

REVELATION – THE TIME IS NEAR**THE SEVEN BOWLS OF JUDGMENT****Revelation 15:1 Seven Last Plagues of God’s Wrath**

I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God’s wrath is completed.

- John sees a Great and Marvelous sign that introduces the final seven judgments of God. We have seen Seven seals, Seven trumpets and now he sees Seven angels with the seven last plagues to be poured out from Seven bowls.
- Many people wrestle with the contents of this prophetic and apocalyptic book because of the things we are about to read –a loving, merciful, gracious God who pours out his wrath and inflicts pain and anguish on people and his creation. **But we must understand this morally divine activity is NOT a mystery nor was it withheld from humanity.** We have been warned through scripture that the Day of the Lord would come, and it would NOT be pretty! The OT is filled with prophetic announcements about the wrath of God being poured out on Israel and Judah for their rebellion against the covenant and laws of God, along with ALL the other nations, tribes, and peoples of the world, called out in scripture as enemies of God, who also have rebelled against the Lord’s moral and ethical established boundaries. Believers have been washed in the blood and are no longer condemned as lawbreakers – but the faithless will be judged by the lawgiver and the law! And God’s judgments are perfect and holy!

Here are a few passages you can read that will inform you of how God has made his intentions known so that we are ALL without excuse when it comes to judgment day and his impending wrath!

OT References to the Day of the Lord and the Wrath of God

Isaiah 65:2-7; 66:5-6, 14-16; **Ezekiel** 36:6-7, 22-27; 38:14-23; 39:4-8; **Daniel** 12:1-2;

Obadiah 1:15-17; **Micah** 4:6-12; 5:15; 7:16-20; **Nahum** 1:2-6;

Zephaniah 1:2-3,14-18; 3:8-9; **Zechariah** 9:8,14-17; 14:1-9; **Malachi** 4:1-4

The final chapter in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, has this uncompromising warning:

Malachi 4:1-2

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. ² But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.

Revelation 15:5-8 God’s Glory

⁵ After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law—and it was opened. ⁶ Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests.

⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. ⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

“**After this**” is a key phrase in Revelation to move the reader from one scene to another. John saw a great and marvelous sign (most likely in the stars like chapter 12); then he is refocused back to the courts of heaven where he sees the temple, the tabernacle of the covenant law! Remember, after the exodus out of Egypt, Moses was commanded to build a tabernacle and set it in the middle of the community. Within the tabernacle was a room called the holy of holies. That room contained the ark of the covenant...



...inside the ark were the two stone tablets on which the ten commandments were written, along with Aaron’s rod that budded, and a golden jar of manna. Two large angels made from hammered gold

Revelation 15-16

covered the mercy seat on the top of this holy box. It was the place of God's holy presence among the Israelites he redeemed and rescued from bondage. Only the high priest could enter this room once a year on the day of atonement. John saw God's most holy HEAVENLY dwelling place filled with glory!

Seven angels emerge from the heavenly holy of holies with the seven plagues, dressed in linen with gold sashes. One of the four living creatures has seven bowls FILLED with the wrath of God and gives one to each angel. The temple is now FILLED with the glory of God and his omnipotent power. Only a sovereign God who created all things has the authority and ability to administer this kind of justice on the people, animals, land, sea and sky. In Genesis chapter one God saw all that he made and declared it was very good, but sin has detrimentally impacted ALL of creation and God is about to re-create it!

Revelation 16:1-2

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth." ² The **first angel** went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

- Angel 1 – Painful sores (boils) on those who worship the beast and take his mark
- Humanity, made in the image and likeness of God, will be the recipients of this first plague. The days of gratifying the sinful cravings of the flesh will be replaced with bodies writhing in painful agony, unable to find relief. All the memories of the pleasures of sin that enticed men and women to turn from the living Lord will not be able to bring the comfort now desired! And this is only a precursor to the eternal torment Jesus warned would envelop the ungodly and unrepentant!

Revelation 16:3

³ The **second angel** poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.

- Angel 2 – The salt-water oceans turn to blood killing all living things within them

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- Scripture declares the world has been suffering since the fall in the Garden Of Eden along with humanity. The curse of sin included the earth and now the Lord begins the process of eradicating all that has been tainted so that a new heaven and new earth can be revealed!

Revelation 16:4

⁴The **third angel** poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

- Angel 3 – Fresh water sources are turned into blood
- The Lord now focuses on the fresh water resources resulting in the death of all the creatures that lives within them and removing the source of clean water for humanity to drink. Angels declare the reason for this plague in vv. 5-7.

Revelation 16:5-7

⁵Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: “You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were; ⁶for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.”

- The inhabitants of the world at this stage of the great tribulation, committed to worshipping the dragon and beast, will have treated believers with disdain and ruthlessness! They will be judged accordingly for the murders of God’s holy people and prophets!

⁷And I heard the altar respond: “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.”

- Presumably, this “AMEN!” could be the collective voice of the martyrs under the altar in heaven crying out for vengeance in chapter 6!

“⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.” (Rev. 6:9-11)

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Revelation 16:8-9

⁸The **fourth angel** poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

- Angel 4 – Sun intensifies and scorches people.
- Painful sores all over the body, oceans and fresh waters turned to blood, and now the sun is intensified to cause sunburns, the like of which no one on earth has experienced before...and the response of the people – they break commandment number three and CURSE the name of GOD!
- Romans 8:7 enlightens us to the reason for this unwillingness to repent and glorify God: The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.
- As believers we are NOT appointed to suffer God's wrath for we have been saved from the wrath of God! (AMEN!) But those who have pledged their allegiance to Satan and received his mark have allowed their minds to be darkened, deluded, and depraved so that even under the most severe and painful trial they are literally UNABLE to turn from sin and turn to God!
- *Hide God's word in your heart, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be HUMBLE to ensure there is nothing between you and God! Live in right relationship with Lord and choose LIFE not death!*

Revelation 16:10-11

¹⁰The **fifth angel** poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

- Angel 5 – Beast's kingdom plunged into darkness
- The Egyptians experienced a similar plague in Exodus 10 for three days. Jesus taught that darkness awaits those who have not made themselves ready for eternity in Matthew 22:13 and 25:30. He also said there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Hell was created for Satan and his fallen entourage of angels – but he will bring down with him a great number of men and women who will suffer the same torment!
- DARKNESS -

Revelation 15-16

- God is working out his divine plan to crush the kingdom of evil that has plagued humanity. The dominion of darkness is revealed for what it truly is and God is setting up the final encounter where he will send his son to rescue Israel and defeat the antichrist, false prophet and dragon once and for all!

Revelation 16:12-13

¹² The **sixth angel** poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. ¹³ Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Revelation 16:14-16

¹⁴ They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵ “Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

¹⁶ Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

- Angel 6 – Euphrates dried up to make a way for the kings of the east to march into Israel
- Here we see a divine miracle that dries up the Euphrates River. Interestingly the river has seen a decrease over the last few decades due to the construction of a dam and severe droughts. Demonic forces will entice world leaders to band together and march on the nation of Israel probably under the delusion of putting an end to the “plagues” being experienced. I could easily believe that the antichrist and false prophet would create a narrative that blames the Jews for the terrible things happening!
- God will use this moment to engage the devil and his followers with the armies of heaven led by Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords!
- Armageddon – I believe John is alluding to the battle outlined in Revelation 19:17-19 and prophetically mentioned in Ezekiel 39:1-4. We will explore this in greater detail in the weeks to come!

Revelation 15-16

Revelation 16:17-21

¹⁷ The **seventh angel** poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “**It is done!**” ¹⁸ Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake.

No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.

¹⁹ The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath.

²⁰ Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. ²¹ From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

- Angel 7 – A diving declaration “IT IS DONE!”
- God declares from heaven that his wrath has ended! We started with 15:1, “...seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God’s wrath is completed.” One final flurry of activity that assures anyone left on earth that YHWH, the creator of heaven and earth, is seated on the throne, has all power and authority, will NOT be mocked, and will reign and rule forever and ever! The earth will be laid bare - shaken to its core!
- The inhabitants of the earth continue to CURSE God!!

CONCLUSION

Why is this vision important? God gave Moses the LAW to which all of humanity is held accountable! Jesus did not ABOLISH the law, but he fulfilled it, and he still expects ALL humanity to strive to live according to its ethic through the love we have for God and a love for others!

UNDERSTAND that God poured out the full measure of his divine LOVE when his son Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sin of the world.

- Accepting God’s love by grace through faith means you are no longer condemned as a lawbreaker, but you are a child of God – adopted into God’s family!
- Those who REJECT God’s love and follow the antichrist receiving his mark will receive God’s justice as Paul declares to the Thessalonians.

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2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

⁵All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.

This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Two options!

1. Counted worthy of the Kingdom of God – washed in the blood of the Lamb!
2. Punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord!