Saved To Serve

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Revelation 16:
The 7 Last Plagues, Part 1

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will study the first five of the seven last plagues found in Revelation 16. For further comprehension and study, read chapter 38 from *The Great Controversy* entitled, The Time of Trouble.

2. To recap from our previous lesson, when do the plagues begin to fall? Revelation 15:8; 1 Kings 8:10, 11

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"**When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out.** The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people." {GC 627.3}

3. What have men done to receive the plagues?

   a) Revelation 16:1-2; 14:9-10 _____

   b) Psalm 119:126; Romans 2:5 _____

"God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Through every century of this world's history evil workers have been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; and **when the time fully comes that iniquity shall have reached the stated boundary of God's mercy, His forbearance will cease**. When the accumulated figures in heaven's record books shall mark the sum of transgression complete, wrath will come, unmixed with mercy, and then it will be seen what a tremendous thing it is to have worn out the divine patience. **This crisis will be reached when the nations shall unite in making void God's law**." {5T 523.4}

4. How does the Bible describe this display of God's anger? Isaiah 28:21; Joshua 10:10-11; Ezekiel 33:11

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5. **Note:** The seven last plagues are very similar to the plagues poured out upon Egypt in the time of Moses. For further study, compare Revelation 16 with Exodus chapters 7-11.

6. What are the second and third plagues found in Revelation 16:3-4?

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7. Why did God pour out these plagues in the land of Egypt? Exodus 7:14, 19

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8. What have men refused to let go of, which will cause them to receive the judgment of the plagues? Hosea 4:17; Judges 10:13-14; 1 Samuel 6:6

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9. What does the angel of the waters say the wicked have done to God's saints and thus, are worthy of receiving these judgments from God? Revelation 16:5-6

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10. What is the two-fold meaning of the phrase they have "shed the blood of saints and prophets?"

11. Matthew 24:9; John 16:2 *Note: This happens after the passing of the National Sunday Law, but before the falling of the seven last plagues.*

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12. Revelation 13:15; Matthew 23:35-36

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"When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people. Says the revelator, in describing those terrific scourges: "There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image." The sea "became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." And "the rivers and fountains of waters ... became blood." Terrible as these inflictions are, God's justice stands fully vindicated. **The angel of God declares: "Thou art righteous, O Lord, ... because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." Revelation 16:2-6. By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work with these murderers of the prophets.**" {GC 627.3}

11. **Note:** The passing of the death decree upon God's saints will happen sometime between the falling of the second plague and the falling of the fourth plague. A date will be set for the slaughtering of God's people during that period (see GC 626.1 & 631.1). However, based on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, there will not be any martyrs once the plagues begin to fall. How can we confirm that the death decree will be enacted between the falling of the second and fourth plague? Based on Revelation 16:4-6, the falling of the third plague seems to be the result of the previous killing of the saints and the enactment of the death decree (see question 10). Carefully compare Revelation 16:4-6 and the previous quotation from *The Great Controversy, page 627.3*.

12. How many forms of retributive judgment will fall in the last days? **Answer:** There will be two forms of judgment. A) When Jesus closes probation, the four winds are loosed (Revelation 7:1-3), and Satan is permitted to destroy the wicked. B) God will pour out the seven last plagues upon the unrepentant.

"**When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth.** In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. **The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.**" {GC 614.1}

13. **Note:** Here is a chronology of last day events: At the passing of the National Sunday Law, the Little Time of Trouble begins. Everyone, individually will begin to make their decisions either for the God and His commandments or against it. During this time, there will be some martyrs. Once everyone has made their final decisions, then comes the general close of probation. Jesus will then allow the winds of strife to be let loose, and Satan will bring devastation on the earth. At the same time, the seven last plagues from God begin to fall. Shortly after, the death decree will be enacted and the saints of God will be plunged into Jacob's Time of Trouble or the Great Time of Trouble. However, God will protect His faithful people and will return to deliver them.

14. Read Revelation 16:8-9. What happens under the fourth plague?

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"**In the plague that follows, power is given to the sun "to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat**." Verses 8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: "The land mourneth; ... because the harvest of the field is perished.... All the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men." "The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate.... How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture.... The rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." "The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence." Joel 1:10-12, 17-20; Amos 8:3." {GC 628.1}

15. Upon whom is the fifth plague poured out? Revelation 16:10-11 _____

16. Who is the beast? Revelation 13:1-3 _____

"**The fifth angel pours out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and darkness like that which overspread Egypt pervades his kingdom. This judgment is inflicted especially upon the papacy, the seat of the beast being Rome, and his kingdom being his subjects wherever they are found**." {SYNPT 163.6} (Synopsis of the Present Truth by Uriah Smith)

17. How does the Bible describe the darkness that will fall upon the beast or the Papacy? Revelation 16:10-11; Exodus 10:21

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18. Why will this plague of darkness fall upon the beast? John 3:19; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

"**Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power.... In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures**. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. **This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions**." {GC 51.3}

19. When the plagues begin to fall will they be felt by all of the wicked at the same time? *Note: Notice that some of the plagues in Revelation 16 are poured out on specific areas or people.*

"**These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off.** Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy." {GC 628.2}

20. What will some of the wicked seek to do once the plagues begin to fall? Amos 8:11, 12

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21. Why won't there be martyrs once the plagues begin to fall? Psalm 27:5; Isaiah 26:20, 21

"**The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3:17. If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness.** Says the psalmist: "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." Psalm 27:5. Christ has spoken: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Isaiah 26:20, 21. Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life." {GC 634.1}

22. Will God's people be free from suffering while the plagues are poured out? Matthew 24:21-22; 1 Kings 19:1-4; Luke 18:7

"**The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that "walketh righteously" is the promise: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them**." Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17. {GC 629.2}

23. What will God do for the righteous while the plagues are being poured out? Psalm 91:3-10; 121:5-8

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24. As we close, meditate on these points. The number seven represents completion. There are seven last plagues. What promise does Jesus want us to remember when the plagues are falling? Job 5:19; Hebrews 13:5 (last part of the verse)