

Seven Angels, Seven Plagues, Seven Bowls

Revelation 15 & 16

Since chapter 6 we have been in the time of the tribulation...and we will be until chapter 18...the tribulation, the seven years of God's pouring out His wrath on the world... I believe the church has been removed prior to these seven years... and what is left on earth are the unregenerate... unbelievers...

This tribulation period is a time of great God driven trouble primarily to deal with and get the attention of His people Israel who have been obstinate and have rejected the true Messiah...and to wake up other unbelievers to give them a chance to come to Jesus...the tribulation is a time of awakening to those who will listen and respond...

Many do listen and come to Christ during the tribulation period, but sadly most don't.

It will be a seven-year period of judgement to those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ...many think that when God's judgement on the world finally comes, it will be one huge event... what we learn in these chapters is that God's judgement is dispensed in three, sevenfold judgments totaling 21 judgments...

It began with the seven seal judgements that are broken (ch.6)... then the seven trumpet judgements that are blown (ch.8)... and finally where we are this morning... the seven bowl judgements that are poured out (ch.16)...the most intense and devastating of the three.... The bowl judgements are God's final wake-up call.

So this morning, we will look at both chapters 15 and 16 which are concerned with these seven bowl judgments... You are saying to yourself.... *2 chapters?... are you avoiding going deep Dan?... yes!*

It is true we could spend a month or two on these two chapters... I've personally spent way more than that!... some of you are now disappointed...it's fun to talk about Armageddon and get all excited about figuring out when and how it all is going to happen...

In an attempt to stay true to the text... not add more to it than God gave us... I believe that to dive deep requires speculation... I want to pull out what I think God wants us to know...

We will come back to this great war later in the next few chapters.

If the entire world knows about 666... they also know things about "Armageddon" ...it has become a word describing any cataclysmic event that could bring an end to the world... of anything else... a person... *He met his Armageddon...*

Chapter 15 is a prelude, an introduction to what will happen in chapter 16... follow along as I read:

Read 15:1-8

This is a heavenly vision...takes place in heaven...not on earth... John tells us it is **great and marvelous**... what is great and marvelous?...seven angels are going to come out of heaven who are going to bring with them seven final plagues...remember... the world has gone through 14 judgements at this point... these are going to be seven final judgements carrying with them God's wrath!

That's **great and marvelous**? How can God's wrath be great and marvelous?...often when we think of wrath... anger and judgement... we think of them being the opposite of love, grace and goodness... God is love right?

But let's rethink God's wrath and judgement for a minute... God's anger, wrath is His righteous response to evil... and that is glorious!...God is eternal...He cannot live with evil... anything sinful...anything unpure... therefore He must judge all that destroys life...all that mars life... all that detracts from His perfect love... His holiness...

We don't want God to tolerate sin... evil... we do not want an eternity that is simply a continuation of what we are living in now!... Be thankful for a God who will set things right!

So when John says its great and marvelous these seven angels are going to pour out God's judgement... he sees God is setting things right... it's beautiful...we will see what a perfect eternity is like because of His holiness...

[Memorial service]

[Julie's Revelation with David Hocking... God's holiness.]

Notice in these Eight verses, the number seven is found eight times...I think that should get our attention...remember the number seven in the Bible usually means "perfection" or "completion"... What we will see is that something indeed is coming to completion...John tells us right off in verse 1... **the wrath of God is finished... complete....**that too is great and marvelous!

Interesting that the Greek word translated "complete" or "finished", *teleo*... is the same word used to describe when Jesus went to the cross, hanging on that cross, after receiving the sour wine ... Jesus said **it is finished** ...same word...*teleo... tetelestai* John 19:30 .

The entire redemptive work of God has been finished on the cross by His Son Jesus Christ... what is finished in Revelation 15 and 16 is the wrath of God... after this... no more!...as verse 17 of chapter 16 says **It is done.**

There is a comforting Psalm that I think goes so well with what John is showing us... Psalm 85:5-9

5 Will You be angry with us forever?

Will You prolong Your anger from generation to generation?

6 Will You not Yourself return to revive us,

That Your people may be glad in You?

7 Show us, O Yahweh, Your lovingkindness,

And give us Your salvation.

8 Let me hear what the God, Yahweh, will speak;

For He will speak peace to His people, to His holy ones;

But let them not turn back to folly.

9 Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,

That glory may dwell in our land.

One message for us this morning in light of our passage... **is that good news is coming**... Just as Jesus paid the full price of God's redemption for mankind... and because of that you and I can escape God's wrath against sinners...through the blood of Jesus we are "clean" before God... His wrath will eventually come to an end... no more tribulation! No more trouble in the world... all things will eventually be made new....Good news!

V.2 **The I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire**...we saw a sea of glass back in chapter 4:6 where in front of God's throne was a platform described as a "sea of glass"... but this glass sea was mixed with fire... fire represents God's judgement... His judgement that is about to be poured out over the entire earth.

Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire and those who have overcome the beast and his image and the number of his name, those who refused the mark, 666... standing on the glass having harps of God...

I'm beginning to get the idea there will be a lot of music going on in heaven!...if you don't like music you had better take a class in music appreciation!!!

who are the "those"...they are those who came to Christ during the tribulation period... and because they refused the mark, will be martyred during this tribulation period...they don't die because of God's wrath comes upon them.... No... they died because they denied the evil one and came to Christ.... And the good news is... their deaths were not the end!...we see them here in heaven playing harps!...and.... SINGING!

Read verses 3-4

Great song!... Written by Moses and Jesus (the lamb)!...the song is basically about three things:

1. **The works of God**...Great and marvelous are your works
2. **The ways of God**... righteous and true are your ways...not only is this honoring God in

what He does, but also how He does them...

3. The worth of God... for you alone are holy; for all the nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed...

By the way... there is a great hymn by Kieth and Krysten Ghetty *Christos Victor Amen* ...

O Most High King of the ages Great God of wonders By the blood You have redeemed us Led us through mighty waters Our strength our song our sure salvation... Now to the Lamb upon the throne Be blessing honor glory power For the battle You have won Hallelujah Amen ...O Most High dwelling among us Son of man sent for sinners By Your blood You have redeemed us Spotless Lamb mighty Savior Who lived who died who rose victorious...

Read verses 5-6

So these seven angels... coming from within the **sanctuary of the tabernacle of testimony**...come out and begin to distribute these seven bowls of God's judgement...

Verse 7...then one of the four living creatures... we met them earlier in chapter 4 and 5... four high ranking angels... the Cherubim...they pass out the seven bowls to these seven angels **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.**

Most likely these bowls were the incense bowls used in the temple... the priest would fill these fairly shallow bowls with burning incense and offer up the sweet aroma to God... now these bowls are filled with God's wrath.

The seven angels will pour out these bowls... God's final wrath...

Read verse 8

If any of this sounds familiar... you've read your Old Testament... way back in Exodus 40:34-35

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had dwelt on it, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.

1 Kings 8:10-12

Now it happened that when the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the house of Yahweh,11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh.

We probably should understand what "glory" is!

In his book "*The Weight of Glory*" C.S. Lewis recounts his idea about "glory" back when he was a skeptic over Christianity.... He wrote *Either glory means to me fame or it means*

luminosity...meaning glory as being famous.... Or glory as a something bright... he ends with who wishes to be a kind of living light bulb?

But God's glory is not about being famous and far more than being a living light bulb!... God's glory certainly is luminous... so bright no human could look at Him directly... but so much more...

Glory is His beauty that emanates from His character, from all that He is. **The glory of man—human dignity and honor—fades (1 Peter 1:24). But the glory of God, which is manifested in all His attributes together, never passes away. It is eternal.**

His glory is manifested in all of creation... Psalm 19:1 **The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork...**

So, so much more could be said of His glory... but it is His glory that fills the entire temple so that no one could enter it... That's what is happening in heaven... **so we move into chapter 16 with the pouring out of all these seven bowls onto the entire earth.**

Read 16:1

Remember...these seven bowls of wrath are supernatural acts from God... I don't know how many books and articles I've read trying to piece together all the possible ways all this will happen... **it's all going to happen supernaturally...**

It seems that each of these seven bowls are being poured out rapidly... if fact... the pouring overlap each other...I think the fact that all of these happen in one chapter shows us they happen very quickly...

Something else... these bowls of wrath are just... they are right...God is "justified" in His wrath... they are examples of an Old Testament principle of *lex talionis*... **eye for an eye...**

Definition—*The law of retaliation, whereby a punishment resembles the offence committed in kind and degree...*some may think some of these bowls exceed the offence...let's think about that as we go through them.

1. Read verse 2

So ugly and painful sores break out on all those who have the mark of the beast...*You got the mark of the beast on your forehead or hands?... now you get sores on your body!*...these are malignant sores... the sores are just an indication of something very wrong going on inside the body....these people who refused God and embraced the beast.... Have chosen death.

Something else to keep in mind as we go through these... they strike a parallel to the plagues on Egypt and the Pharaoh in Exodus..

Remember the sixth plague of Moses?... **where dust became boils breaking out on man and beast...**that was limited to Egypt... this first bowl is worldwide!...Remember the first plague of Moses?...

Exodus 7

God instructed Moses to confront Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites. When Pharaoh refused, Moses, following God's command, struck the waters of the Nile with his staff, turning the river into blood...the second bowl:

Read verse 3

The sea turns into blood and everything in the sea dies...remember back to the trumpet judgements?... the beginning of the tribulation period back in chapter 8 the second trumpet where when the trumpet sounded 1/3 of the ocean became blood...in this case ALL of the sea becomes blood...killing everything in the sea...

No more halibut... no more lobster!... Alaskan King Crab!... huge food source wiped out!

Can you imagine the stench???...[dead whale]... remember... by this time of the seven years tribulation... over 1/2 of the world's population have died and the church raptured...over 4 billion people dead!

Is God being just?... Isn't this a bit extreme?

Read verse 4

Not just the ocean is polluted... but now all the fresh-water streams and rivers are polluted...

Read verses 5-7

God's judgment is holy and righteous... remember,.. these people on earth rejoiced as they shed the blood of those who became believers during the tribulation... and the two witnesses... *Lex-talionis*...shouldn't they who spilled the blood of God's people be given nothing but blood to drink?

Isaiah 49:26

**I will feed those who mistreat you with their own flesh,
And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine;
And all flesh will know that I, Yahweh, am your Savior
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."**

I was trying to comprehend what all this will look like...Henry Morris helped me out think about this...Henry Morris was by profession a civil engineer... he liked to play with numbers and figure things out...He wrote a book entitled *Revelation Record*...

He figured out that about 70% of the earth is covered by water... 97% of that is salt water...most of the three percent left makes up the polar icecaps and glaciers...now get this... all of humanity basically survives on just 1% of all fresh water!

And all of that will be turned to blood!

Read verse 8-9

People scorched by the intense heat of the sun... interesting... some 700+ years earlier, God gave Isaiah a glimpse into the end times in chapter 30:26.

And the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven days, on the day Yahweh binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted.

Think about that... what happens when the sun amps up seven times hotter than it is?... Morris again calculated what the effects would be on the earth if the sun was 7 times hotter...

All the icesheets in Greenland, all of antarctica would melt... the polar icecaps melted... it would raise the sea level by 200 feet...Think of all the cities that are basically at sea level... Seattle, Los Angeles, San Diego, we're ok in Idaho!... they think there's global warming today?...

You would think that after all this... these four bowls...people might begin to think "*Maybe we were deluded by this beast and should maybe consider the one true God of the universe!*"

Maybe they didn't realize it was God doing all this?...no... it says **they blasphemed God**...they cursed Almighty God!... they knew who was doing this!...they are so deceived... so enthralled in their sin... I don't think they realize **this is it!**... God's FINAL wrath has come.... One last chance to "repent"...turn from their allegiance to the beast and give God the glory....

Read verse 10

Darkness covers the kingdom of the beast... that would be the entire globe....interesting that the dark kingdom of the beast will be put in complete darkness!... similar to the ninth plague of Egypt who was in complete darkness for three days...

Back in the fourth trumpet... 1/3 of the earth was darkened... not the entire earth... intensified judgements... **they gnawed their tongues because of pain**... bite their tongues so as not feel the pain of judgement.

again... look at their response...

Read verse 11

There it is again... they basically looked right at God... cursed at Him for all that He has been doing... refused to turn from their ways and give Him the glory...**they did not repent**...

To repent means “to change one’s mind.” The Bible tells us that true repentance will result in a change of actions... Paul defined why he preached the word..., **“I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds”** (Acts 26:20). Repentance is **“a change of mind that results in a change of action.”**

All this seems so crazy... what’s wrong with them?... but then what does the Bible say about the human condition?... Jeremiah 17:9 **“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”**

What that means is it isn’t just a few people on earth are evil reprobates who deserve the wrath of God... ALL of us have deceitful hearts... ALL **have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God!** (Rom. 3:23)... **everyone of us need to be saved from the wrath to come...**

Paul... commending the Thessalonian church in 1 Thessalonians 1 for their faithfulness in the work of the gospel... they once worshipped idols... but they *repented*... **turned to God from the idols...to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.**

As we watch these bowls being poured out... *we must remind ourselves that “there but for the grace of God, go we!”*...I think that if we really understood all this... believed it... it just might lead us to take sin in our own lives more seriously...

And prompt a little urgency to our commitment to spread the gospel message to a lost world... headed for His just “terrible” wrath!

The sixth bowl is much longer than the other five... verse 12

Read verse 12

The Euphrates river flows some 1800 miles from Mt Ararat in Turkey down to the Persian gulf... since the sun melted all the icecaps it will be a raging river to say the least... but supernaturally, God dries up the Euphrates river so that the confederacy of kings and their armies from the east can get to Israel.

Verse 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon (Satan) and out of the beast (antichrist) and out of the mouth of the false prophet...the antichrist assistant...the Unholy Trinity...the false copy of the true Trinity... three unclean spirits like frogs...

Remember Exodus 8 and the plague of frogs?...

In Exodus what is God doing?... He’s taking Israel out of bondage in Egypt... what is He doing here in Revelation?... He’s taking the entire world out of bondage from the evil one!...so here the unholy trinity join together to deceive the kings in the east by doing signs to entice them to invade Israel...

Read verse 14

The great war with God and Christ... Armegeddon...The great war prophesied in the Old Testament...Joel 2:11 11

**But Yahweh gives forth His voice before His military force;
Surely His camp is very numerous,
For mighty is he who does His word.
The day of Yahweh is indeed great and very awesome,
And who can endure it?**

Joel 3:2

**2 I will gather all the nations
And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.
Then I will enter into judgment with them there
On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
And they have divided up My land.**

Zechariah 12:1

The oracle of the word of Yahweh concerning Israel. *Thus* declares Yahweh who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

3 But it will be in that day, *that* I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who heave it up will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

9 And it will be in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

“And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.¹¹ In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

Why this war?... what entices these massive armies from the east to mass their armies and go to Israel?... Commenting on this passage from Zechariah... Dr. Charles Feinberg back in 1950 wrote this:

“The last section of the later part of Zechariah’s prophesy deals with the events of the distant future... as a portion of prophetic Scriptures it is second to none in importance to this book or any other Old Testament book...It is indispensable to an understanding of the event of the last days for Israel—the time of the great tribulation and the establishment of God’s kingdom on

earth...in the time of our passage all the nations of the earth will be bitten by the vision of antisemitism”

In other words... the world in the end times will have a growing hatred for the people of Israel... hard to imagine?...Is our world being set up for that?

Read verse 15

Some think this is the rapture... that the rapture is removed at the end of the tribulation... post-trib...here’s how I know this is not referring to the rapture... here’s the rule: **The rapture is a comfort.**

Every time the rapture is mentioned in Scripture... it is a comfort...1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.¹⁸ **Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

Every time you read something like **I am coming like a thief...** Jesus is not talking about the rapture... He’s talking about His second coming...

1 Thessalonians 5:2

2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

A thief breaking into a house at night is a horrible thought... a negative experience... seven times the New Testament uses the “thief” imagery... none of these are talking about a rapture...[that really messes up the movie series back in the 70’s called *A Thief in the Night*]

What is it then in 16:15?

It is referring to the world in its unrepentant state being caught off guard by the return of Jesus Christ with His final judgement!

So... there’s a blessing for those who are ready for His return... this is the third of seven beatitudes in Revelation... His second coming will happen in a moment... unannounced... so be ready...be awake (ready) and keep your clothes on! (if caught without wearing his uniform when a surprise attack happens...a soldier in the Roman army could be executed).

Read verse 16

A couple things to consider...

1. *Escaping the reality of judgement is impossible*

Even though these events, God's final judgement might be in the distant future... no one escapes His judgement... but you can escape His wrath through the blood of Jesus Christ...repent!

2. *Postponing repentance is regrettable.* Those who refuse Him will face His justice!

If you do not yet know Jesus Christ... it is not too late for you to turn to God in repentance and experience the hope of everlasting life...but don't delay... one thing we have been learning in Revelation is that a time WILL come when it will be too late... you will never know when that moment will happen.

The Seven Judgments of Revelation

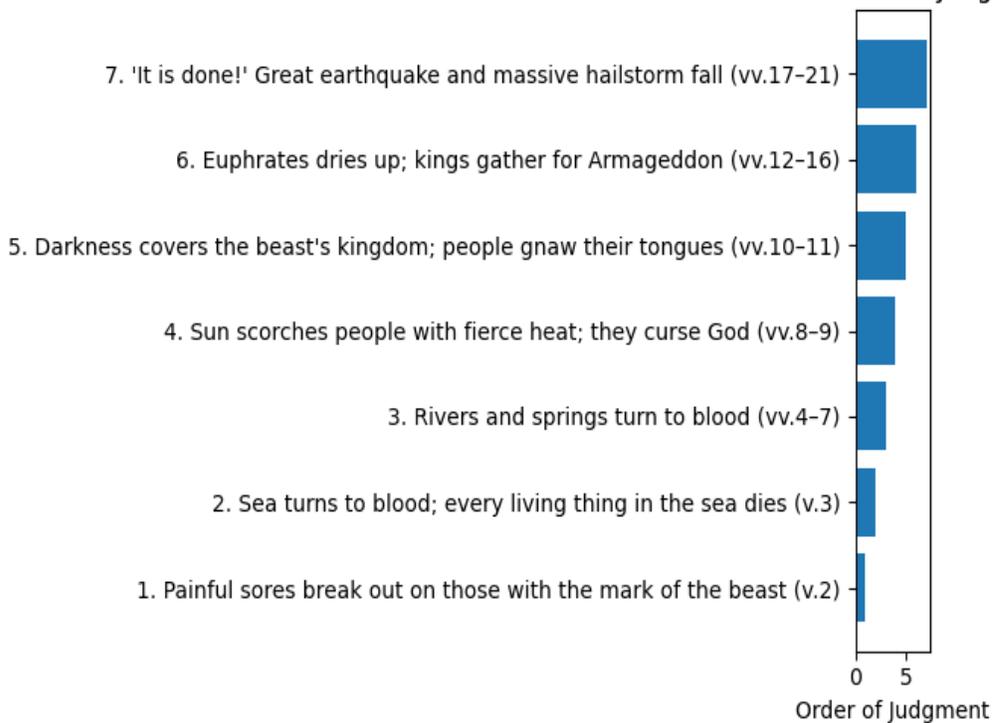
#	Judgment	Scripture Reference	Description	Key Effects
1	Seven Seals	Revelation 6–8:1	A scroll is opened seal by seal	War, famine, pestilence, martyrdom, cosmic disturbances
2	Seven Trumpets	Revelation 8:2–11:19	Seven angels sound trumpets	Natural disasters intensify; waters poisoned; darkness; demonic torment; massive earthquake
3	Seven Bowls (Vials)	Revelation 16	Seven angels pour out bowls of wrath	Painful sores, seas & rivers turn to blood, scorching heat, darkness, Euphrates dries up, Armageddon, global earthquake
4	Judgment of Babylon	Revelation 17–18	Fall of religious & commercial Babylon	Political-religious system destroyed; global mourning
5	Judgment of the Beast & False Prophet	Revelation 19:11–21	Christ returns in victory	Beast and False Prophet thrown into the lake of fire
6	Judgment of Satan	Revelation 20:1–10	Satan bound, later released, then defeated	Final rebellion crushed; Satan cast into lake of fire
7	Great White Throne Judgment	Revelation 20:11–15	Final judgment of the dead	The dead judged according to works; anyone not in Book of Life cast into lake of fire

Seven Angels, Seven Plagues, Seven Bowls

Revelation 15 & 16

- I. Chapter 15—Introduction to the seven bowls of God’s wrath.
 - A. A heavenly vision.
 - B. Seven angels deliver 7 plagues—God’s judgements.
 - 1. “Great and marvelous”.
 - 2. At the completion of the plagues, God’s wrath is *finished*.
 - a. Finished = *teleo*, same word as Jesus’ final word on the cross.
 - b. Good news is coming!
 - C. Sea of glass mixed with fire (V.2).
 - 1. A platform in front of God’s throne (4:6).
 - 2. Fire = judgement.
 - 3. The song:
 - a. The works of God.
 - b. The ways of God.
 - c. The worth of God.
 - D. The angels are given the bowls to pour out.
 - 1. The four living creatures—The cherubim?
 - 2. The golden bowls—the incense bowls of the tabernacle/temple.
 - 3. The sanctuary filled with the smoke of the glory of God (V.8)
 - a. Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10
 - 4. God’s glory: Manifested from His character—1 Peter 1:24
- II. The seven bowl judgements (Chapter 16).
 - A. All happens supernaturally.

Detailed Chart of the Seven Bowl Judgments - Revelation 16



Notes:

- The seven bowl judgements have a correlation with the plagues of Egypt in Exodus.
- Remember God' judgement is holy and righteous.
- *Lex talionis*-- The law of retaliation, whereby a punishment resembles the offence committed in kind and degree.
- Even after all these judgements, and opportunities for the people to repent and turn to Christ, they blasphemed God and would not repent (V 11)
- Repentance is “a change of mind that results in a change of action.”
- Armageddon is prophesied in the Old Testament: Joel 2:11; 3:2; Zech. 12:1

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