

# A SERIES THROUGH THE REVELATION

## Revelation 16 —THE FINAL SEVEN JUDGMENTS OF GOD | 9.29.22

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### I. INTRODUCTION (Revelation 16:1-21)

- A. When it comes to the wrath of God, which is seen expressly in **Revelation 16** it's worth stating that the Church isn't the subject, or the subjects of God's wrath (**Rom. 5:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:10; 5:9**). For the follower of Christ, God's wrath has been satisfied in Christ's atoning death.
- B. So, as we look closer at these 7 bowls that are poured out it's clear that God's not pouring out His wrath on the Church, or those that love Jesus, but largely on the beast, his regime, and those that have taken His mark:
1. **Bowl #1 | Revelation 16:2**—*Sores came upon those who received the mark, and worshipped his image*
  2. **Bowl #2 + 3 | Revelation 16:3,4**—*The sea became like blood, along with the waters, because they've shed the blood of God's saints*
  3. **Bowl #4 | Revelation 16:8-9**—*Men, a part of the beast regime were scorched with fire, and they blamed God for their pain*
  4. **Bowl #5 | Revelation 16:10-11**—*The bowl is poured out on the throne of the beast*
  5. **Bowl #6 | Revelation 16:12-16**—*The bowl is poured out on the river Euphrates to set up a final battle between God, the beast and those who've taken the mark*
  6. **Bowl #7 | Revelation 16:17-21**—*The bowl is poured out in the air, splitting Babylon into three parts*
- C. The bowl judgements that are released in **Revelation 16** are beyond human comprehension, but simultaneously what's taking place through Babylon, and the beast will be equally unbelievable. In **Revelation 16** we see the strength of what God is pouring out, but in **Revelation 17-18** we learn why.
- D. Lastly, there's a school of thought that sees the 21 judgements in the Revelation as 3 different vantage points of the same thing (*7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls = 21 judgments*). This school of thought sees the 7 seals, as the same thing as the 7 trumpets, but viewed from a different angle, or perspective (*In the same way that the four gospels give us the same story, from four different people*).
- E. Well, I disagree with this school of thought for two primary reasons. Firstly, these judgments are sequential, meaning they happen in order, from the first to the last. Secondly, the impact they cause increases from judgement to judgment:
1. **Revelation 6:8 (Seal #4)**—1/4 of the earth dies.
    - a. **Revelation 9:18 (Trumpet #6)**—1/3 of the earth dies.
      1. **Revelation 16:1, 17 (Bowl 7)**—John hears God say, "...pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth..." and then "...It is done." These final bowls don't touch 1/4 or 1/3, but everything/everyone.
  2. **Revelation 8:8-9 (Trumpet #2)**—1/3 of the fish in the sea die.
    - a. **Revelation 16:3 (Bowl #2)**—Every living creature in the sea dies.
  3. **Revelation 6:12-17 (Seal #6)**—There's a great earthquake.
    - a. **Revelation 16:18 (Bowl #7)**—There's an earthquake such as the earth has never seen.
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**II. THE SEVEN FINAL BOWLS OF GOD'S WRATH (Revelation 16:1-21)**

- A. **Revelation 16:1-2** *“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth. So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and foul and loathsome sores came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image.”*
1. I Heard A Loud Voice From The Temple Saying, Go And Pour Out The Bowls—I think it's clear that this voice is God's. We learned in **Revelation 15:8** that currently, until these 7 bowls are poured out, the temple is closed, and nobody was able to enter it, leaving only God inside.
    - a. Some have asked why God is using bowls, instead of trumpets. The reason for this is because trumpets are all about warning, whereas the bowls are made for containing something to be poured out. The trumpets were warnings that the bowls were coming, and now they are here.
  2. The First Poured Out His Bowl, And Loathsome Sores Came Upon Men Who Had The Mark Of The Beast, and Worshipped His Image—This first bowl isn't poured out on men indiscriminately, but specifically those who have worshipped the beast.
    - a. These sores would be like what Job experienced (**Job 2:1-13**), or what broke out on both the people and animals in **Exodus 9:9-11**. Beloved, this type of global affliction would upend our medical system in one day (*it's devastation on a level we can't understand*).
- B. **Revelation 16:3-7** *“Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying; You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due. And I heard another voice from the altar saying, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgements.”*
1. The Second Angel Poured Out His Bowl On The Sea And It Became Blood—Back in **Revelation 8:8** when the waters were previously turned to blood, it slowed things down, but here, everything on the sea has come to a halt. It's as if God is saying, *“That mark you forced others to take deprived people of the basic necessities in life, and therefore, I'm going to now deprive you of basic things.”*
  2. The Third Angel Poured Out His Bowl On The Rivers, and Springs And Waters And They Became Blood—It's not just the salt-water that Jesus is going to touch, but all of the water sources. The earth will be deprived of finding any fresh water. There will be no relief, no work around.
  3. You Are Righteous, Because You Have Judged These Things—This is the start of a doxology, but it's a unique one in the whole of the Bible. It's a song of praise to God, for judgment. The earth has trampled on what God deems scared, and therefore God is trampling them.
    - a. The angel declares, *“...You are righteous...BECAUSE You have judged these things...”* This means that it's right, in light of God's righteous judgment, what He's doing is right.
    - b. Also notice this missing phrase in a familiar phrase, *“...the One who is, and who was, and who is to be...”* What's missing is, *“is to come”* but it's not needed, because His final judgment is here, He's come!
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4. You Have Shed The Blood Of Saints And Prophets, And You Have Given Them Blood To Drink—You can hear the vindication of the martyred saints from **Revelation 6:9-11** happening here. God is answering their prayers, as He has been all along the way!
    - a. Jesus is returning blood for blood. This is a right thing to do, in staying true to His promises to humanity. He's staying true to His two-fold nature of a Bridegroom and a Judge. He's a good Father!
  5. I Heard Another From The Altar Saying, Lord God Almighty, True And Righteous Are Your Judgments—We don't know specifically who's voice this is, but whoever is saying this, it's clear, all of heaven agrees with the rightness of God's judgments among the nations (*which means, so should we*).
- C. **Revelation 16:8-9**     *“Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.”*
1. The Fourth Angel Poured Out His Bowl On The Sun, And Men Were Scorched With Great Heat—This judgment is going to change the atmosphere which protects us from the cosmic rays of the sun, the ultraviolet rays and the infra-red rays of the sun will change.
  2. And They Blasphemed The Name of God Who Has Power Over These Plagues And They Did Not Repent—This is the first place where we have widespread blasphemy from humans to God. Most of the blasphemy in this book comes from the beast (**Rev. 13:1, 5-6; 17:3**). It's clear, these people have taken on the character of their leader, they have absorbed his qualities.
    - a. Their deception is so great that they are aware it's God who's doing this, but they still want nothing to do with Him (*They know it's God in all three previous plagues*). Instead of taking responsibility for their sins, for their actions, for the condition of their hearts, they blame God.
    - b. This is the hardness of the human heart when it's bent on disobeying God, and rebellion. Friends, more terrible than the judgment that befalls this group of people, is their reaction to God's mercy!
      1. We also must be careful about this too. It's easy for us to take on the personality and characteristics of those we follow. Be it musical artists, social commentators, politicians, political parties or authors. We for sure become, who or what we behold.
- D. **Revelation 16:10-11**     *“Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores and did not repent of their deeds.”*
1. The Fifth Angel Poured Out His Bowl On The Throne Of The Beast And His Kingdom Became Full Of Darkness—This throne, only being mentioned now for the second time (Rev. 13:2) is the epicenter of God's anger. This throne has worked to usurp God and His glory for thousands of years, and this is where God has focused His judgments.
    - a. There is coming a wholesale eclipse that will turn everything dark. Something Joel prophesied, Jesus and so many others in the Bible. In the Exodus God sent a darkness that could be felt (**Ex. 10:21**).
  2. They Gnawed Their Tongues Because Of The Pain and They Blasphemed The God Of Heaven Because Of Their Pain, But They Did Not Repent Of Their Deeds—This was the warning that God gave them in **Revelation 14:8-11** that if they worshipped the beast, they would share in his punishment, drinking the full cup of God's wrath (**Revelation 15:1,7**).
    - a. The saddest part is that however bad this suffering is, it's only a taste of what's to come in eternity.
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- E. **Revelation 16:12-14** *“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty.”*
1. **The Sixth Angel Poured Out His Bowl On The Great River Euphrates, And It’s Water Was Dried Up So The Way Of The Kings Of The East Might Be Prepared**—This is similar to God opening the Red Sea for Israel to walk across (**Ex. 14:21-22**). Isaiah saw this river drying up as a way for God’s people to escape their enemies (**Isa. 11:15-16; 44:27; 50:2; 51:10; Jer. 51:36; Zech. 10:11**).
    - a. The river Euphrates was the Biblical boundary line that kept pagan nations out from the promised land. The prophets often seen the drying up of this river as the prelude to God’s dispersed people in their own land (**Isa. 11:15-16**).
    - b. It’s best thought that this is making way for the great end-time battle against God Himself which we see in the following verses.
  2. **Three Unclean Spirits Like Frogs Came Out Of The Mouth Of The Counterfeit Trinity (dragon, beast, false prophet) For They Are Spirits of Demons, Performing Signs, Gathering Kings And The Whole World To The Battle Of that Great Day of God Almighty**—Though this is the first time that the second beast is referred to as the false prophet, they are one and the same.
    - a. John is helping us to see that these frogs (*keeping with the Exodus imagery from Ex. 8:6*) are the demonic inspiration that will be fueling this movement to fight against God Himself. What we see is that even though a military movement will be behind this, it’s not a military movement, it’s all an end time army to fight against Christ Himself. This is a fully demonized army.
    - b. The false prophet is the minister of propaganda that’s fueling the beast’s regime.
    - c. As dark as this is, as hard as this is, as difficult as this is, it’s a great day, because it’s the fulfillment of God’s promises being manifested in the earth. This is the great culmination of God’s prophetic activity, happening in real time.
- F. **Revelation 16:15** *“Behold, I am coming as thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*
1. **Behold, I Am Coming As A Thief, Blessed Is He Who Watches, Lest He Walk Naked**—This is being divinely inserted into God’s storyline to strengthen His people with this promise. At the lowest point in human history, God is reminding His Church that theirs a blessing for those that wait for Him and His return (**Jn. 16:15**).
    - a. This is a needed reminder to stay the course, and not throw in the towel. The idea isn’t just to watch, but to keep on watching. The idea is to hold onto your garments, meaning that you might have them now, but it doesn’t ensure you will have them later if you become careless, and carefree.
      1. *“The word watch here is mistranslated and means something different in English than it does in the Greek. It’s important here that we understand the sleeping, watching and being awake reality that God is pushing upon us. It’s not that we are supposed to be watching, as much as we are to be awake. It’s not the suddenness of His return that’s emphasized, but the unexpectedness of His return that is brought to our attention.”* –George Eldon Ladd, *The Revelation of John*, Pg. 215

- b. The day of the Lord isn't coming as a thief to those who are watching (**1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:1-11**). It will come as a thief to those that refuse to watch. For those that are watching the return of Christ and the season of His return will not be sudden or unexpected (**Matt. 24:32-39**).

**G. Revelation 16:16** *“And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”*

- 1. And They Gathered Them Together To The Place Called In Hebrew Armageddon—In the previous verse we were told that they were being gathered, but we didn't know where, but we do now: Armageddon.
  - a. Some assume that the whole of God's end-time drama is called Armageddon. But what we learn is that **Revelation 16:16** is a prophetic snapshot of what happens at the very end, in **Revelation 19:11**. Armageddon is the final battle between the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of darkness.
  - b. The Hebrew equivalent would be *har-Megiddo* or the mountain of Megiddo. The problem is that Megiddo is not a mountain, but a plain located between the sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean, part of the valley of Jezreel (Esdraelon). It was the famous battleground in the history of Israel. At Megiddo, Barak and Deborah overthrew the Canaanite Jabin (**Jud. 5:19**). Ahaziah was slain by Jehu (**2<sup>nd</sup> Chro. 35:22**), also of Gideon and Midianites (**Judges 7**), and Saul and the Philistines (**1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 31**). Also, the place where Josiah died in battle (**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 23:29-30**).

**H. Revelation 16:17-21** *“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, it is done! And there were noises and thundering and lightning's; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nation's fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone weighing about the of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”*

- 1. Then The Seventh Angel Poured Out His Bowl Into The Air, And A Loud Voice Came Out Of The Temple Of Heaven, From The Throne Saying, It Is Done—The sixth bowl isn't as much of a judgment, as it prepares for the final judgment which comes from the seventh bowl.
  - a. This voice, coming from the throne of God, is God Himself, in His temple. God is the author behind all this trouble and the difficulty among the nations, and He's not ashamed of it (He's signing his name).
  - b. And wow, this same John who stood beside Jesus as He cried out, *“...It is finished...”* in **John 19:30** is hearing him again, say the same thing, *“...It is done.”*
- 2. There Was An Earthquake As Had Not Occurred Since Men Were On The Earth—All these actions that follow the finality of God's judgments being poured out are coupled with sounds we have already seen that are associated with God's glory (**Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19**). These are divine manifestations of glory and power from God Himself.
- 3. Now The Great City Was Divided Into Three Parts, And Great Babylon Was Remembered Before God To Give Her The Cup Of His Wrath—Here we see the longsuffering of God, that God isn't willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God's patient, but never tolerant.
  - a. The city being divided into three parts simply means that it's destroyed. This isn't Jerusalem, because that was already collapsed in **Revelation 11:13**. This is Babylon, and we will learn about her destruction in fullness in **Revelation 17-18**.

- b. From Genesis to Revelation, He's been watching this Babylonian system destroy His creation, and the time has come to give her the final blow. Instead of enjoying a cup of fornication and corruption (**Rev. 17:4-6**) Babylon, the beast, and those that join her are drinking the fierce cup of God's wrath.
- 4. And Great Hail Fell From Heaven, Each Hailstone Weighing About A Talent, and Men Blasphemed God— These hailstones weigh about 75-100 pounds apiece. It's the final pummeling of anything that was remaining.
  - a. This is the end of civilization as we know it. The wrath and anger of God, the right, and justified wrath of God has been poured out full strength upon that anti-Christ empire. And although this will be a devastating time for the Church, it will also be the most exciting time because we see that though one thing has ended, a brand-new thing is coming.
  - b. The end of all things is at hand, and the beginning of all things is also at hand. And just like John at the conclusion of the Revelation, after he saw all this, Lord, help us to say, "Even so, COME LORD JESUS!"