



LESSON 33

Foundations Curriculum

Revelation, Part 3: The Final Events

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Introduction

Revelation, Part 3: The Final Events

In this thirty-third lesson, we will continue our study of the book of Revelation, its importance and teaching, along with the metaphorical figures and the possibilities that are not clearly stated. We will look at the 7 bowls of Wrath, give a brief explanation of the chapters we call “parentheses,” and consider the final events.

Beginning with the 6th seal, grave events, cataclysms, and destructions will come upon the earth. These will be the judgments of God upon the nations, related to the Day of Wrath announced in the prophecies of the Old Testament. We will study each of them. These judgments intensify and reach their culmination in the wrath of God through the sequence of the 7 bowls.

In the previous lesson we stopped at the 7th trumpet, at the end of chapter 11. At this point, we will skip chapters 12 through 14, because they are “parentheses.” We will begin in chapter 15, which brings the sequence of the 7 bowls of Wrath that comes after the 7 trumpets.

Those grave events — the cataclysms and destructions that come upon the earth (which appear beginning with the 6th seal) — are the judgments of God upon the nations. These judgments are connected with the pouring out of the wrath of God, announced in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Chapter 15 begins with a very solemn scene. Once again we see that sea of glass mingled with fire before the throne of God, and in that sea we can see the conquerors of the Beast worshiping the Lord.

The expression “those who have the victory over the beast” is interesting. Even though they were killed by the Antichrist because of the Word of the Lord, the Word says that they conquered the Antichrist, precisely by holding fast to the testimony of Christ even to death. That is a great victory. Hallelujah!

In this scene there are the 7 angels with the last plagues. They come out of the sanctuary and receive the 7 bowls full of the wrath of God, and no one else can enter the sanctuary until the 7 plagues are completed.

These are the last, terrible judgments of God upon the men who did not repent; everything will grow worse.

1) Revelation 15 and 16 - The 7 Bowls of Wrath

In these chapters are recorded the last, terrible judgments of God upon mankind.

In chapter 16, we see the first angel pour out his bowl upon the earth:

1st Bowl

Foul and loathsome sores will come upon those who bear the mark of the Beast.

2nd Bowl

The sea will become blood. Every living thing in the sea will die.

3rd Bowl

The angel will pour out his bowl on all the rivers and springs of water, and they will become blood.

4th Bowl

The angel pours it out on the sun, which in turn will scorch men with fire; here it says that men will blaspheme the name of God and will not repent.

5th Bowl

The kingdom of the Beast will become darkness, and men will gnaw their tongues because of the pain caused by the anguish and the sores, and again it says that they will blaspheme the name of God and will not repent.

6th Bowl

Here the angel will pour out his bowl on the river Euphrates and it will dry up, to prepare the way for the kings who come from the east, where the sun rises, so that these kings may come to make war against the Lord. It says there that Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet go out to gather the kings of the world (the gathering) to make war against the Lord in a place called Armageddon, or the Valley of Megiddo. And God dries up the river Euphrates, as it were, to make their coming easier. This will happen to prepare the kings.

7th Bowl

(And the seventh angel comes with the last bowl!) — It is done! And there will come lightnings, voices, thunderings, and the greatest earthquake in history. All the cities of the nations will fall, the islands and the mountains will not be found, and there will come a rain of hailstones of about ninety pounds each. They will fall from heaven upon men.

After this, the final events will still come (to be treated further on, in other lessons).

OBSERVATION: COMMENTS ON THE PARENTHESES

Returning to Revelation, chapter 7:1–8.

Here it speaks of two visions that John had. The 144,000 sealed of Israel:

A number of protected Jews, divided equally among the tribes (the number may be symbolic or literal); they are clean, chaste, and have had no contact with a woman.

This is one more mention that the Lord has not definitively rejected Israel — just as Paul mentions the remnant of Israel that will be saved.

2) Revelation 7:9–17

In these verses is recorded the multitude that comes out of the Great Tribulation:

John sees a great multitude from all the nations. The elder asks him, and then answers him: they are the ones who come out of the Great Tribulation.

There will be a great multitude from all peoples and nations (not only Jews will suffer in the Great Tribulation); there will be many who persevere to the end.

They will receive an unequalled honor and comfort (verses 5–17). The Lord Himself will care for them; the Lamb will shepherd them and lead them to the fountains of living water.

3) Revelation 10:1–11 - John and the Little Book

Another terrible scene. A mighty angel, with a face like the sun and legs like pillars of fire, with a little book. His voice roars like a lion.

And 7 thunders that spoke. What did they say? We do not know. John was forbidden to write it.

And a voice from heaven commands John to take the little book and eat it. The little book was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach.

What was in the little book? We do not know. The text does not say, and we cannot speculate. (One possibility: lamentations, mourning, and woe), like the sweet book that Ezekiel ate. The voice goes on to tell John that he must prophesy again concerning many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

Another parenthesis:

4) Revelation 11:1–2 - Jerusalem Occupied

At the beginning of the chapter, someone commands John to measure the sanctuary and says that the Gentiles will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months (3 and a half years).

It is a reference to the abomination of desolation, to the occupation of Jerusalem, which both Jesus and Daniel announce.

42 months = 3½ years (Jerusalem will be invaded and occupied at the manifestation of the Antichrist).

Revelation 11:3–14 - The Two Witnesses

They will prophesy for 1,260 days (verse 3) = 3½ years. They will be a torment to the Beast (the Antichrist); and the text says that these two prophets will torment the inhabitants of the earth (possibly they will expose the evil deeds of men and announce the judgments of God). Once again, we see the mercy of God here.

Who are they? The text does not say.

Fire proceeds from their mouths; it devours their enemies (verse 5).

They have authority over the forces of nature and plagues (verse 6).

When they finish their testimony, the Beast will kill them, and the peoples of the earth will rejoice (verses 7–10).

After 3½ days they will be resurrected and will ascend to heaven (verses 11–12).

And there will be a great earthquake in Jerusalem, and 7,000 people will die, and the rest will glorify God.

5) Revelation 12:1–6 - The Woman and the Dragon

A woman, with a crown of 12 stars, who gives birth to a male Child, who is to rule the nations (verses 1–5). Who is the Child? Jesus.

Who is the woman? We cannot say for certain. The text does not tell us. One possibility could be Israel or the Church itself (in a figurative sense, giving birth to Jesus).

And there is a great red Dragon who wants to devour the Child at His birth (verses 3–4).

Who is the Dragon? It is Satan. The text plainly says so — he is the serpent of old (verse 9).

The Child is caught up to God (verse 5); the dragon is not able to seize Him.

The woman flees into the wilderness, where God prepares a place for her to be sustained for 1,260 days — 3½ years (verse 6).

Revelation 12:7–12 - Satan Is Cast Out of Heaven

There is war in heaven, and Satan is cast out of it and thrown down to the earth along with his angels (verses 7–9).

The heavens rejoice, and the earth suffers, because Satan comes down with great wrath, knowing that he has a short time (verse 12).

This expulsion is not the fall of Lucifer that occurred at the beginning. Notice that he still has access to God and is our accuser before Him. This is a future event, at the time of the end.

Revelation 12:13–17 - Satan Persecutes the Woman and the Rest of Her Offspring

When he is cast to the earth, Satan persecutes the woman (verse 13).

She is carried to the wilderness and sustained for a time and times and half a time, out of the sight of the serpent (verse 14). This is a clear reference to the 3½ years.

The dragon was enraged and went to make war with the rest of the woman's offspring, who hold the testimony of Jesus (verse 17). These passages give us further detail.

6) Revelation 13:1–18 - The Two Beasts and the Manifestation of the Antichrist

The first Beast rises up out of the sea, having 10 horns and 7 heads — the Antichrist (verse 1). The 7 kings/kingdoms and 10 kings with authority as kings, but not yet with a kingdom (Revelation 17:9–12); they give their authority to the Beast.

Satan will give them his power and his authority (verses 2 and 4).

He will have authority over every nation to act for 42 months (verses 5 and 7). Everything is related to the 3-and-a-half-year period.

He will blaspheme against God and will be worshiped by the inhabitants of the earth whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life (verses 5–8; Dan. 11:36–37).

He will persecute and kill the saints (verses 12:17; 13:7; 20:4; Dan. 7:21, 25; 11:33).

The saints must not receive his mark (Revelation 14:9–11; 20:4). Those who worship him will receive eternal punishment.

He will control the economic system (verses 16–17); no one will be able to buy or sell without the mark.

His number is 666. What does this mean? The text does not say. However, no one will receive it unwittingly. Whoever receives it will be aware that he is aligning himself with the Beast; no one will do this by mistake. The saints will know.

A second Beast will also arise, out of the earth, performing great signs — even making fire come down from heaven — and it will cause the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first Beast. This is the False Prophet (Revelation 19:20).

7) Chapter 14 Onward and the Final Events

This is a parenthesis that touches on several different events, as a kind of brief summary.

It begins with the vision of Jesus standing on Mount Zion together with the 144,000 sealed.

Then comes the vision of four angels announcing various events: the arrival of the hour of judgment, the fall of great Babylon, the judgments upon those who have the mark of the Beast, and the blessedness of the martyrs (those who die for love of the Lord Jesus).

And afterward two more angels announce the hour of the harvest (possibly the rapture) and the vintage (possibly the war of Armageddon).

It is important to know that the events here are not necessarily in chronological order.

So, it is possible that during the last plagues, the fall of the Great Harlot will occur.

8) Revelation 17 and 18: The Fall of the Great Harlot (Babylon) Riding on the Beast

The Great Harlot comes riding on the Beast (verse 3).

She is the mother of harlots and abominations; the kings of the earth commit fornication with her (verses 2 and 5).

She is drunk with the blood of the saints (verse 6).

She is the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth (verse 18).

Who could this Harlot, this Babylon, be? The text does not state it! (One possibility: the system of political and economic power in this world, which has existed since the beginning of the nations, which stands behind and dominates the kings of the earth.)

9) Revelation 18 - The Fall of Great Babylon

The Beast and the 10 horns will hate the harlot, and will lay her waste and devour her (Revelation 17:16) — these are explanations that John places in the text.

An angel with great authority declares: Babylon the great is fallen!

The Lord has judged her, and in one day she will be destroyed swiftly (verse 8).

The kings of the earth, who committed fornication with her and lived in luxury, will weep bitterly over the destruction of this Babylon (verse 9).

All the commerce of the earth will be brought to a halt, and all the merchants will mourn for her (verse 15).

Everyone will stand far off, watching the smoke rise from her (verses 17–18). All of this may be a figurative description.

10) The Final Events

Revelation 19: The Wedding and the Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 19:1–10 - Rejoicing in Heaven and the Marriage of the Lamb

Heaven celebrates the fall of great Babylon and the reign of the Lord (verses 1–5).

They announce the arrival of the Marriage of the Lamb (verses 7–8).

The bride has already made herself ready. She is given fine linen to wear. (It is Jesus who gives the garments to His bride, but it is she who puts on the garment that Jesus gives her.)

The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Jesus is the One who gives the garments to His bride, and she is to wear them.

The angel asks John to write a statement: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

Now the suffering of the church has ended; it is joy, rejoicing, together for all eternity. There is a feast prepared for each one of us.

An important observation:

This is yet another possibility for the moment when the Sign of the Son of Man and the Rapture might appear — in Revelation 19. However, we do not hold to this view.

Revelation 19:11–21 - The Battle of Armageddon

Jesus comes on a white horse for war, to judge and to make war.

He is accompanied by the armies of heaven (it is more likely that these are the angels).

The Beast and the kings of the earth are gathered together in a place called Armageddon (the Valley of Megiddo) to make war against Jesus.

Jesus seizes the two Beasts and throws them into the Lake of Fire (possibly Jesus kills them, as Paul affirms, and raises them so as to throw them alive into the Lake of Fire).

The rest are killed by the sword of the mouth of the Lord.

Isaiah 24 says that few men will remain.

11) Revelation 20: The Millennium and the Judgment

Revelation 20:1–6 - The Millennium

Satan is bound in the abyss for 1,000 years (verses 1–3).

The Lord establishes a 1,000-year reign over the earth (verses 4–6).

The saints will reign with Christ (verses 4–6; cf. Revelation 2:26–27; 5:10; Dan. 7:27).

He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. The nations will be required to serve and worship the Lord (Revelation 19:15; Ps. 2:8–9). On those who refuse to serve, the rain will not fall.

Everyone will acknowledge Him as Lord (Phil. 2:10–11).

It will be a reign of righteousness and peace (Isaiah 11:1–16; 35:1–10; Ps. 2:8–9).

Israel and Jerusalem will be restored. The Jews will be gathered together. This is the time of the fulfillment of the Lord's promises to Israel (Joel 3:16–21; Zech. 8:1–23; 14:9–11, 16).

In the Millennium, we will have here on earth Jesus; the Church, already glorified with a new body; Israel; and also the unrighteous who did not die before the establishment of the Millennium.

Revelation 20:7–10 - The Final Battle

At the end of the Millennium, Satan is released and deceives the kings of the earth, Gog and Magog, to make war against the Lord (verses 7–8). All the people will march up to Jerusalem and surround it, and at that moment fire will fall from heaven and consume them all. Not one human being will be left alive on the earth at that moment.

Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire (verse 10), where the Antichrist and the False Prophet already are.

An important detail: The punishment will be eternal! (verse 10)

12) Revelation 20:11–15 - The 2nd Resurrection and the Eternal Judgment

“The earth and the heaven fled away” (verse 11; see 2 Peter 3:10).

There is a great white throne (Acts 17:31).

All the dead, from the time of Adam until the Millennium, are raised — this is the 2nd resurrection (verses 12–13); the first resurrection occurs earlier and is for the Church.

And all were judged according to their works, as it is written in the books (verses 12–13).

If anyone was not found written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the Lake of Fire (verse 15).

13) Revelation 21 and 22

Revelation 21:1–22:5 - The New Jerusalem - The Church

The Church with the Lord. The bride, the wife of the Lamb.

Revelation 22:6–21 - Final Warnings and Promises

Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:7 (NKJV)

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV)

There is a longing of the Holy Spirit within us that moves us to cry out fervently: "Come, Lord Jesus!"

CONCLUSION

In this thirty-third lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we came to understand better what will happen when the 7 bowls of the wrath of God are poured out upon the earth and upon mankind. We received a brief explanation of the chapters that are "parentheses" in the Scriptures, and we saw some of the final events. We also studied what will happen during the Great Tribulation and identified the references that are clear (such as Armageddon, the Great Harlot, and so on) and those that are not clearly revealed. Finally, we spoke of the 2nd Resurrection and the Eternal Judgment, when everyone will be judged, and those whose names are written in the Book of Life will live eternal moments of joy and peace.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** What will be the last and terrible judgments of God upon the men who do not repent?
- 02** The book of Revelation follows a chronological sequence that is interrupted several times by what we call "parentheses," which serve to give detail to certain events. Could you name some of these "parentheses"?
- 03** Among the final events, a feast in heaven and a war on earth are mentioned. Could you say what they are?
- 04** Who will take part in the second resurrection? What will happen to these people?

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

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