

Revelation 16: 1 and 2; “The 1st Bowl of Wrath Poured Out”, Sermon # 113 in the series – “The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 27th, 2014, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Before we get into our study this afternoon it is important that I ask this question. Why is it so important to study the book of Revelation? The answer to that question is that it is important for every Christian to see, and for all people everywhere to see, that our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy to be worshiped. The “revelation” of the book of Revelation is that one day Christ’s gospel will come with power to all the nations of the world. One day, Christ’s kingdom the Church, shall spiritually conquer all the kingdoms of this world, and she shall reign, under Christ’s Headship and His true authority, in righteousness during the time period of the Millennium, the thousand years which are mentioned in Revelation 20, verses 4, 6, and 7. This will take place before His Second Coming. In Revelation 5: 9 it says this: “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.’”

Christ is presently reigning at the right hand of the Father. But His Church is not yet reigning upon the earth. Someday the nation and the kingdom that will not worship Christ, or serve the true Church, will not be blessed by God. Isaiah Chapter 60, verse 12 says, “For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall utterly perish.” And Daniel 7: 27 says, “Then the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.” “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” Brethren, this cannot be referring to the time of the New Heavens and New Earth. It cannot be the time of the eternal state. For there will be no opposition anywhere to Christ then. Therefore, we must conclude that it is referring to the time of the Millennium, the thousand years, the Latter Day glory; the time period in which the Church comes to reign upon the earth.

It is also very important to study the book of Revelation from the standpoint of knowing the schemes of the Devil, as this is what he desperately is trying to prevent, the Church reigning upon the earth, and he himself being bound. Christians need to be those who are willing to speak up and expose what is false. When false doctrines and churches who hold to false doctrines are exposed, then the truth of the gospel and how God ought to be worshiped by all Christians comes to light. It is then that the gospel is clearly preached, and actual progress is made in the furtherance of Christ’s kingdom and His glory. There is no value in false religion in the sight of God. In fact, there is positive evil that is being promoted when people do not worship God according to the truth of the Bible. God is not at all honored by deception, lies, and untruth. Rather, we should understand that those who engage in false religion are really dishonoring God and His Son Jesus Christ when they make up their own religion of doctrines which they impose upon the Word of God.

Here in Chapter 16 this is why we find the seven angels have been given seven last plagues, the seven bowls of the wrath of God, to be poured out upon the Antichristian powers. It is because God has wrath against this false Babylon; against the men who hold to this false religious system of sacramental salvation and works-righteousness, which Satan has raised up against Christ and His true Church. Therefore, I would like to approach the study of these verses by asking 1st of all – What are these bowls of wrath in general? And then 2nd – What specifically does the 1st bowl of wrath being poured out produce in its effects on the men who had the mark of the beast? May the Lord give me help as I preach so that you will understand these amazing judgments which are coming upon all those who hold to the Antichristian doctrines and false practices of worship.

1st of all - What are these bowls of wrath in general?

Chapter 16, verse 1 says: “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth.” These bowls of wrath are not the

eternal wrath of God for these bowls or vials have a definite beginning and a definite ending. The wrath of God in hell, although it does have a beginning, it does not have an ending. In Chapter 15, verse 1, John says that in the pouring out of these bowls the wrath of God is complete. He means that the wrath of God against the false system of Antichrist is complete. Therefore, how should we understand the pouring out of these particular manifestations of God's wrath? I believe that they should be understood as a successive and progressive outpouring of God's declared condemnation upon the Popes and priests and people who uphold this false Church over the latter part of the 1260 days (or years) prophecy; specifically the last 700 years of the 1260 years prophecy. In the first 500 years of the 1260 years, the persecuting Popes and priests had the upper hand so to speak. There was opposition to their doctrines and their forcing people to support what was false in the doctrine and practice taught by the Roman Church, but the true Christian Church was forced into a defensive posture, fleeing before the enemy. But at this point in time, God raised up men to preach and to address the errors and the heresies of Rome. All of the bowls of wrath will culminate and issue in the destruction of the false system of Antichrist when the seventh bowl is poured out, and Satan will be bound.

The bowls of wrath are essentially the Spirit-anointed preaching and teaching of the truth of the sound doctrine of the Bible, which brings the truth to light and conviction of sin to the wrong-doers in the Antichristian system and false church. "The earth", as Hanserd Knollys says in his commentary on this verse, "doth *metonymically signify the inhabitants of the Popish earth, the earthly state of the Roman papal kingdom; that is, those inhabitants of the earth against whom the third woe is pronounced, (Revelation 8:13) especially those that rejoiced at the killing of Christ's two prophetic witnesses. (Revelation 11:10) *Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, as in the use of Washington for the United States government or of the sword for military power.

The "angels" who proclaim these truths are the men whom God raises up to confront the false system of popes, priests, councils, and the false doctrine and practice of the false church. The voice issuing from the temple is that of Christ Himself commissioning them at just the right time in history to accomplish His purpose. When this preaching and teaching is poured out, when it is preached and set forth by the Reformers, it does tremendous damage to the false kingdom of the beast, and also the false prophet; the Popes and clergy, and it exposed the harlot Church. As each bowl of wrath is poured out, God according to His intent and purpose is progressively destroying the idea, over time, of the success of the Antichristian agenda. As these bowls are being poured out, God's great displeasure in relation to those who hold to this false system comes to be seen in a more public way. Many people begin to change their minds about the Roman Church and the authority of the Popes and their false doctrines. And some, by God's grace, come to know the truth of the Bible and are set free by understanding the true gospel of grace of Christ, which is received by faith. In the minds of those who hold to what is false, God's judgment of Divine displeasure comes to be experienced by them in the real way of their realizing that they will not ultimately succeed in holding on to all of their covetous, violent, selfish and immoral practices; that God Himself is condemning them, and will punish them eternally for these if they do not repent. This sense of falling under the condemnation and wrath of God comes to be experientially known and felt as a troubling loathsome sore that cannot be healed, by those who hold to their personal and their ecclesiastical sins the strongest; those who have promoted the false doctrine the most; those who have practiced sin against the true Church the most.

Since there are seven bowls of wrath, I came to the conclusion in my studies that I should attempt to think through how much time each vial might take in its pouring out, since they have appeared to me to be successive in time. And so, according to the way that I have interpreted the book of Revelation thus far, I believe that each of these bowls of wrath has been poured out successively at one hundred year intervals. This is not to say that the effects of the first bowl's wrath will not continue to be felt by those in the Antichristian system after that, but during that hundred year period of time, the

wrath was initiated by God in that particular way that each bowl describes. At this point I would also remind you that I cannot be entirely sure about my conclusion concerning when the 1260 years of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church under the Roman Catholic Antichrist began; and so I want you to understand that I could be off in my calculations. But I have said in the past that I believe that the 1260 prophetic years could have begun in 756 A.D. and therefore they would end in 2016 A.D. If the slaying of the witnesses, Revelation 11: 7-10, is for 3 and a half years, it therefore would not be until 2020 that the final bowl of wrath would be poured out upon the Antichristian system. If the beginning was in 787 at the council of Nicaea, the council which re-established images as legitimate in the Roman Catholic church, they would run until 2047. If the beginning was in 800 A.D., which is the latest date which I believe that the 1260 years could have begun, they would run until 2060; and the raising of the witnesses 3 years after that. Not having any definitive word from the Word of God itself about when these years began, I cannot be exactly sure of the timing of these things. But as I have studied it, and have attempted to put these things together, I have thought that each of these bowls of wrath could possibly be poured out at 100 year intervals. If this is the case, and there are 7 of them, measuring back from 2020-2060, you would come to 1320-1360 A.D. to begin the time of the pouring out of the bowls of wrath.

What was it that was so significant that took place in back in 1320 A.D.? If you look back in history to that year, you would find that 1320 A.D. was the year in which John Wycliffe was born. Historians have had a hard time specifically dating his birth; somewhere from 1320-1324. But as you study the history of the Church, you know that it was through the teaching of John Wycliffe that the Reformation of the Church was first undertaken in the way of an “angel” here in our text. He was a mighty Reformer raised up by God, who by his preaching and by his writings helped to pour out a bowl of the wrath of God upon the false doctrines and false authority of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical system. And the second man, among many who we could mention, of that one hundred years period of time from 1320-1420, who was instrumental in helping to pour out this bowl of wrath, was John Hus. I want to give you a brief overview of both of their ministries; I will begin John Wycliffe today, and include John Hus the next time that I preach to you.

2nd - What specifically does the 1st bowl of wrath being poured out produce, in its effects on the men who had the mark of the beast?

Verse 2 says, “So the first angel went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.” This language takes us back to the days of when Moses and Aaron were commissioned by the Lord to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and confront him and tell him to let the people go. Turn with me back to Exodus Chapter 9, verse 8 – “So the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh.’” “And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” “Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven.” “And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.” “And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians, and on all the Egyptians.” “But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.”

So, we see here, that even as the magicians could not stand before Moses and Aaron, even so the magician priests of Popery could not ultimately stand before the truth that was being preached by the Reformers of that day. This foul and loathsome sore was the spots and blemishes of the guilt of the sinful attitudes and actions of the Popes and the priests, and all who sought to promote and defend their false doctrines. It was the public sense of guilt and shame which came to them from the people who knew that their actions were sinful and wrong; this became so much more apparent to them when the Reformers preached. It was a foul and loathsome sore which broke out upon the whole “body” of Roman Catholicism, when they heard and felt the sting of the condemning preaching; to know that there were men like Wickliffe and John Hus who were pointing out to all the world, their

disease of false doctrine and their blasphemous practices of worship. John Gill thinks that it refers to the future and says this sore will be: "Their secret and wicked practices, both in political and ecclesiastical affairs, which will be discovered, and they will appear with boils and blotches upon them all over, which will render them odious to the people, and be the means of a general reformation."

Let me now relate to you the story of John Wycliffe. This is what I found on-line. "As Marco Polo began his famous journey to the far east in 1324, John Wycliffe turned four years old." "The radical Franciscans were denouncing the riches of the Papacy, and Pope John XXII was mid-way through his reign." "The world was at peace; and Rome held ultimate authority in the lives of the people of the continent and the British Isles." "From Augustine and Constantine till the birth of Wycliffe, the Church was the center of every person's life." "Wycliffe was born in 1320 and studied Theology in Oxford." "His training and disposition led him to oppose the ownership of English land by the Papacy, on religious and theological grounds rather than merely economic." "From 1376 onward Wycliffe published tracts which decried the secularization of the Church." "This secularization, he maintained, was beneficial neither to the Church or the State." "In 1377 the Pope issued a Bull condemning in 18 theses the writings of Wycliffe." "Wycliffe's reaction was violent." "He began to denounce the Pope in vehement writings." "From 1378 to 1379 Wycliffe published his theological system in a series of tracts." "The main thesis of these works was that the Scriptures are the foundation of all doctrine." "This was the turning point of doctrinal history." "To this point Tradition was placed, by Rome, alongside Scripture as a source of doctrine; but Wycliffe disputed this notion and John Hus of Prague and Martin Luther as well as Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin would adopt the view of Wycliffe." "Wycliffe's doctrine of the Church was likewise revolutionary." "He saw the Church as a spiritual institution and not a political one." "Thus the pre-reformation work of Wycliffe lay in his doctrines of Scripture and the Church." "The significance of Wycliffe cannot be overlooked." "His movement towards Scripture and Church as spiritual society were the foundation stones on which the later Reformation would be founded." "He was a translator before Luther; a theologian before Calvin; and a reformer before the Reformation." "He died in 1384." "The floodgates opened by Wycliffe would reach fruition in Zwingli and Luther." (End of Quote) (Taken from an on-line site: Men who changed the world, John Wickliffe.)

So what I believe that this 1st plague was, was the first pouring out of God's wrath upon the false system of Antichrist. In this hundred year period of time, from 1320-1420, there was "a foul and loathsome sore which came upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and those who worshiped his image. The falsehood of the Roman Catholic system of doctrine and worship was publicly exposed in a very dramatic way through this "Morning Star" of the Reformation. Let us understand how serious it is then, when a religion is invented which says that it is building upon what God has said is true in the Bible, and yet it is either adding to that truth, or taking away from it. That religion is portraying itself as perfectly true, when in actuality it is false. This has been the case with Roman Catholicism, and sad to say, it is also true of Liberal Protestantism. They both claim to be truly Christian, and yet they both believe in a largely sacramental salvation. Conversion to Christ, and the doctrine of Justification by faith have largely been lost to them, and thus these doctrines and the spiritual actions of God in relation to the New Birth and justification by faith, which must take place in the salvation of any sinner, these are not seen as essential or important to either to salvation or to glorifying God and our Christ in a pure worship of Him.

And we can further say, in the case of Rome, that its adherents and worshipers are required to believe in the infallible authority of the Pope to determine what doctrines are true and false. Many popes, over the past 1200 years have added many false doctrines to the true doctrines of the Bible, thus obscuring the true. Listen to Wycliffe in his own words: "I believe that the gospel of Christ is the whole body of God's law." "I believe that Christ who gave it to us, is very God and very man, and that this gospel revelation is, accordingly, superior to all other parts of Holy Scripture." "I believe that the bishop of Rome is bound more than all other men to submit to it, for the greatness among Christ's disciples did not consist in worldly dignity or honors, but in the exact following of Christ in His life

and manners.” “No faithful man ought to follow the pope, but in such points as he hath followed Jesus Christ.” “If I could labor according to my desire in mine own person, I would surely present myself before the Bishop of Rome, but the Lord hath otherwise visited me the contrary, and hath taught me to obey God rather than men.” I will give you more on John Wycliffe in my next sermon.