

# A Great Reversal

Revelation 16:10-16

Sooke Baptist Church

Sunday, August 1, 2021

9:30 am, In-person

also on Facebook and YouTube

**03:00**

Coffee/Question

What story of reversal in the Bible  
most resonates with you?

Explain.

Revelation 16:10-16

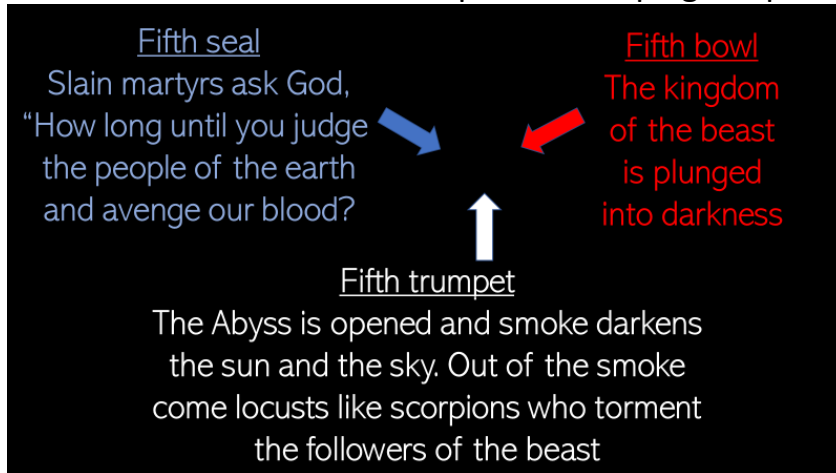
## Fifth Bowl – 16:10-11

The bowl is poured out... on the throne of the beast.

The result... is that his kingdom is plunged into darkness.

But John is not shown how the beast is impacted by this judgment.

What John did see ... is the impact of this plague upon the followers of the beast.

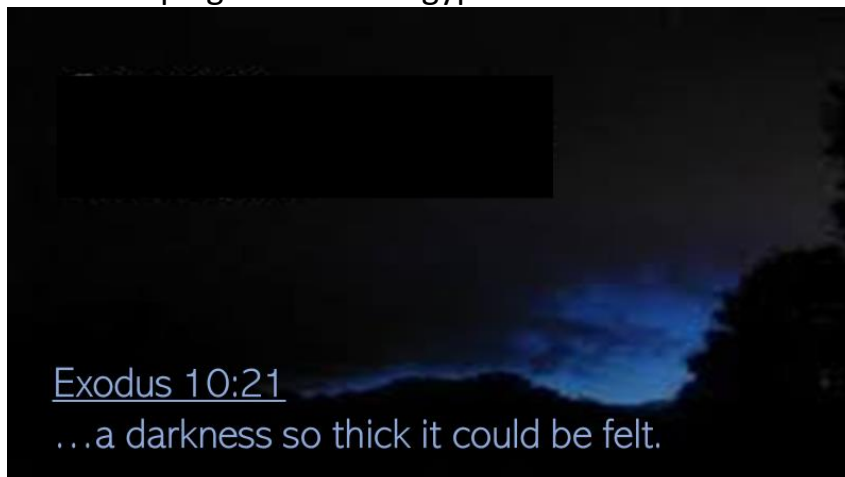


The bowl plagues particularly point the reader back to the OT... back to the plagues that struck Egypt long ago in the days of Moses.

It was through those plagues that judged Egypt...and rescued the nation of Israel.

The plagues of Egypt foreshadowed what God would do in the last days... when he judges the world and avenges his people, rescuing his church, not just from one nation, but from the world of humanity who stands opposed to God as Pharaoh once did.

The ninth plague to strike Egypt was ...



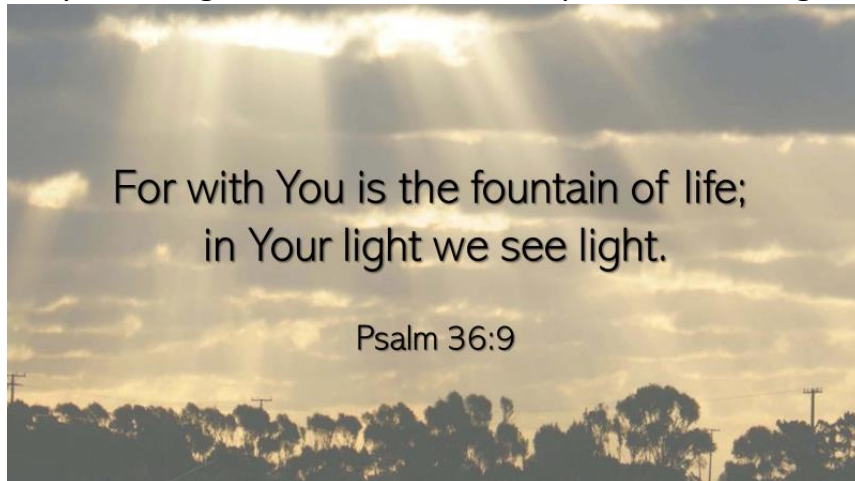
When that plague struck... the natural world acted as a mirror, to reflect back to the Egyptians the condition of their souls.

Something similar happens with the fifth trumpet and bowl.

Human life cannot thrive without God.

And without God human beings cannot know truth, for truth is found in the person of God.

Only in the light of who God is can a person see things as they truly are.

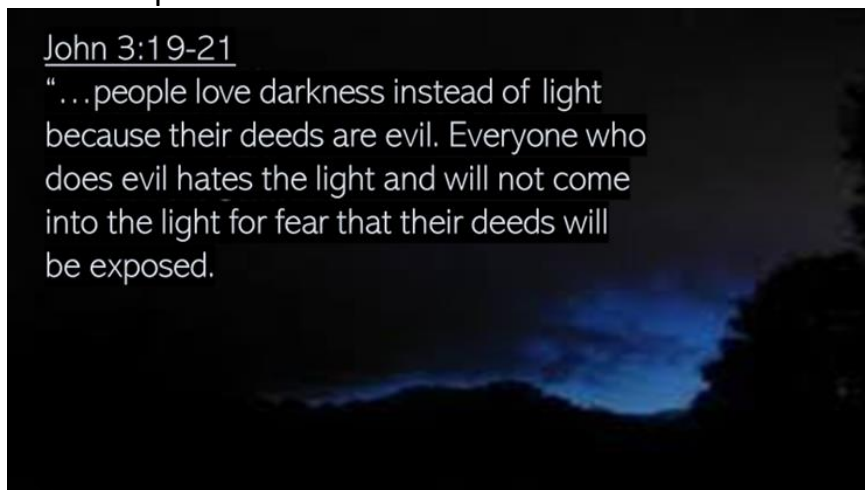


In the absence of God darkness rushes in to fill the void.

What the fifth bowl judgment does is make known to humanity that the light within the kingdom of the beast and the dragon is darkness... a darkness so profound that it produces an agony of soul for those who live in it.

I believe that until the return of Jesus the fifth bowl... like the other four... is also a severe mercy.

Let me explain. Jesus said...



How good is God...that he confronts sinners and reveals to them that “the light” they are trusting in... has actually cloaked their souls in darkness.

How good is God... to call a person to repent of their sin... and step into the light!

How good is God... that along with his call to repent, he gives the assurance of his welcome to all who come near to him in faith of his Savior.

John 3:19,21

“...people love darkness instead of light because their deeds are evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light...”

Is this not also the story of many of you who are here or listening at home?  
It is mine!!

As a teenager, God revealed to me what he saw when he looked into my heart.  
God Spirit’s urged me to repent of my sin and unbelief.  
The Spirit assured me that if I came, God would save me, cleanse me, make me to be a new person.  
And so, I came to him with great trembling.

It is the heart of God that all be saved.  
The sacrifice of Jesus is sufficient.  
His mercy and grace cannot be exhausted.

But our passage tells us that not everyone will respond to God’s mercy.  
There will be those who curse God and who refuse to repent... who choose the darkness of the dragon and the beast rather than step into the light of God’s person and trust him to save them.

## Sixth Bowl – 16:12-14, 16



v.12 – the sixth bowl is poured out on the great river Euphrates.



This plague points back to two historical rescues.  
The first was in the days of Moses when...



...God dried up the Red Sea – making a path for Israel to walk through.

The second occurred many hundreds of years later, after the nation of Judah was taken into exile by the Babylonians.

In those days the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold that God would bring his people back to Judah... and he would do so in a way that was as dramatic and miraculous as the crossing of the Red Sea.

Isaiah 11:15

...with a scorching wind [the LORD] will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River.

He will break it into seven streams so that anyone can cross over in sandals.

There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt.

Jeremiah 50:36-37

Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

"See I will defend your cause and avenge you;  
I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.

Babylon will be a heap of ruins,  
a haunt of jackals,  
an object of horror and scorn,  
a place where no one lives."



Isaiah 44:24-28

"I am the LORD, the Maker of all things,  
who stretches out the heavens,  
who spreads out the earth by myself,  
who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools  
of diviners,  
who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it  
into nonsense,  
who carries out the words of his servants and  
fulfills the predictions of his messengers,

Isaiah 44:24-28

who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,'  
of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be rebuilt,'  
and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'  
who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry, and I will dry  
up your streams,'  
who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will  
accomplish all that I please;  
he [Cyrus] will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt,"  
and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'

To those who had gone into exile, God told in advance the name of the king who would defeat Babylon and then command that Jerusalem be rebuilt.

God also foretold that Cyrus would be a king who came from the east.

Isaiah 41:2-4

“Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service?”

He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow. He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before.

Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.”

See also Isaiah 46:11.

When Cyrus came to Babylon, he did the very thing God had foretold he would do... he diverted the waters of the Euphrates...



... which allowed his army to enter the city of Babylon unexpectedly and defeat the Babylonians.

The victory by Cyrus then led to Israel’s release from captivity, as God had foretold.



I love what GK Beale said about this.

"In the OT, God is always the One who dries up the water, whether for redemption or judgment."

GK Beale

p.340

What this says to us is that God always makes a way...for his people. Nothing and no one can stop him or frustrate what he purposes to do.

In order to teach this truth to his people... to grow their confidence in him... it was God's practice to foretell... generations in advance... what he would do. You and I have the benefit of being able to read of these events...and reflect upon and ponder the historical faithfulness of God. As we do so, our confidence in God grows.

In the vision of the sixth bowl, John was shown that in the last days God will again rescue his people in a way that bears similarity to what he did long ago...at the Red Sea and at Babylon.



God will rescue his people...in his time... and in his way... so that there will be no doubt that what has been done... is of God.

Look at v.13.

What John saw next seems so bizarre.

He saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs...



...that came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

In verse 13, for the first time in the book of Revelation, the third person of the unholy trinity, is identified, not simply as the beast that came out of the earth, but as the false prophet.

Why... did God choose in this vision to use the image of three frogs?

The reader is meant to make a connection to the second plague which struck ancient Egypt in the days of Moses...



The plague of frogs – Exodus 8

Exodus 8 says that the frogs came up from the Nile into the palace and into all homes, into bedrooms and onto beds, into ovens and the kneading troughs where bread was made.

Frogs are slimy and to some they are unpleasant...but we don't typically think of them as dangerous.

But listen to what Psalm 78:44-45 says...

Psalm 78:44-45

He turned their river into blood; they  
could not drink from their streams.  
He sent swarms of flies that devoured  
them, **and frogs that devastated them.**

GK Beale says, "While the frogs may have appeared harmless, the psalm writer, Asaph, under the influence of God's Spirit wrote, they destroyed the Egyptians." p.342.

The same is true of the three impure spirits of Revelation 16.

God warns that they are not harmless, but extremely dangerous.

But why?

Because it is impossible for them to speak the truth... as confirmed by Jesus.

## Satan the Father of Lies

... he was a murderer from the beginning,  
not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.  
When he lies, he speaks his native language,  
for he is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44

They... always kill, steal and destroy.

The thief comes only  
to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come  
that they may have life,  
and have it to the full.

Jesus, John 10:10

Another important emphasis is made in v.14.

In addition to being liars, they are able to perform signs, which they use to deceive the “kings of the whole world.”

For what purpose?

Look again at the latter half of v.14.

To war against God.

In the vision John was shown where this battle would take place.

It is a place that in Hebrew is called...



1. Darrell Johnson writes, "There is no place in the whole of the Middle East known by the name Armageddon." p.290
2. The name Armageddon is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name Har-Megiddo, which means the mountain of Megiddo.



"There is a place sixty miles north of Jerusalem, near Mt Carmel, known by the name of Megiddo. But it is not a mountain. DJ, p.290

3. The Bible does tell us of a battle fought there between King Josiah of Judah and King Neco of Egypt on the plains of Megiddo.



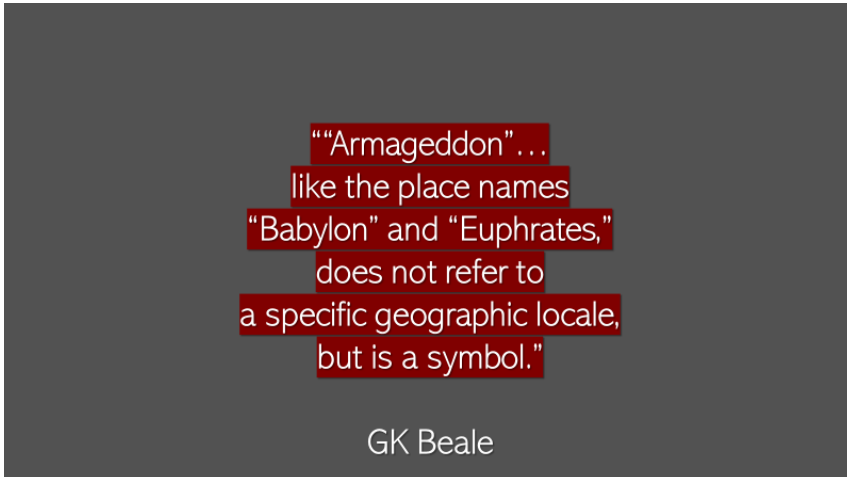


2 Kings 23:29

While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle, but Neco faced him and killed him at Megiddo.

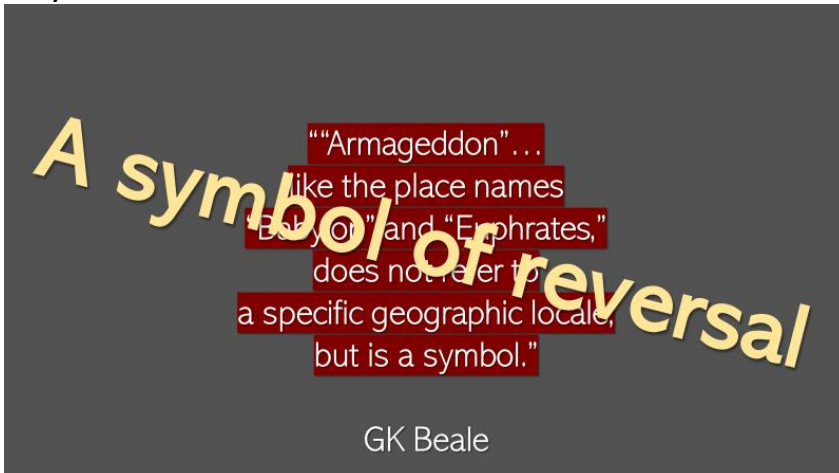
In this battle, not only was Josiah killed...Judah was also defeated, a defeat which resulted in a slow decline, which 22 ½ years later culminated in Judah being captured by Babylon.

Here's then what we know about "Armageddon."



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A symbol of what?





By referencing a place where the nation of Judah was once tragically defeated, what is being communicated by God to his people... is that he is...



The unholy trinity of dragon, beast and false prophet may gather the kings of the earth to war against God, it may look like they are winning the war against the people of God, the church may seem to have been sidelined by them to a place of irrelevance, but the triune God is the God of Reversal.



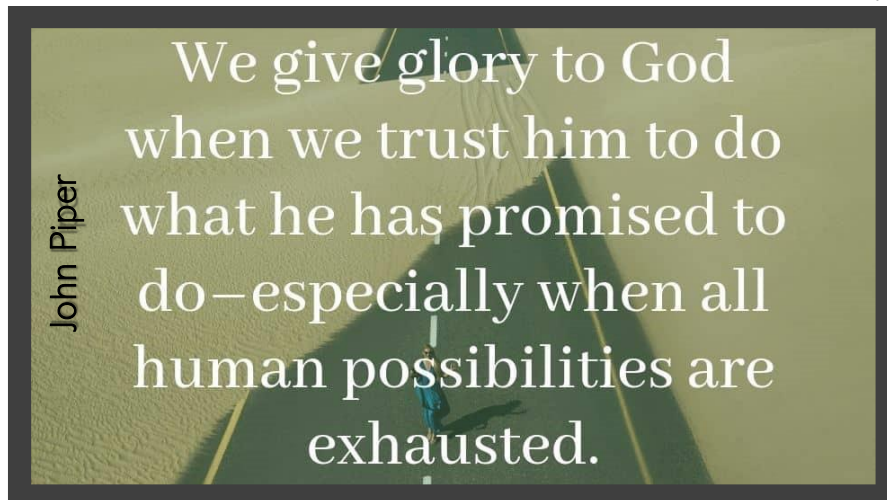
In Revelation 17, John saw the triumph of the Lamb.

Revelation 17:14

They will wage war against the Lamb,  
but the Lamb will triumph over them  
because he is the Lord of lords and King of kings –  
and with him will be his called,  
chosen and faithful followers.

See also Revelation 19:14-21

John Piper says... in light of the fact that in the past, in the present and in the future...God makes himself known as the God of Reversal, his followers....



We do not lose heart.

We have been saved and are confident that we will be saved by...



This is the One in whose hands we put our lives.

What God has done for his people throughout the last days... he will do on a scale unprecedented... at the return of Jesus, when he undoes what sin and death has ruined, when he makes right... all the wrongs committed throughout history, when he makes all things new.

I invite you to again speak with those you interacted with during the coffee question time.

Share with one another how the truth in this passage has impacted you and the way you sense God's Spirit leading you to put the truth of Scripture into practice.

### Life Connection/Question

- In what circumstance are you waiting on God for rescue?
- How has this passage encouraged you, or given you hope to hold on and wait for him?
- In what way(s) is the Spirit of God persuading you to put into practice this truth?
- If the passage has made you uncomfortable, what specifically is it that is troubling you?

**03:00**