

Revelation 16 The Seven Vials

Introduction

This chapter details the last seven judgments during the Tribulation. These are the most severe of all. Most of the vials or bowls are poured out on the antichrist and the lost in the world. These judgments show not only the righteousness of God, but also his grace. Man has one last chance to repent, but v 11 tells us they "repented not of their deeds"

I. First Vial-Sores, v1-2

This judgment causes terrible sores on those who have taken the mark of the Beast, and have worshiped his image. A sore is a symbol of inward corruption God is showing that their inward rebellion on the outside of their bodies. Those who are judged will be very religious people. Many of these people will probably take pride in the mark of the Beast, now God will give them another mark to identify them as objects of his judgment

This judgment is similar to the plague on Egypt, that is described in Exodus 9: 9. In both cases the people involved were worshipers of false gods

II. Second Vial-Blood in the Oceans. v3

This judgment is very similar to the second trumpet. However, in the second judgment, only a third part of the oceans are turned into blood. When this vial is poured out, all of the water in the seas are turned into blood. This plague also has an Old Testament predecessor. The first plague on Egypt turned the Nile into blood, Ex 7:21.

This will be a terrible judgment. All life in the oceans will die. This will produce a major ecological disaster. Not only will this impact the worlds ecology, it will lead to great sufferings for many whose diet consists mainly of fish. There will be diseases that will be caused by all the dead sea life.

III. Third Vial- Blood in Fresh Water, v4-7

The worlds remaining water is now turned into blood. This will also have a terrible impact on the world. There will be dead aquatic life, but all life needs water to survive. Many animals and humans will die from this vial.

Many want to know why God would send a judgment like this. Verse 6 gives the reason. This is a "repayment" for the blood of God's people that has been shed by the current inhabitants of this world. Verse 7 states that God is completely justified in doing this. Water in Scripture pictures a source of life, but now it is a source of death.

IV. Fourth Vial- Fire, v8-9

There will be global warming in the future! Those who have rejected the Lord will suffer this burning of the sun. God could remove some of the atmospheres protective elements, or He can simply direct the sun to burn those who have rejected Him.

This judgment does not produce repentance. Those who are burned blaspheme the name of God and refuse to repent. This again shows that God is completely just in sending these plagues.

V. Fifth Vial- Darkness, 10-11

This vial is fixed on the "seat of the Beast and his kingdom." The Lord is narrowing the focus in this judgment. This seems to be an intense and painful darkness, v10. Again, this is a more intense form of one of the plagues that came on Egypt. Jesus says that He is the light of the world, now for these people the light has been removed. They will ultimately spend eternity in outer darkness.

This passage also gives man's reaction to the work of God. Verse 11 tells us they "repented not of their deeds." This is interesting, usually when man refuses to repent, he intensifies his sin. The world will be in bad physical and spiritual shape

VI. Sixth Vial- The Dry Euphrates, v12-16

This river is mentioned often in Scripture. It is first mentioned in Gen. 2:14. Its fertile valleys are often called the "Cradle of Civilization." The river is a natural boundary between the Middle East and Asia. The Euphrates must be dry in order for the massive Oriental armies enter the Middle East. God has performed this type of miracle before, once at the Red Sea and again at the Jordan River. In order to accomplish this movement, 3 demons will go out from the antichrist and deceive the world. They will move them to the place for the next vial- Armageddon.

VII. Seventh Vial- Great Destruction, v17-21

This vial will be the final one. On the cross Jesus said "It is finished," here God says "It is done." The last chance for man has gone, and the last judgment of God has been sent. There will be a massive earthquake. This quake will be strong enough to destroy the mountains and the islands in the sea, v20. Cities, especially Babylon, will be destroyed, and hail stones that weigh about 100 pounds will fall on men. This will be the last and greatest of the plagues, v21.