

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Week 5 – The Bowl Judgments

February 13, 2018

Rev. 15:5-7 - *After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.* The seven bowls of the wrath of God, the seven plagues, are the culmination of God's wrath poured out on the earth during the Tribulation.

Rev. 15:8 - *The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.* Here we have perhaps one of the most mysterious and wondrous verses in all of Scripture. Perhaps there is also great sadness in knowing that no more will turn. All that remains is the hand of judgment. Perhaps behind the smoke the heart of God is weeping even as Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Yet God *must* judge for His very holiness and justice require it!

The third woe is revealed after the seventh trumpet judgment. Incorporated within this third and final woe are the seven “bowls” of God's wrath, described in Revelation 16:1-21. Jesus said, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive” (Matthew 24:22).

REVELATION 16

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 on the earth.” ² So the first 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. ³ Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. ⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. ⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” ⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.” ⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. ⁹ And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. ¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. ¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the

dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. ¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰ Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

The seven bowls of the wrath of God are the culmination of God’s wrath poured out on the earth during the Tribulation. WHY all this wrath?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIBULATION?

- To make an end of wickedness and wicked ones both Jews and Gentiles. To cleanse the earth.
 - Isa. 13:9 - Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.
 - Isa. 24:19-20 - The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. ²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.
- To bring about a worldwide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom - God’s grace!
 - Matt. 24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. The King is coming; and “gospel” means good news of forgiveness of sin.
- To purge Israel; to shatter/break the power of the holy people. The Tribulation is called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” in Jer. 30:7. The Jewish people/Israel must turn away from trying to establish their own righteousness and seek the righteousness of God through the Messiah Jesus. This will lead to Israel’s national regeneration.

The seven bowl judgments will be relentless and rapid in their outpouring. One of the reasons for the Tribulation is the cleansing of the earth so that God can set up His kingdom of righteousness on earth. Just as it was in the days of Noah when the wicked were removed from the earth by the universal flood and the righteous (Noah and his family) survived, every lost person left at the end of the Tribulation will be removed from the earth when Jesus returns at His physical Second Coming. The saved will repopulate the earth during the Millennium. At the outset of the Millennial Kingdom – the 1,000 year reign of Jesus – only believers will enter the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:31-46).

Rev. 16:1 - *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 on the earth'* We don't see a limited portion of the earth receiving the judgments...we see the bowls of wrath poured out "on the earth."

Rev. 16:2 - *So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul (dangerous; harmful) and loathsome (disgusting, repulsive) sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.* Only those who take the mark of the beast, worshipping his image, will be afflicted. It appears that the antichrist will be unable to heal his own followers. The sore lingers (see Rev. 16:11).

Rev. 16:3 - *Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.* Consider: when men who know of the true existence of God refuse to glorify Him as God and are not thankful for the great gifts of His creation, God will give them up so that even the creation itself turns against them.

Rev. 16:4 - *Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.* The earth dwellers have refused the salvation that was offered to them through the blood of the One Who is life.

Rev. 16:5 - *And I heard the angel of the waters saying: 'You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things.* The angel of the waters views this judgment as a deserved judgment. This angel proclaims the justice of God, the eternal existence of God, and the holy nature of God. It is because of God's justice and holiness that God MUST punish sin.

Rev. 16:6 - *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.* God's judgment causing all the waters to turn to blood is God's response to the shedding of the blood of the Tribulation saints and the prophets of the OT. Because they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, in a twist of God's hand of judgment, He gives them literal blood to drink.

Rev. 16:7 - *And I heard another from the altar saying, 'Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.'* "Another" – another angel – probably the angel which officiated at the altar and offered the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:3-4). This angel is in agreement with giving the earth dwellers blood to drink, for he attends the altar where the martyrs, who shed their blood, cry for vengeance.

Rev. 16:8 - *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.* Men have worshipped the sun, moon, and stars rather than God. That which men have worshipped will become the source of their curse.

Rev. 16:9 - *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.* In blaspheming the name of God, men will acknowledge God's existence and that He has control over what is causing their great pain – the plagues. However, instead of bowing down to Him and repenting, they will curse His name. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence of the reality and power of God, the earth dwellers are unrepentant.

Rev. 16:10 - *Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.*

The darkness will cover the planet. Although the throne of the Beast is empowered by Lucifer, the *shining one, the son of the dawn* (Isa. 14:12), he is helpless to illumine, to make bright the darkness imposed by God.

Rev. 16:11 - *They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.* Men will not repent but will blame God for their afflictions. Instead of repentance they will choose to continue to blaspheme God. In spite of their sin, they will continue to follow the antichrist and his false prophet both having no power to remove the plagues!

Rev. 16:12 - *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.* The Euphrates River is mentioned 25X in the Bible and is referred to as “the great river” five times in Scripture (Gen. 15:18; Deut. 1:7; Josh 1:4; Rev. 9:14; Rev. 16:12). The Euphrates is one of the oldest rivers of history, being one of the four rivers which was fed from Eden in the pre-flood world (Gen. 2:10). This is the first phase of Armageddon. This is God's divine intervention! The Euphrates has been dried up so that human kings from the east may cross to the west. Their movement is associated with the “Campaign” of Armageddon.

Rev. 16:13-16 - *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

¹⁵ *“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”* ¹⁶ *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.* Demonic spirits from the mouths of the unholy trinity, Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet, will gather the kings of the whole world to gather for the battle of the great day. They are being used of God to do so – so that God will be vindicated – so that God will be triumphant! Frogs were unclean animals according to the OT dietary laws (Lev. 11:10, 11, 41). Persian mythology viewed frogs as plague-inducing creatures. The demons are described as slimy, coldblooded creatures.

Rev. 16:15 - *Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.* Jesus promised He would come as

a thief at His physical Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. People do not usually expect thieves. Jesus' coming in this passage is a surprise. It cannot be the rapture. The Church is already in heaven. There are those on earth who are Tribulation saints who are living and they are watching for Jesus' physical Second Coming.

QUESTIONS

Why did we read this chapter?

How does this chapter glorify God?

What has this chapter taught you?

What were your V8 moments?

What are you now going to do with this chapter?

STRONG SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread this handout with the cross references.

Make observations and ask questions.

Share what you've learned in Rev. 16 with at least one person.

Continue to work in your Judgment Seat of Christ journal.

Read the handout for week 6 when you receive it.