



THE RETURN OF THE KING

A STUDY OF REVELATION

Week 9

Bowls of Wrath, Revelation 15-16

Nov 2, 2025

Sermon Summary

The seven bowls of God's wrath in Revelation 15-16 present us with one of Scripture's most challenging yet essential truths: God's perfect justice must ultimately address evil. These final plagues mirror the Exodus story, reminding us that the same God who delivered His people from Egyptian bondage will one day deliver creation itself from the tyranny of sin. What makes these passages so profound is their revelation that God's wrath doesn't contradict His love—it flows directly from His holiness and perfection. The imagery is stark: painful sores, seas turned to blood, scorching heat, and impenetrable darkness falling upon those who bear the mark of the beast. Yet even amid judgment, we see glimpses of mercy—repeated mentions that people 'did not repent' suggest opportunities were given. For us today, this passage calls us to three vital responses: stay alert for Christ's return, don't downplay the reality of God's holy wrath, and recognize the urgency of the delay we're currently experiencing. That delay isn't divine procrastination; it's grace extended, giving us time to turn to Christ and share His gospel with others. The most beautiful truth here is that those who belong to Christ need not fear these bowls of wrath—Jesus already drank the cup of God's judgment on our behalf at Calvary. What's poured out on us instead is love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

Small Group Guide

Opening Prayer: Begin with a prayer asking God to guide your discussion and help the group understand and apply the teachings from Revelation.

Key Takeaways

- God's wrath flows out of His excellence and perfection - His wrath is rooted in His holiness, justice, and truth
- God's wrath gives people what they deserve - The seven bowls demonstrate perfect justice
- God's wrath gathers His enemies - Ultimately for their final destruction
- God's wrath brings about the end of evil - Justice is fully satisfied; evil is purified from creation

Discussion Questions

- How does understanding that God's wrath flows from His holiness and perfection change the way you view His justice?
- In what ways might Christians today be tempted to either downplay God's wrath or wrongly attempt to dish it out themselves?
- What does it mean practically to 'stay alert' and live as if Christ could return at any moment, and how would that change your daily priorities?
- How does the 'delay' of God's final judgment demonstrate both His mercy and our responsibility to share the gospel with others?
- How can we balance standing up for truth and justice in this world while not attempting to execute God's wrath ourselves?
- What does it mean to conquer evil with good and suffering rather than with retaliation, and how did Christ model this for us?

Practical Applications

- Stay Vigilant: Set a daily reminder to pray and read a short Bible passage each morning. Memorize one Bible verse about God's promises and share it with the group.
- God's Balance: Spend time this week reflecting on one aspect of God's character.
- Repentance Practice: Take a moment each day to reflect on areas needing change and pray for forgiveness.
- Acts of Compassion: Plan one act of kindness or service for someone in need this week.
- Pray for Unbelievers: Choose one person who needs Christ and pray for them each day this week.

Closing Prayer

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for gathering us here today and for the opportunity to delve into Your Word together. As we reflect on Your holiness and the reality of Your justice, we ask for understanding and courage to live as faithful ambassadors of Your grace. Help us to stay alert, to embrace Your mercy, and to share the hope we have in Christ with those around us. May Your Spirit guide our conversations and deepen our faith. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: The Holiness Behind God's Wrath

Reading: Revelation 15:1-8

Devotional: God's wrath isn't arbitrary anger—it flows from His perfect holiness and justice. When we read about judgment in Revelation, we're witnessing the necessary response of a holy God to persistent evil. The angels emerge from the sanctuary wearing priestly garments, symbolizing that judgment comes from God's sacred presence. This should comfort us: God doesn't ignore injustice or overlook suffering. His wrath means He cares deeply about making things right. Today, reflect on areas where you've witnessed injustice. Rather than taking revenge into your own hands, trust that God's perfect justice will ultimately prevail. How does knowing God is both loving and just change your perspective on suffering?

Day 2: The Choice to Repent

Reading: Revelation 16:1-11; Exodus 7-10

Devotional: Throughout the plagues, people "cursed God" and "did not repent." Like Pharaoh's hardened heart, they chose rebellion over repentance. Yet the very fact that repentance is mentioned reveals God's patience—even in judgment, there's invitation. The delay before Christ's return isn't God's slowness but His mercy, giving people time to turn to Him. Are there areas in your life where you've hardened your heart? Perhaps bitterness, unforgiveness, or secret sin? Today is still the day of salvation. God's grace is available now. Don't wait for harder circumstances to drive you to Him. Respond to His gentle conviction today, and if you know someone far from God, pray for their heart to soften.

Day 3: Christ Drank the Cup for Us

Reading: Luke 22:39-46; Isaiah 51:17-23

Devotional: Before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed about "the cup"—the cup of God's wrath that we deserved. On the cross, Christ absorbed the full measure of divine judgment for sin, so those who trust Him receive mercy instead of wrath. The bowls of wrath in Revelation will never be poured on believers because Jesus already drank our cup. This truth should overwhelm us with gratitude and humility. You don't have to fear eternal separation from God. The punishment is finished—absorbed by Christ. Today, thank Jesus specifically for taking your place. Let this reality move you from fear to freedom, from guilt to gratitude. How does knowing Christ bore your judgment change how you live today?

Day 4: Stay Alert and Prepared

Reading: Matthew 24:36-51; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Devotional: "I will come like a thief," Jesus warns. We don't know the day or hour of His return, so we must live in constant readiness—not in anxious fear, but in faithful obedience. Staying alert means living each day as His ambassador, representing Christ well to those around you. It means keeping your spiritual life vibrant through prayer, Scripture, and community. It means being prepared to give an answer for the hope within you. Examine your life today: Are you living as

if Christ could return at any moment? Are there relationships to restore, sins to confess, or people who need to hear about Jesus? Don't be caught unprepared—live with eternal perspective today.

Day 5: The Mission During the Delay

Reading: 2 Peter 3:3-15; Matthew 28:16-20

Devotional: God's "delay" in returning isn't procrastination—it's patience, "not wanting anyone to perish." This extended grace period gives us sacred work: sharing the gospel with those still far from God. You have friends, family members, and coworkers who need to hear about Jesus before the final judgment comes. We conquer evil not through wrath but through suffering love, showing the world what Christ looks like. Your mission is urgent but filled with hope. Who in your life needs to hear about God's mercy? Pray for boldness to share your faith this week. Remember: every conversation, every act of kindness, every testimony could be the moment someone chooses eternal life over eternal separation. Make the delay count.