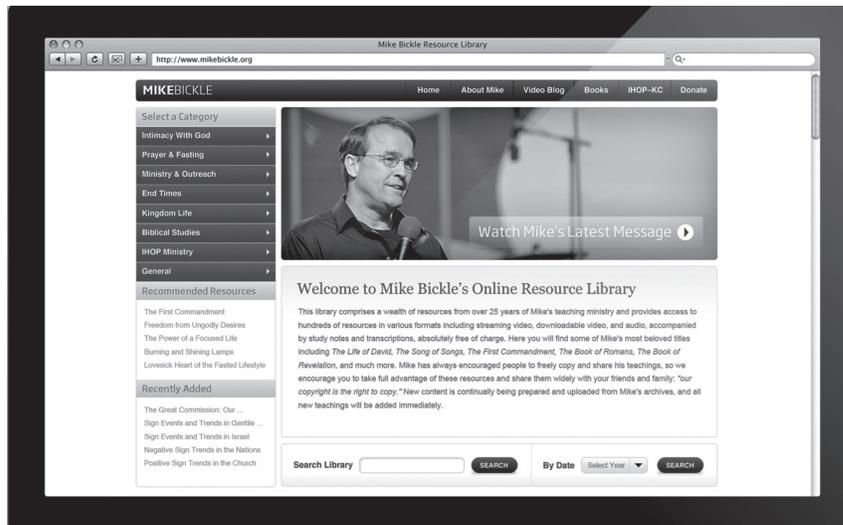
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