

The Synopsis

J. N. Darby

1847

1 THE REVELATION

1.1 Chapter 16

The first vial of wrath brought the utmost distress and shameful misery on all who had taken the mark of the beast.

The second brought the power of moral death on the mass of peoples; all who were among them within the limits of the prophetic earth, died-I apprehend, gave up mere outward profession. We have here an example of the use of symbols which it is well to note. All the vials are poured out on the earth, that is, are applied to the sphere of already formed relationship with God. But in this there might be a special relationship in which men had to do with God in this world were inhabitants of earth, or the mass of people within that sphere.

The third vial was poured out on all the sources of popular influence and action; and they became positively deathful. It seems to me, that the deadly influence in alienation from God, within the sphere of prophecy, is strongly marked here. Death is used generally as the expression of the power of Satan.

Then the supreme authority is made frightfully oppressive. This gave the first four of direct judgment according to the usual division.

The fifth vial strikes the throne of the beast, the seat and stability of his authority, which Satan had given him; and his kingdom became full of darkness. All was confusion and wretchedness, and no resource: they gnawed their tongues with anguish and blasphemed God.

The sixth angel pours out his vial on Euphrates-destroys, I apprehend, the securing boundary of the Western prophetic powers-not the seat of its power, but broke its frontier, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared. I look at this simply as the bringing in of the powers of Asia into the conflict for the universal conflagration of powers. The sixth vial sends forth three unclean spirits, the sum of all evil influences: that of Satan's direct power as antagonistic of Christ; that of the power of the last empire, the beast; and that of the second beast of chapter 13 henceforth known as the false prophet, Satan's influence as the Antichrist, an idolatrous wonder-working power; and the kings of the world were gathered together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The allusion is to Judges 5 : 19,20.

At the seventh vial there is a general break-up and subversion, and Babylon comes into judgment. And the hail of God, the judgment of God, came on men from heaven (compare Isaiah 32 and 33). All separate independent interests and established powers disappeared. This was over the earth-God's judgment by providence and instruments-but the Lamb was not come yet. The details of Babylon's judgments are reserved for the following chapters.