

Series: **The End of Time**

Today's Title: **"7 Bowls"**

November 5, 2023 – *Revelation 15:1-18:24*

Objective: To understand God's righteous judgment of sin and evil in at the end of time.

Opening prayer

We ended last week with **Revelation 14** – and in the first few verses John gives us a preview of the 2nd coming of Christ – and worship on Mt. Zion of the 144,000 Jewish servants / evangelists.

We saw the 3 angels and their proclamations.

We saw the harvesting of the earth – the angels and their sickles.

Turn to Revelation 15.

Today, we once again have a worship scene in heaven – as preparations are made for the final series of judgments before the 2nd coming of Jesus.

Heaven worships God for His righteous judgments. *15:1-8*

We'll only spend a few minutes in this chapter since what John sees here is prelude of worship - in heaven. This is the prelude before the 7 bowl judgments are poured out on the earth.

Read vs. 1-4

These last 7 plagues – the 7 bowl judgments – “are the last”.

God's wrath will be "finished" after these judgments.

We won't read them today, but **vs. 5-8** detail the 7 angels who are each given a bowl – from which these final judgments will be poured out.

This sets the stage for the last series of judgments to be poured out on the earth.

The 7 bowl judgments of God on the earth. 16:1-21

John's vision continues...

Read 16:1-11

Bowl #1: (vs. 2) caused loathsome and painful sores on those who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.

Bowl #2: (vs. 3) turned all of the seas into blood and everything in them died.

Bowl #3: (vs. 4) polluted the rivers and the springs of waters and they became like blood.

Bowl #4: (vs. 8) causes the sun's heat to be turned up till it scorches people with fire.

Bowl #5: (vs. 10) - the 5th angel poured out his bowl on "the throne of the beast". The kingdom became dark. They gnawed their tongues because of pain.

The response of the people? (vs. 11)

They cursed God because of their pains and their sores and did not repent of their deeds.

Humanity – enduring such torture, pain, calamity, and death – only harden their hearts toward God.

Now we move to the 6th and 7th bowls.

These are the last 2 judgments of the Tribulation.

Read vs. 12-16

Bowl #6 begins by drying up the Euphrates River. How this will happen is uncertain.

The Euphrates River is 1,740 miles long and is the primary river in the Middle East – along with the Tigris.

(<https://www.britannica.com/place/Euphrates-River>)

The Euphrates – it's headwaters are sourced from Mt. Ararat (where Noah's Ark came to rest) – which is located in eastern Turkey.

Mt. Ararat is just under 17,000' in elevation – and it has a snowpack all year long.

The tremendous increase in temperature (bowl #4) will cause the snowpack and glacier fields on Ararat to melt very quickly, and it will flood the entire Mesopotamian plain – the region between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

Then, Bowl #6 dries up the river – and the flood plain.

Why?

To make it possible for the armies of the east (China, India, Japan, Indonesia, North Korea, etc.) to move troops to Israel – to Megiddo – Armageddon.

These armies will be convinced by the demons (vs. 13) to assemble for battle at Armageddon.

Read vs. 17-21 - Bowl #7

vs. 17 – “a loud voice” - this is the voice of God.

“It is done” – **the final judgment!!!!**

On the cross, Jesus cried out, “It is finished.” (John 19:30)

The cross was a judgment on sin – full of grace.

However, this judgment – the 7th bowl – will be

God’s judgment on sin – but there is no grace here.

vs. 18 – lighting and thunder often accompany the presence of God.

A great earthquake – way beyond anything the world has ever experienced.

This is a world-wide quake.

vs. 19 – “The great city” – Jerusalem? It splits Jerusalem into 3 parts. Other cities around the world are felled.

vs. 20 - Islands and mountains are no more (Islands are mountains in the sea).

vs. 21 - Massive hailstones – about 100 lbs. each – crash to the earth.

The atmosphere of the earth has been changed so much – that hailstones of this size are possible.

The response?

“...and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.” (vs. 21b)

No repentance.

No seeking forgiveness.

No seeking God.

They raise their fists toward heaven – and curse God!

Spiritual and commercial Babylon. *Chapters 17 & 18*

In **chapters 17 & 18** we move away from a chronological sequence of events – away from the judgments of God.

World *religious* system... (chapter 17)

World *economic* system... (chapter 18)

In **chapter 17** John sees “the great prostitute”.

In the Bible, a “prostitute” can be that, but it is often a metaphor for idolatry – the worship of other gods.

See the book of Hosea.

We will see the “great prostitute” and how this idol worshiping / false religion will seduce the nations of the world.

We will see the alignment and partnership between the “great prostitute” and the “beast” (Anti-Christ).

But the Anti-Christ will destroy the “great prostitute” so he alone can be worshiped. He will not compete with any other ideologies or philosophies that oppose him.

In **chapter 18**, we'll see the world-wide economic system of the Anti-Christ – and it's destruction by God.

The rise of the future false religion. *17:1-6*

Read 17:1-6 – comment as you read.

Babylon was not only a real city throughout history, (which will be rebuilt) but it was the site of the first organized form of idol worship.

In **Genesis 11** we read of the tower of Babel being built – so they could reach to the heavens – worship false gods - and make themselves gods.

God judged their idol worship and worship of self – by confusing their language.

So, in the Bible, Babylon is often used (especially in Revelation) as a symbol of the false religions of the world – of pagan worship.

1 in 10 verses in Revelation mentions Babylon.

vs. 5 – “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.”

Babylon – “mother of prostitutes” – meaning the mother of all idol worship and false gods / false religion.

“abominations” – refers to the many grotesque sins which have been committed in the worship of these idols and false gods.

The 2 powerful allies: Religion and World Political Power. 17:3, 7

Read vs. 3, 7

vs. 7 - “that carries her...”

We see here an alignment – a partnership – between the false religion of the world – and the Anti-Christ. The false religions will rely on the power and protection of the Anti-Christ – the political and military structures.

The political leader and his allies. 17:8-13

Read vs. 8-13

vs. 10

10 “...they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.

The “seven kings” – are the 7 great nation empires in history. **Daniel 2** – Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a huge statue – revealing the nation empires of the future.

The great nation empires in history:

Egypt / Assyria / Babylonia / Medo-Persia /
Greece / Rome (that’s 6)

When John is writing (90-95 A.D.) “five...have fallen”.
Egypt / Assyria / Babylonia / Medo-Persia / Greece.

“one is” = Rome (in power when John was writing).

“the other has not yet come” = Anti-Christ

“and when he does come he must remain only a little while.” – the empire / kingdom of Satan and the Anti-Christ will be short-lived. (See 12:12; 13:5)

There have certainly been other world empires, such as China, India, the Incas, and England, but these world powers had little to no contact or impact on God’s Word and His people, Israel.

But what about **vs. 11**?

vs. 11 - “As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.”

The beast / Anti-Christ – will be the 7th – but also the 8th!

How can that be?

Because he will be the 7th – and then he is killed.

But he will be resurrected – and then he is counted as #8.

“it goes to destruction” – eternal punishment / hell.

The Anti-Christ’s war on all religion. 17:14-18

This likely occurs around the mid-point of the Tribulation.

The Anti-Christ will make war against all the followers of Jesus – but he and his 10 allies – the 10 “horns” / kings – will also war against the “prostitute” –

the false religions of the world – and they will destroy her.

Read vs. 14-16

The “beast” (Anti-Christ) and his 10 allies will destroy the “prostitute” – which is the false religious system that will exist during the Tribulation.

He will do this because he will demand to be worshiped.

He will not share worship with any other false gods or idols.

The sin, corruption, and judgment of the world’s economic system. *18:1-24*

Due to time, I want to give you a template – so you can read this chapter and have a template / framework to understand it.

The first 5 verses of **chapter 18** give a brief indictment of Babylon – which is also representative of the world’s economic system – the Anti-Christ’s world empire.

The indictment of Babylon. *18:1-5*

The list in **vs. 2** is representative of the evil and detestable things the Anti-Christ and his economic system have done and encouraged.

There is a sense that the rampant and obsessive materialism that will be pervasive in the global economy of the end times is a form of idol worship.

vs. 4 – an appeal is made to Christians – who are wrapped up in this world economic system – to separate from it – detach from it – lest they are caught up in the coming judgment.

Think of this as a Grand Jury Indictment against Babylon – the spirit of materialism and worldly passions.

Judgment explained. 18:6-8

vs. 6-8

“Pay her back as she herself has paid back others...
give her a like measure of torment and mourning...
For this reason her plagues will come in a single day...”

The judgments will be in accordance with her sins.

The destruction God brings will be swift – “in a single day” (vs. 8). Literal day? Maybe.

The point is this will be a sudden and quick fall / failure of the entire system.

The judgment of Babylon lamented. 18:9-19

These verses highlight 3 groups:

vs. 9-10 - Kings / political leaders

vs. 11-17a - Merchants – the salesmen / businessmen (28 categories of goods are listed)

vs. 17b-19 - Shipmasters – the distributors

vs. 9 - “And the kings of the earth...will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.”

vs. 11 - “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore...”

vs. 17 - “And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors...cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning...”

These are the groups who use the system for their own benefit.

For power – for wealth.

The consumers of the world will be at their mercy.

These are the ones who gain the most from the system.

These 3 groups mourn the loss of their wealth.

As judgment is poured out on the world – destroying the Anti-Christ and his world-wide economic system, there is a group who will be celebrating what they see.

Judgment celebrated. 18:20-24

Those in heaven – saints – apostles – prophets – those who were martyred – all will celebrate God’s judgment.

Not because of the pain and suffering people endure,
but because of the justice God will bring.

They are finally vindicated by God.

Read vs. 20-24

God's just judgment – for Babylon's many sins –
will be celebrated.

Apply it...

Reject the spirit of Babylon.

The love of stuff – materialism – looking for purpose
and fulfillment in this life – by the values of the
world.

Stats about materialism in the U.S. (Pastor Gary Hamrick)

- 300,000 items in the average American home.
- Avg. American home has tripled in size over the past 50 years.
- 10% of Americans rent off-site storage (Off-site storage is the fastest growing segment of the commercial real estate industry over the past 4 decades.)
- 25% of people with 2-car garages don't have room to park cars in their garage.
- 32% only have room to park 1 of their cars in the 2-car garage.
- In the U.S., there are 50,000 storage facilities – more than 5x the number of Starbucks.

- 3.1% of the world’s children live in America – but they own 40% of the toys consumed globally.
- Avg American woman owns 30 outfits – in 1930 it was 9.
- Americans spend more on shoes, jewelry, and watches (\$100 Billion) every year - which is more than we spend on higher education.

(Source: <https://cornerstonechapel.net/teaching/20210106/>)

How much of the spirit of Babylon is in you today?

Do you own stuff...

Or does stuff own you?

Jesus warned us not to live with a temporal focus.

“Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” (Matt. 6:20)

Make sure you’re ready for Jesus!

Put your faith in Christ – as your Savior – for the forgiveness of your sins.

Close in prayer