

## **Week 6: Chapters 15-16**

### **Wrath and the Seven Bowls**

*Next week's meeting is our last. For next week please read Revelation 17-22*

#### **Chaos and the Wrath of God**

- Connection with Exodus
  - Lamb of God
  - God's people and the Sea
  - The Song of Moses
  - Plagues like in Exodus
  - Throne room scenes are theophany – like on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19-20
- God is faithful creator
- Forces of evil are 'anti-creation' or destroyers
- The plagues are signs of the fruit of the rebellion of sin
  - "The plagues may thus be viewed as the effect of Pharaoh's antireational sins upon the cosmic order writ large." -Terrance Fretheim
- What is the wrath of God?
  - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth." Romans 1:18
  - "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves," Romans 1:24
  - "For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural," Romans 1:26
  - "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done." Romans 1:28
  - "The wrath to come refers to the climactic, end time scene of judgment when those who prefer to worship idols rather than the living God receive the fruits of their own misplaced hopes and commitments." (Baker and Green)
- God's Judgment in Revelation
  - 'Destroying those who destroy the earth' Revelation 11:18
  - Cup of God's wrath coming from sinful 'grapes' Revelation 14:17-20
  - They shed the prophet's blood – they get blood to drink Revelation 16:5-6

#### **A Song and Seven Angels: Revelation 15**

- What is the imagery of the people by the sea supposed to bring to mind?
  - "Therefore, just as God sent plagues upon Pharaoh and his allies in order to liberate his people from bondage, God's angels send plagues upon the beast and his allies in order to liberate the world from his tyranny." (Koester p.145)
- The song of Moses – see Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32
- What is the significance of the plagues being in the seven golden bowls? See Revelation 5:8.

## The Seven Bowls of Wrath: Revelation 16

- Plagues of Exodus: Waters to blood, Frogs, Gnats, Flies, Death of livestock, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Death of firstborn
- First bowl
  - Poured on the earth
  - those with mark of beast get corresponding sores
- Second bowl
  - Poured into the sea
  - Sea turned to blood of a corpse
- Third bowl
  - Poured into the rivers and springs of water
  - Rivers and springs became blood
  - The shed blood of saints and prophets, now they have blood to drink
- Fourth bowl
  - Poured on the sun
  - scorched people with fire
- Fifth bowl
  - Poured on the throne of the beast
  - It's Kingdom plunged into darkness
- Sixth bowl
  - Poured on the great river Euphrates
  - Water dries up for Kings from the East – military conquest and threat
  - Froglike demons – evil gathers for battle
  - Assembled at Harmagedon or Armageddon
- Seventh bowl
  - Poured into the air
  - "It is done"
- Quotes to consider:
  - “The visions are not simple descriptions of future events, but warnings that are designed to move the readers of Revelation to repentance and renewed commitment to the ways of God and the Lamb. Although the trumpet plagues warn of disasters that affect a third of the earth, and the bowl plagues portent more complete judgments on the worshippers of the beast, both series are designed to strip away the readers’ sense of security by hemming them in with dangers in earth, sea, and sky. Each series, in its own way, focuses on the issue of whether people will repent or refuse to repent in the face of God’s judgment (9:20-21, 16:9, 11, 21). When readers are moved to ask where their own deepest loyalties lie, the text has its proper effect.” -Craig Koester
  - “Again the author is not describing what will happen but using images to create a sense of the horrible nature of undergoing God’s wrath.” -Ben Witherington III