

# God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2

## Untouchable Hearts

### Revelation 16:8-21

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#### I. Introduction

1. Chapter 16 is the third round of judgments cast by a righteous God on an unrighteous people. [God will impossibly amp up the already devastating judgments leading to a world we would barely recognize.](#) Here in the final days before Christ's return God's wrath is the fulfilment of His promises to hold the nations to account for our sin.

While our eyes are rightly on God, may we not miss the endurance of evil possessing the very heart of mankind.

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#### II. Revelation 16:8-9: Global Warming

1. In **Revelation 8:12**, the Creator of all things will blot out the much needed power of the sun and here in Revelation 16, He will take what was made to serve man, the sun (as we see in **Genesis 1:14-19**), and uses it as an instrument of righteousness as He turns the heat up to barely bearable temperatures.
2. Man was scorched, but so was their food chain. [Water evaporation rates will increase, placing further pressure on this increasingly scarce commodity.](#) What's more as trees and plants die, the ground will become unstable as we see God setting the table for what is yet to come.
3. I note that in His grace, to any that will listen, God has and continues to offer many warnings. [Examples include in Malachi 4...specifically, for this passage, 4:1:](#)

**4** “For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” Says the Lord of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch.  
- Malachi 4:1

and Isaiah 24:3-6

<sup>3</sup> The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the Lord has spoken this word. <sup>4</sup>The earth mourns *and* fades away, The world languishes *and* fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. <sup>5</sup>The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. <sup>6</sup>Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men *are* left. - Isaiah 24:3–6

4. It's ugly. **The heat inflames the sores.** The pain is intolerable, but hatred is a cruel master.

5. In **John 8:12**, Jesus tells us that He is the light of the world and in **John 11:25** that He is life. **It's no accident that here we see the blazing light of Christ introducing the next bowl of judgment.**

**Revelation 16:10-11**: **The Kingdom of Darkness is a Dead-End**

1. The 5<sup>th</sup> bowl is to be poured out on the throne of the beast...spreading throughout his earthly kingdom; **which context suggests includes much, but not all of the world at this point.**
2. What we read is brutal...really beyond brutal. **People with hearts so darkened by pride and sensuality they will condemn themselves to destruction.**
3. Rather than repent and receive what is good, their hatred spews forth as venom blaspheming God for what they have themselves done. **I think it's good for us to draw back here for a moment as we consider the claims by some that all people will eventually confess**

Christ and be saved, including those that are judged to hell and not heaven.

Not only is this false teaching poorly supported in the canon of Scripture, but as we consider these verses, we see how they hated Jesus and His message of surrender, grace, and freedom. Their hearts will be so hardened that they were eagerly awaiting the call to battle to defeat Christ once of for all. They will show no evidence of remorse or repentance for that is what the fulness of evil does.

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#### IV. Revelation 16:12-16: Preparing the Battlefield

1. The kingdom of the unholy trinity is under assault. Resources are stretched thin. Things are not going their way as judgment after judgment destroys their kingdom and undermines their authority. Something has to be done.

So the best and the brightest, Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet have gathered together in planning the final battle.

2. The 6<sup>th</sup> angel pours God's wrath on the great river Euphrates which spans some 1720+ miles and represents the boundary between east and west. While never expanding that far, the land of Israel, as given by God, was to extend all the way to the Euphrates.
3. Satan et. al. will be powerless to stop the water from drying up...yet they are unmoved from their goal of being gods of this world. In Mark 13:22, Jesus Himself offers a great warning as to what we see unfolding here:

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<sup>22</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. <sup>23</sup> But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand. - Mark 13:22-23

So, the unholy trinity will send out three like themselves as a battle cry to all the nations. Things have reached a fever pitch and as there is no turning back, Jesus judgment will make their decision

clear; since they could not defeat Him, they must destroy Him! While we don't have time to do so at this point, I encourage you to go back and read **Joel 3** alongside this passage.

4. A couple of final thoughts before we move on to the final bowl judgment.
  - A. V15 has left some perplexed as to why it's been parachuted into the middle of this passage. This is one of those things I suggest we don't need to overthink. Just as Jesus was doing, at least in part, with His similar sentiment in **Matthew 24:43**, He will pour out His grace and mercy in an encouragement that He will not forget those defending the hope of Jesus within them.
  - B. Finally, I want to note that Armageddon means the "Mountain of Megiddo". Since Megiddo is a town about 60 miles NE from Jerusalem on the plain of Esdraelon (or valley of Jezreel), it offers difficulty for proper interpretation of to what the "mountain of Megiddo" is referring.

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#### V. Revelation 16:17-21: Extreme Makeover

1. We have read of "voices of thundering's and lightnings" previously in **Revelation 4:5, 8:5, and 11:19**. In 11:19 and our passage today, they are accompanied by an earthquake. Of course here in 7<sup>th</sup> bowl judgment, unlike the localized 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet in 11:19, the earthquake here will have a worldwide impact.
2. Indeed, "the great city was divided into three parts" and the cities of the nations fell". Some posit the great city as being Babylon because Babylon is referred to by name in the second half of the verse 19. While that may be true, the natural reading of the passage suggests Babylon will be with the cities of the nations that fell while the "great city" here at the beginning of v19, will NOT fall, but will be divided into three parts.
  - A. **Zechariah 14** offers some possible insights as to this dividing into parts. **Zechariah 14:4** tells us that the Mt of Olives will be

split in two. A few verses later in **14:8**, **Zechariah** tells us that there will be a new source of living waters with some suggesting this will be the source of water flowing from the millennial temple noted in **Ezekiel 47**<sup>1</sup>.

3. V20-21 offers a word picture of what John meant at the end of v19 with God pouring out His judgment described as “the fierceness of His wrath”. Unlike **Revelation 6:12-14** when every mountain and island were moved, the surface of the planet is literally transformed as mountains and islands cease to exist. What’s more, hailstones weighing between 100-130 lbs fall, destroying, maiming, and killing...enough that they again blasphemed God.

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A picture of this great transformation of earth in preparation for the millennial kingdom can be found in **Isaiah 40:4-5**:

Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;  
<sup>5</sup> The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see *it*  
together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” - Isaiah 40:4–5

4. One final note. V19 offers another interpretive difficulty. Which **Babylon is in view**? Babylon on the Tiber River, the one on the Euphrates, or failed-yet-still-kicking spiritual Babylon brought forward in the Roman empire? The language indicates a literal city is in view, suggesting it is either Rome or the new Babylon on the Euphrates. Yet that does not preclude a broader connection to spiritual Babylon for which there is much more said coming up in Revelation chapters 17-18.

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## VI. Closing: A Clear Path Amidst an Uncomfortable Truth

1. This is hard to read and process. I can’t imagine what living through it will be like. What can we draw from the horrors that John shares here? While this list can extend more than a few pages, it might be summed up this way:

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<sup>1</sup> The Revelation Record, Henry Morris, p319-320

- A. God's wrath is not to be trifled with as His judgment is righteous and sure;
  - B. Some throughout the ages have eyes and hearts open to the Lord's leading and come to a saving faith; and
  - C. Far too much of mankind, even those living in the midst of His promised judgments and having waded into the river of hatred up to their waists, are all too willing to continue their foolish plunge into darkness and death. *What's more, because it's so unnecessary, it makes the sorrow even greater.*
2. So, what can we say and what can we do? *After thanking God for saving us*, we can be the church and please Him by sharing the Good News and making disciples to the ends of the world *for only God knows the hearts that are not untouchable.*

# Revelation 16:8-21

## Discussion Prompts

Don't be shy or embarrassed, this is a safe place to talk, learn, and grow. All of us should walk with an attitude of grace and Godly love in encouraging one another to contribute to our shared growth in the Lord.

***For more discussion questions helping your faith to grow, please download the sermon documents typically posted the day after each sermon on the watch tab of our App or website.***

1. Since hatred can be such a cruel master, what, if anything, can we do as Christ's ambassadors to be a part of overcoming hatred?
2. How can we effectively use Revelation, particularly the tribulation period, as a tool to witness to a blind (and dying) world?
3. You are sharing about end-times with non-believers and they ask why God would meet evil with more evil? Surely, wrath poured out on your own creation is more of an indictment that you don't follow such a good God than it is on broken people. How would you respond to this or similar circumstances?

## Revelation 16:8-21

God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts

### I. Introduction

### II. Revelation 16:8-9: Global Warming

- The many warnings ignored.
- Hatred is a cruel master.

Additional Scripture References: Malachi 4:1; Is 24:3-6; Jn 8:12, 11:25

### III. Revelation 16:10-11: The Kingdom of Darkness is a Dead-End

- Evil feeds such hatred that eternity in hell becomes a willing choice.

### IV. Revelation 16:12-16: Preparing the Battlefield

- The unholy trinity sends out mini-me's.
- Jesus brings comfort even in the darkest hour.

Additional Scripture References: Mk 13:22; Joel 3; Mt 24:43

### V. Revelation 16:17-21: Extreme Makeover

- Identifying “the great city”.
- Wrath made complete

Additional Scripture References: Re 4:5, 89:5, 11:19; Zech 14, 14:4, 14:8; Ez 47; Re 6:12-14; Is 40:4-5

### VI. Closing: A Clear Path Amidst an Uncomfortable Truth



## **5-Day Devotional Revelation 16:8-21 God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts**

### **Day 1: God's Righteous Judgment and Mercy**

**Reading: Rom 2:1-11**

**Devotional**: As we reflect on God's righteous judgment, it's crucial to remember that His wrath is always balanced with mercy. In Romans, Paul reminds us that God "will repay each person according to what they have done" (v. 6). This can seem daunting, but it's also a reminder of God's perfect justice. However, for those who "persist in doing good," there is "glory, honor and peace" (v. 10).

Today, consider areas in your life where you might be resisting God's guidance. Are there sins you're holding onto, thinking they're harmless? Remember, God's judgment is not to condemn us, but to refine us and draw us closer to Him. Pray for the courage to face these areas, seeking God's forgiveness and transforming power.

### **Day 2: Light in Darkness**

**Reading: John 8:12-20**

**Devotional**: Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (v. 12). In a world that often seems consumed by darkness, this promise offers immense hope. Just as the sermon mentioned the contrast between Christ's blazing light and the darkness of judgment, we too are called to be bearers of His light.

Reflect on areas of your life or community where darkness seems prevalent. How can you bring Christ's light into these situations? It might be through acts of kindness, words of encouragement, or simply being present for someone in need. Remember, even the smallest light can dispel deep darkness.

### **Day 3: The Power of Repentance**

**Reading: Acts 3:17-26**

**Devotional**: Peter's sermon in Acts emphasizes the importance and power of repentance. He calls his listeners to "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (v. 19). This echoes the warnings we see in Revelation, where despite severe judgments, many still refuse to repent.

Today, examine your heart. Are there areas where you've grown complacent or resistant to God's prompting? Repentance isn't just about feeling sorry; it's about turning towards God and allowing Him to transform us. Pray for a soft heart, open to God's conviction and eager for His refreshing presence.

#### **Day 4: Standing Firm in Faith**

**Reading: Eph 6:10-18**

**Devotional:** In the face of spiritual warfare and end-time tribulations, Paul's exhortation to "put on the full armor of God" (v. 11) becomes even more crucial. Just as the sermon described believers enduring through intense trials, we too must be prepared to stand firm in our faith.

Consider each piece of the armor Paul describes. Which areas of your spiritual life feel strong, and which might need reinforcement? Remember, our strength comes not from ourselves, but from being "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (v. 10). Take time to pray, asking God to fortify your faith and equip you for whatever challenges lie ahead.

#### **Day 5: Hope in God's Promises**

**Reading: Rev 21:1-7**

**Devotional:** After the intense judgments described in Revelation 16, we find this beautiful picture of hope and renewal. God promises a new heaven and earth, where He will "wipe every tear from their eyes" and where "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (v. 4). This is the ultimate fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.

As you reflect on this passage, allow its hope to permeate your current circumstances. Whatever trials or sorrows you're facing, they are temporary in light of eternity. How does this eternal perspective change how you view your present challenges? Take time to thank God for His promises and ask for the faith to live in light of this coming reality.

## **Small Group Study Guide**

### **Revelation 16:8-21**

### **God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a prayer asking for wisdom and open hearts as you discuss this challenging topic.

**Key Takeaways:** Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. God's wrath is the fulfillment of His promises to hold mankind accountable for sin.
2. Even in the face of severe judgment, many hearts remain hardened against God.
3. God's grace is evident even amid His judgments, offering warnings and opportunities for repentance.
4. The final tribulation judgments will dramatically transform the earth in preparation for Christ's return.

**Discussion Questions:** Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. How does the intensity of God's judgments in Revelation 16 challenge or affirm your understanding of God's character?
2. The passage describes people blaspheming God rather than repenting. Why do you think some hearts remain hardened even in the face of clear divine judgment?
3. In verse 15, Jesus offers a word of encouragement to believers. How can we apply this message to our lives today?
4. The sermon mentions that these judgments are "unnecessary" because people have opportunities to repent. How does this perspective impact your view of evangelism and sharing your faith?
5. How do the descriptions of God's wrath in this passage relate to Jesus' teachings about God's love and mercy?
6. The sermon notes that some throughout history have had "eyes and hearts open to the Lord's leading." What practices can help us maintain soft hearts towards God?

**Practical Applications:** Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Spend time this week reflecting on areas in your life where you might be resistant to God's leading. Pray for a softened heart.
2. Choose one person in your life who doesn't know Christ and commit to praying for their salvation daily this week.
3. Study one of the Old Testament prophecies mentioned in the sermon (e.g., Zechariah 14 or Isaiah 40:4-5) and consider how it relates to Revelation 16.
4. Discuss with a friend or family member how the reality of God's judgment should impact how we live our daily lives.
5. Write a short prayer of thanksgiving for God's patience and grace in your own life.

**Closing Prayer:** End the session by thanking God for His righteousness, mercy, and the hope we have in Christ. Pray for the courage to share the gospel in light of the realities discussed.

**Discussion Questions**  
**Revelation 16:8-21**  
**God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts**

4. How does the concept of God's righteous wrath challenge or affirm your understanding of His character? How do you reconcile this with His love and mercy?
5. What insights can we gain from the contrast between the hardened hearts of those facing judgment and the enduring faith of believers during tribulation?
6. How might the imagery of the sun scorching people relate to modern environmental concerns, and what spiritual lessons can we draw from this?
7. In what ways does the description of the 'kingdom of darkness' in Revelation 16:10-11 challenge popular notions of evil and its consequences?
8. How does the preparation for the battle of Armageddon reflect spiritual warfare in our daily lives, and what can we learn from this cosmic conflict?
9. What significance do you see in Jesus' sudden interjection in verse 15, and how might this apply to believers today?
10. How does the description of global catastrophes in the final judgment challenge our perception of stability and security in the world?
11. What spiritual insights can we gain from the transformation of the earth's surface described in the seventh bowl judgment?
12. How does the persistent blasphemy of those under judgment inform our understanding of free will and the nature of repentance?
13. In light of these prophecies, how should believers balance urgency in evangelism with living out their faith in everyday life?

# **Dinner Conversation Starters**

## **Revelation 16:8-21**

### **God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts**

#### **1. Facing Consequences**

The sermon discusses the severe judgments in Revelation 16 as God's way of holding mankind accountable for sin. How do we, as individuals or families, handle consequences when we make mistakes? Can we think of ways to teach about accountability in our daily lives?

#### **2. Repentance and Forgiveness**

The sermon emphasizes the refusal of many to repent despite facing intense suffering. Why is repentance important, and how can forgiveness play a role in our personal relationships and community interactions?

#### **3. The Impact of Evil on the Heart**

The text speaks about hearts hardened by pride and evil. In what ways can we guard our hearts against negative influences, and how can we cultivate a spirit of kindness and openness in our family life?

#### **4. Signs and Warnings**

God gives warnings before implementing His judgments, similar to the warnings mentioned in the sermon. Can we identify moments in our lives where we received gentle warnings or signs that helped us change our path for the better?

#### **5. Hope and Resilience**

Despite the dark imagery of Revelation, the sermon speaks to God's ultimate justice and the establishment of His kingdom. How does our faith provide hope and resilience during challenging times, and how can we support each other as a family when faced with difficulties?

# Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

## Revelation 16:8-21

### God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts

#### AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Understanding Consequences**: Teach children that every action has an outcome. Positive actions often lead to positive reactions, while negative actions might lead to consequences.

*Discussion Question*: Can you think of a time when you did something good and received a "thank you" or a reward? What about a time you made a mistake, and there was a consequence?

2. **Apologizing**: Emphasize the importance of saying sorry when they hurt someone or make a mistake, showing the value of repentance and forgiveness.

*Discussion Question*: Is there someone you need to apologize to for something you did? How can saying sorry help you feel better and make peace with them?

3. **Choosing Kindness**: Encourage choosing kind words and actions, highlighting how their choices impact friends and family.

*Discussion Question*: How can we show kindness to someone when we see they're upset or angry?

#### AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Understanding Warnings and Advice**: Teach them to recognize when advice or warnings from others can protect them from harm, similar to how God warns us.

*Discussion Question*: Can you think of a time when someone gave you advice that helped you avoid trouble? How did you feel afterward?

2. **Resisting Peer Pressure**: Highlight the importance of making independent decisions and not just following friends, especially when in digital spaces.

*Discussion Question*: What would you do if a friend wanted you to do something you knew wasn't right? How could you respond to them?

3. **Digital Responsibility**: Discuss the importance of making smart and kind choices when using the internet or social media.

*Discussion Question*: What are some ways we can use the internet and social media positively and safely?

## AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Accountability in Relationships**: Discuss how being responsible for their actions can strengthen trust in friendships and family.

*Discussion Question*: How does taking responsibility for a mistake build trust with your friends or family?

2. **Standing Firm in Beliefs**: Encourage them to stand by their values and faith even when it's challenging, especially in social circles.

*Discussion Question*: How can you stay true to your faith when others may encourage you to do something different?

3. **Mindful Online Presence**: Guide them in understanding the long-term impact of their digital footprint and encourage mindful posting.

*Discussion Question*: What are some questions you can ask yourself before you post something online to ensure it's responsible and respectful?

### **Tips for Parents**

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.



# **Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z**

## **Revelation 16:8-21**

### **God's Righteous Wrath – Part 2, Untouchable Hearts**

#### **1. Accountability and Integrity**

Application: Just as God holds us accountable for our actions, it's important to practice integrity by being honest and taking responsibility in group settings. This aligns with Proverbs 28:13, which emphasizes confession and renouncing wrongdoings.

Scenario: You're in a group project at school, and a team member doesn't contribute as expected, causing issues. Instead of hiding or blaming others, hold a group meeting to discuss everyone's responsibilities openly and constructively.

Discussion Question: How can you approach someone who isn't contributing fairly, and what steps can you take to ensure the team works with integrity?

#### **2. Rejecting Peer Pressure with Faith**

Application: Like those in Revelation who refused to repent despite suffering, resist succumbing to negative peer pressure by standing firm in your beliefs. Romans 12:2 reminds us not to conform to this world but be transformed by renewing our minds.

Scenario: Friends are pressuring you to participate in a trending but inappropriate social media challenge. Reflect on your values and choose not to partake, explaining your perspective.

Discussion Question: How can you politely, yet firmly, refuse participation in something that goes against your beliefs, and how might that influence others positively?

#### **3. Digital Discernment**

Application: As Revelation speaks of the ultimate battle between good and evil, apply discernment in digital interaction, choosing to spread positivity and truth. Philippians 4:8 encourages us to focus on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, or praiseworthy.

Scenario: You're scrolling through your social media feed and come across false or harmful content being widely shared. Use your platform to promote truthful and uplifting messages by sharing verified positive posts.

Discussion Question: What steps can you take to ensure the content you share or engage with online reflects your faith and values?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.