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Revelation

Chapter 16 - Revealing that Which Angers God Loathsome & Malignant Things (vs. 1-2)

Revelation 16:1-2: Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

Well, I bet if I were to ask you, “How many of you have heard a message on verses 1 and 2 of Chapter 16 of Revelation?” I bet most of you would say, “Not me.” And there's probably a reason why we tend to dodge these things, because it's kind of negative. It's about the wrath of God, and the perception is that's a bad thing, but it's

not. And I believe that one of the great things that Revelation reveals is the goodness of God in a time in which man is so wicked and so hurtful and so malevolent towards Him. So, as we come to this passage, what we're going to see is clearly the love of God. Now, what we've already established according to Chapter 15, in particular at the end of Chapter 15, is where this wrath is coming from. And just in case you missed it, let me re-emphasize. Because if you back up into Revelation 15:5, you'll read, "After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened."

So, we now see this scene in which God is literally opening up His heart to us because as we talked about, the word "*naos*," temple is making reference to the inner place in which, in the Greek mind as well as in the Hebrew, where the gods lived. And so, the interesting picture to these that are, well, in the Gentile world is that He's talking about this is where He lives. And these feelings are coming out of His heart, the very depth, the center of where He is in His mind and His emotions.

And as it goes on, it says,

“...of the tabernacle of testimony...”

What we know is that the tabernacle is making reference to the skins of that wonderful picture in the Old Testament of the tabernacle actually being made out of skins, was that picture of Christ becoming flesh and dwelling among us, that we would actually see Him in person. And I know this is a day and age where people are not trying to see people in person. But that's what's so wonderful is that we saw truth in the flesh. And He is the exact representation of His nature. And well, John will even say what we have handled concerning the word of God, what we have embraced. And we see that relationship that he has, that very physical, personal relationship with God. Even John would lean on His shoulder. Now, it's the same John that writes Revelation. And he is declaring God is opening his heart. And when God opens His heart and He focuses on something, what we understand is that His wrath is coming out of His love and His passion for that which He loves the most. In other words, what we're seeing is that this wrath is not out of hate, it's out of a love. And that's very interesting and a

point that you need to understand. The best way I can explain it is, I was asking my wife, and she's probably going to be upset at me because I brought up the story. I said, "Do you remember when I got in a fight over you?" And she goes, "Which one?" But ironically, it was at church. I actually remember I was about 16 and we were kind of dating, ever since 3rd grade. But there was this guy about 60 pounds heavier than I was, about 3 years older than me and about 4 inches taller than me at that time or whatever, but it seemed that way, probably 3. But anyway, he started making passes at Connie, at church, and started saying things inappropriate. And I didn't hate this guy to begin with. I mean, I didn't necessarily like him, but I didn't hate him until he started saying those things. And I remember saying to him, "You need to stop." And then he just laughed. And then he made a gesture at Connie and proceeded on doing what he was doing. And I said, "You need to stop." And he didn't. And I remember, I was on the porch at the church, and we were outside. It was after church. So, I waited. But I just took a flying leap and jumped on him, started pounding on him. And a couple of deacons pulled me off, and one pulled my ear.

(But I'm not bitter about that, but I never will forget him doing that.) I still can't hear really well. But I remember thinking, it wasn't that I hated that guy. It was that I loved Connie. And if you can understand where this wrath is coming from, you can understand that God is not an angry God. I mean, we see that repeated over and over again. His lovingkindness is from everlasting and everlasting. His anger may be for a short time, but it comes out of a love and a protection for that which He loves. I mean, if you can get a picture of somebody just pushing somebody's kid and laughing about it, and God saying, "Stop," and they do it again, "Stop," and they do it again, at what point is He not going to get in there? See? And this is an interesting passage because Jeremiah says something interesting in Jeremiah 6:11. Jeremiah, being a prophet of God, is a mouthpiece of God.

And so, his statement is in Jeremiah 6:11,

"But I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary with holding it in..."

The grace of God holds back. His Son gets beat and tortured and crucified on the cross, and we go, "God is so

impatient.” God is impatient? Man, I would have jumped in a long time ago if somebody touches my kid and does those things to Him. But God is patient, not willing that any should perish, but that all would be saved. And you can hear the voice of His Son calling out to Him on the cross, “Dad, let it go. They don't understand what they're doing. Let it go, Dad.” But what's being stored up is wrath. It doesn't go away. Those feelings don't go away. It's being stored up. In fact, Romans will talk about that, and we'll look at it as we go.

But if you can just get the picture, and the description here in Revelation 15:6,

“And the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen...”

We made reference to the fact that really it gives a picture of flax that is lit, and for the purpose of, well, these are beings that are bringing the light of the world in.

And it gives the picture,

“... clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.”

Which are all descriptions, really, of God displaying that His enduring values, that's the gold, by the way, will ultimately bring closure to all that which hurts and subverts everything that He loves. And it's coming out of a purity. It's coming out of a love. It's coming out of values that are enduring, that He's protecting. It is not God hating. It is God loving so intensely. He can't not do something.

And so, by the time you come to verses 7 and 8, and the temple is now filled with all of the smoke, what is it over? And the answer is, over a God who can't let this continue. He will not let it continue.

So, as you come into Chapter 16, the great loud voice that is bold and unobstructed and clearly proclaiming the boldness of God begins to announce.

(Revelation 16:1) “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple...”

Now, why do you think he's repeating that?

I mean, if you look in Chapter 15,

(Revelation 15:5) “After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,

(Revelation 15:6) and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple...”

(Revelation 15:8) “And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple...”

So, now, Revelation 16:1,

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple...”

See, sometimes you get so stuck on wrath that you're just focusing on wrath. Where's it coming from? It's coming from the heart of God.

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

Now, the points that I want you to look at specifically is, first of all, what He tells the angels to do, “Go.” The word

that He uses in the Greek is probably a little bit stronger than just “go.” It's, “Get out of here. Go away.”

Well, let me ask you this. Where did all this horrific stuff come from? Because if you look at the passage, it says in verse 2,

(Revelation 16:2) “So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore...”

Okay, my question to you is, where did that come from? And let me ask you another question, heaven? Are those heavenly things? “Oh, I look forward to the loathsome and malignant.” I don't know. It came from earth. Why is it in heaven? God's been storing it. Why? Because that's what man's been giving Him. See, Scripture says you're storing up treasures. God created you. You were made for God. The question is, what are you sowing? Well, whatever you sow, that's what you're going to reap, right? So, God comes on the scene, and He goes, “What are you giving Me?” “Well, we're giving You malignant and loathsome.” And He stores it up. But God's not

storing it up to keep. It doesn't belong in heaven. Where does it belong? On the earth.

So, the passage reads, “Get it out of here, the seven bowls of wrath of God, take it to the earth.”

And if you look at the next phrase,

“So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth...”

Why? Because that's where it belongs, on the earth.

And the description is,

“... and it became a loathsome and malignant...”

Now, I want to stop here. These are two very interesting words. They are actually two words that are very general. The one word is “*kakos*,” which makes reference to stuff that is miserable inside. It makes reference to, specifically, that which is intrinsic in nature. You know all that miserable stuff and junk in you? Have you ever met a miserable person? Okay. You meet a miserable person and then they're just miserable all over you. I mean, it spills over on you. But you have to ask yourself, “Where did that come from?” And God would say, “*kakos*”. It's in

you. It's intrinsic in you. It's who you are. So, in this particular text, He's going to be talking about two kinds of evil. One is, it's described in the NAS, "loathsome," which is making reference to your loathsome nature; the intrinsic nature of your horribleness that's within you. It's who you are. The second is malignant. Now, malignant is another word, "*ponēros*". And here again, they're both very general words. Sometimes, you'll see them literally translated as evil or calamity or hardship or pain in the New Testament. But they've chosen to reveal them this way. But the point is that one's intrinsic, the other is the effects of. So, "*ponēros*" is dealing with the effects of your miserableness. So, you're a miserable person, but there are effects to that, and the hurt and the pain that you bring to others is destructive. A miserable person, you can see the carnage behind them that they leave, the collateral damage that is there. So, what's being poured out? The heart of man that he stored up. You didn't think you were storing anything up with your heart, did you? You thought that all those evil thoughts were just... No, they're being stored up. Now, the wonderful thing is in Christ, they're washed away. One of the things that we're

going to see in this passage is that you kind of have a choice. What do you want poured out on you? Do you want poured back the things that you've been storing up? Or as Titus 3 will say, do you want the pouring of the Spirit which washes away everything? You have a choice. What do you want pouring on you? So, this passage begins to describe all those things that man is storing up and has been; the things of his heart; the destruction of his decisions and the things that he does towards others. And it uses the phrase here, if you look,

“... it became a loathsome and malignant sore...”

Could you just mark that off to the side? It would be a puncture. We're actually dealing with something that has pierced the skin and punctured into the skin.

“... sore on the people who had the mark...”

You see the point? “*Charagma*,” who had the mark. You know that the word “mark” refers to puncture. And you also know that it has kind of as its root where men would carve an idol, Therefore, they would puncture whatever they were carving, sometimes in stone, but it's actually

removing flesh or removing things, so to puncture in. So, the picture is that man has been making his idols by virtue of puncturing that which he wants to worship. Well, what's interesting is in the last days, guess what man's going to puncture? Himself. How is he going to do this? He's going to take the mark of the beast.

So, the passage reads this way,

“... it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had...”

Not just anybody.

“... the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.”

Man is going to take the mark. I don't know exactly how it's going to happen. Of course, they're talking about injecting things in your forehead or injecting things in your hand, puncturing your skin. But what's interesting about the text is it's saying that part of what's going to come with this is not only the fact that you've embraced the way of life of the beast, which is intrinsically destructive in your own life. I mean, once you embrace

evil, how terrible that is. But not only that, but literally physically, it will start festering. It's a strange phenomenon that man will oftentimes embrace the very things that will destroy his life. Perhaps, sometimes, people will get operations to maybe look a little bit better, but they find out, "Oh no, I can get infected with that." And there are all kinds of things that come. Well, in this particular text, what Scripture is saying is because you have embraced evil, then evil will come upon you. You've taken the mark of the beast, and you've perceived it as something that you would love, something that you would worship. And because of that, it not only is going to eat you from the inside, but as well on the outside. It's a picture.

Now, the point is that God is pouring out what man has embraced upon himself. And it's quite a picture when you look at it because, I mean, I'm reminded of the fact that Jeremiah 51:9 says that your wickedness had come all the way up to the heavens. I mean, you almost see that same thing with Noah at the time in which the wickedness of man, I mean, was continual. And God says, "I can't let this

continue,” because it was stinking up the heavens, if I can put it that way. So, man is embracing these things, he's piling these things up, and God says, “Enough. It was enough. Do you have any idea what you're doing?” And unfortunately, man pursues terrible, horrific things. And the perception is that God was destroying the world during the time of Noah because He just hated mankind. No. He destroyed the world to save Noah. Because as Scripture says, their thoughts were killing each other all the time. The word “evil” makes reference to the fact that they were destructive in their thinking, so they were going to kill each other off. And God says, “I’ve got to protect humanity.” And so, He rescues Noah. You go, “Well, it was the wrath of God in the flood.” No, the wrath is rooted in His love for Noah. And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The same thing was true with Sodom and Gomorrah. God was saving Abraham and his love for Lot. That's what God was doing. Because had He not, Lot obviously would have been swallowed up. And you see that all the way through Scripture, that God's wrath always comes out of a heart of love for someone or something.

Which brings us to the passage in Romans, which is impossible for us not to parallel. So, if you look with me in Romans 1, though we've read it several times, it is highly appropriate with this passage. Romans 1, and if you'll pick up with me in verse 18, that key text, it says this in case, once again, you didn't know why or where the wrath is coming from,

(Romans 1:18) “For the wrath of God is revealed...”

Once again, Revelation. So, we're right on target.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

Now, where does the wrath come from? The love for the truth. It is not God hating. It is Him loving the truth. What is man doing? Hating the truth. He's suppressing. It's man who's hating. I mean, if you don't want the wrath of God, don't suppress the truth. We'll put it another way. If you don't want the wrath of God, don't beat up His Son. Isn't Jesus truth? “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” So, your hatred for His Son is what's bringing wrath upon you. God came to save you. He sent His Son to save you.

In fact, 1 Thessalonians 5 puts it so clearly,

(1 Thessalonians 5:9) “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

He's destined us for salvation, not for wrath.

But if you look in 2 Thessalonians in particular, you don't need to turn there, but in particular Chapter 2, verse 10, he talks about deception and destruction that comes upon the earth. And this is where it comes from, if you listen to the text; it comes to those who will not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. Where's the wrath coming from? The protection of the truth. Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. But man will not receive. What is he doing? He's calling out and he's saying, “Give me my loathsome and malignant.” Because He could have poured out upon him grace and mercy and forgiveness. But no, he doesn't want that. I mean, it's no wonder Hebrews 2:3 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” I mean, how magnificent the salvation is.

1 Peter 2:24 says that He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross. So, do you have to die? Do you have to have these things poured out upon you? All you have to do is receive Him instead of receiving the false.

If you drop on down to Romans 1:24 of this, you begin to understand what wrath is. It is God pouring out what you have been storing up.

So, if you look in verse 24, what does it say?

(Romans 1:24) “Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity...”

That is to say, probably the best way to translate this is, God gave them into the hands of another. Who? The ones that they were worshiping. And the ones that they were worshiping, what did they want to do? Dishonor you.

What does God want to do? Exalt you.

The passage reads this way,

“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

(Romans 1:25) For they exchanged the truth of God...”

Once again, suppressing that.

“... for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

(Romans 1:26) For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions...”

Now, we're talking about internal. That's what we're talking about, “*pathos*,” that intrinsic, internal thing that's going on inside of you.

And then, they began to burn in an unnatural way, women for women, men for men, as it says in verse 27.

And then if you look at the end of verse 27,

“... toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”

That is to say, the recompense. When it says, “the due penalty,” what it's saying is, God gave them what they earned. Remember what they're heaping up? What do they earn? What are you working for? So, why are they having these problems? Why are they having these troubles? Look, I've never met a person who is steeped in

sin that is genuinely happy. I've seen them pretend to be happy, but I've never known them to be genuine, because they're miserable inside. And it starts internally and intrinsically, and it eventually comes out in the physical. It always comes out in the physical.

So, if you look, it goes on,

(Romans 1:28) “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind...”

Once again, that's internal.

“... to do those things which are not proper.”

That's external.

(Romans 1:29) Being filled with all unrighteousness...”

Once again, we're back in the inside.

“... filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice...”

You think those people are happy? I mean, if you have greed and malice, if you're full of envy; you want to kill somebody; you have a heart against people all the time; you're always lying and full of malice. Are you happy?

Now, if you look at the very end of verse 29, after it's told you what is intrinsically, internally, evil within you, as was said of Satan himself, that he was internally filled with violence. And that's what you're seeing at the beginning of verse 29.

But at the very end, it says,

“... they are gossips.”

Now, what are we going into? We're going into the effect of the internal. So, we're now going into “*ponēros*,” how it affects. So, they are gossips. Okay, they're miserable people, and they're not happy just being miserable by themselves. They've got to make you miserable.

“... they are gossips,

(Romans 1:30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

(Romans 1:31) without understanding, untrustworthy...”

That's treacherous when you think about it. You can't depend on somebody. They won't be faithful to you.

“... unloving, unmerciful;

(Romans 1:32) and although they know the ordinance of God...

It's not that they don't know what's right. Internally they even have a conscience. But now, it's seared.

“... they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

The point of the passage is that you have a loathsome internal heart, and you're going to have a malignant effect, malevolent pain, sorrow, hurt on those around you.

And if you look in Romans 2:5, we'll read this very interesting text that reads this way,

(Romans 2:5) “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart...”

What are you doing according to verse 5?

“... you are storing up wrath for yourself...”

Where did the wrath come from? It's yours. God's dumping it out of heaven. It has no place there. It's what you earned. It's what you want. And according to Matthew 6:20, you could store up treasures in heaven, or

you can store up treasures on the earth. But this belongs on the earth. It doesn't belong in heaven. And it's the grace of God that does that.

There's a final passage that I want to introduce to you. It's found in Psalm 69, and we'll close with that. Psalm 69, in which in this particular Psalm, there is a cry out by the psalmist that cries out to the Lord, and he says, "You've got to pour out Your indignation upon them." And so, the question would be, why does God have to do this? And the answer is actually in this particular Psalm. We read some of it earlier, but in the passage, it talks about that David is sharing the fact that he's been faithful to God and his zeal has consumed him.

In fact, the great text is found in verse 9,

(Psalm 69:9) "For zeal for Your house has consumed me..."

And we see that in John 2. Why was Jesus so angry? Because people were hurting the people that He loved. The church, the temple, was taking money from people that had no money. And they were telling them, "In order for your sins to be forgiven, you have to buy these things

from us.” And they would charge exorbitant prices. They couldn't afford a lamb. So, they had to buy a turtledove, but they weren't paying a normal price. And you can't buy just any turtledove. You have to buy a temple turtledove. And Jesus goes, “Why are you hurting these people?” Why do you think He would turn over the tables? He says, “You're exploiting those that I love, and you were meant to pray for them. This is supposed to be a house in which you're interceding for them. You're talking to God on their behalf, helping them, but you're not doing that.” So, we see the zeal, which is consumed, right? But in the text, what you're going to have is a messianic prophecy of the emotions of Jesus. It's a great passage. Chapter 22 is one of the greatest as well. But this particular passage, you can hear the emotions of Christ.

So, in Psalm 69, David begins to cry out, and his fundamental point is that they just continue to revile and reproach. They're speaking terrible of him. They're throwing out not only false accusations, but they're cursing him. They're spitting on him. I mean, if you were a dad and that was your son and you were watching that

happen, how would you feel? He's crying out to his Father, and he's saying, "You've got to ransom me."

(Psalm 69:18) "Oh draw near to my soul and redeem it; Ransom me because of my enemies!"

(Psalm 69:19) You know my reproach and my shame and my dishonor..."

Watch verse 20. You get to see inside his heart.

(Psalm 69:20) "Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, And for comforters, but I found none."

How would you feel as his father?

"And when I finally cried out, they said, 'Just kill yourself, would you?'" They gave him poison, right? Isn't that what the text says?

(Psalm 69:21) "They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

Gall is poison. He cries out, and they go, "Just kill yourself. Let's get this over with. It's getting late."

Is it any surprise that you read in verse 24, the request,

(Psalm 69:24) “Pour out Your indignation on them...”

Jeremiah 14:16 reads this way,

“... for I will pour out their own wickedness on them.”

Couldn't get any clearer than that, could it?

And Ezekiel 7:8 will put it this way,

“Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you and spend My anger against you; judge you according to your ways and bring on you all your abominations.”

Now, people read the wrath of God in Revelation, but they don't understand how wonderful it is. Because no one could care as deeply as He did and be as patient as He has been. And finally, when man takes that mark, He says, “You wouldn't take My marks that I died on the cross for you. You wouldn't accept My piercing for you. No, you had to pierce yourself so that you could sin. So, evil you get. You want it so much, you embrace it so much, here it is.”

Very simple question, and I can't leave without reading this. You've got to underline Titus 3. Titus 3, you've got to see it. Because, you know, the tendency would be to skip

over the words “pour out”. But it's in Titus 3, and it's in the greatest place to reveal the greatest truth, and that is that you can choose what's poured out on you. Think about that.

(Titus 3:1) “Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

(Titus 3:2) to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”

Of course, stop being miserable yourself and stop hurting people.

(Titus 3:3) “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

(Titus 3:4) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

(Titus 3:5) He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His

mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

(Titus 3:6) whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

What do you want poured on you? It's such an easy question for me to answer.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness and for Your wrath that comes out of love. It's no mistake that You're the loving One and we're not. For we would willingly sacrifice our lives to embrace loathsome and malignant things. We love the evil thoughts that are internally created, and we find ourselves pursuing those things that hurt so many people around us. And yet You came and were pierced through for our transgressions, that we could be poured out clean, free.

Your head's bowed and your eyes closed. It's not a choice. Choose life. The greatest thing that God has given us, I

mean, how could we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? But as many as received Him. Which mark are you going to receive? The mark Christian? Or will you let them pierce you? Your head's bowed and your eyes closed. We're just asking you to get real about this faith thing. We're just asking you to understand what it is that we've chosen to do, and why it needs to be so clear to the world. Because ladies and gentlemen, if we're not clear about what we believe, then we have no faith. For the day will be when you will take a mark.