

Series: The Blessing Book

Text: Revelation 16

Title: Bowls of Wrath

Last week in Revelation 15, we learned that no one could enter the temple until the plagues were finished. The doors of intercession closed. Up to that point, even as the wrath of God was being poured out, mercy was extended too.

The seals were opened, followed by a pause. The trumpets were sounded, followed by a pause.

Each judgment was partial — a 1/4, a 1/3.

God's mercy was continually revealed even in the midst of His wrath.

But now, here in chapter 16 God's mercy has reached its end. Salvation was finished at the Cross when Jesus said, "It is finished," and now the wrath of God is culminated in the bowl judgments when it is declared, "It's done". God

is in control and His judgment is calculated.

God's wrath carries two purposes at once. It is punishment, the dispensing of justice that a moral universe requires. But it is also chastisement, a summons to repentance. Even here, at the end, God is still calling. **Judgment is God's severe evangelism.**

Last week as I ended I wanted to remind you of three things that are just as true as we begin chapter 16 this morning...

What should our response be to chapter 15?

1. To the Church, it calls us to readiness. Be found faithful. Be found watching. Be found doing the Master's business when He comes.

2. To the unbeliever, it calls you to repentance. The door is open now. The invitation stands now. But there is coming a day when no one can enter. Do not presume upon the patience of God. Listen to the word of God that says,

“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.”

3. And to the suffering saint, it calls you to confidence. The God who sits enthroned above the sea of glass has not forgotten you. Your tears are counted. Your suffering is seen. Your vindication is certain. Jesus is coming soon!

For here is the great truth that holds this entire chapter together, the God who judges is the very same God who redeems. The hand that pours out the bowl is the hand that was pierced for you. The holiness that forbids entry to the temple is the same holiness that tore the veil in two so that you might enter. He is not two Gods—one of wrath and one of mercy. He is one God, and in Him justice and love meet at the cross.

In chapter 16 we will find
Seven angels.
Seven bowls.

One final declaration.

If you are wondering, "Are these plagues symbolic?" — perhaps we cannot picture everything these words contain. But hear this carefully: the reality behind a symbol is always more real than the symbol itself. If these images are pictures, the truth they picture is not smaller than the image. It is larger. And therefore even more terrifying.

For the Jewish reader in John's day, they would have immediately made the connection here in Revelation to the pattern we read about in the book of Exodus, as these plagues are not new. Back in Exodus we read of boils (Exodus 9:8–12), water turned to blood (Exodus 7:14–25), darkness (Exodus 10:21–29). God is doing it again, but now on a global scale, what He once did to Egypt. Pharaoh's hardened heart is about to become the world's hardened heart. Sadly, the old saying is true, "The one thing we have learned from history is that we learned nothing from history." Its simply

repeating itself once again.

Pray: Father, help us learn the lesson of history...

Verse 1: Then I heard a mighty voice from the Temple say to the seven angels, “Go your ways and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God’s wrath.”

This judgment comes from God Himself.

The bowls are long, shallow bowls whose contents can be poured out quickly and entirely.

1. Bowl One — The Mark Answered

Verse 2: “2 So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl on the earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. “A foul and

loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast.”

Notice: ONLY those who took the mark are affected. Men took a mark to buy and sell, to belong, to survive. Now God marks them. The mark they chose for security becomes the very mark that identifies them for judgment.

This is not random.
It is not global infection.
It is selective.

During COVID, vaccinations were blamed for side effects. Some people feared consequences others did not experience. The debates were heated. Lines were drawn.

But this is different.

Unlike COVID-19, this judgment is not contagious. It is targeted.

Only those who bear the Beast's mark are

afflicted.

The mark they accepted for protection becomes the mark that exposes them for judgment.

Application: God is never arbitrary. Even in judgment, He is perfectly just.

Spiritual allegiance always has consequences.

2. Bowl Two — A Sea of Death

Verse 3: **“Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died.”**

Not bright blood of a sacrifice but the darkened, dried, lifeless blood of a corpse.

Scientists estimate that over 80% of the world's trade travels by sea.

Now imagine:

Every commercial shipping lane stops.

Every fishing fleet becomes useless.

Cruise ships become floating morgues.

Ports shut down worldwide.

Oil tankers immobilized.

Coastal cities overwhelmed by the stench of billions of dead sea creatures.

The global supply chain — already shown to be fragile during the Y2K and COVID era — collapses completely.

Within days:

Grocery shelves empty.

Fuel shortages worsen.

Medicines become scarce.

Economies implode.

The oceans, once symbols of commerce and life, become symbols of death.

In the trumpet judgments, only 1/3 was struck.
Now it is total.

Mercy has run its course.

3. Bowl Three — Fresh Water Turns to Blood

Verses 4-7: 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel who had authority over all water saying, “You are just, O Holy One, who is and who always was, because you have sent these judgments. 6 Since they shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is their just reward. 7 And I heard a voice from the altar, saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just.”

You recall the third trumpet judgment where 1/3 of the water was affected. The third bowl affects it all.

And here we should observe something about the timeline: with an ecological collapse of this

magnitude, the human race cannot survive long. The return of Christ must be very near.

The rivers and springs become blood.

Imagine waking up and discovering:

Every reservoir supplying California is unusable.

Lake Mead contaminated.

The Mississippi River poisoned.

The Amazon ruined.

The Nile destroyed.

Water treatment plants cannot fix it.

Reverse osmosis fails.

Desalination cannot keep pace.

Humanity realizes it cannot manufacture enough drinking water for billions of people.

And heaven declares in verse 6:

“6 Since they shed the blood of your holy

people and your prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is their just reward.”

God’s judgment fits the crime.

Those who delighted in bloodshed are now confronted with blood everywhere.

The altar answers: **“Your judgments are true and just.”**

The cross stands behind this truth.

Because Jesus once prayed in Gethsemane,
“Let this cup pass.”

It did not pass. He drank it.

John 12:27 **“Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! 28 Father, bring glory to your name.”**

God’s judgment is an act of worship as it glorifies His name.

4. Bowl Four — The Sun Becomes an Instrument of Judgment

Verses 8-9: “8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. 9 Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory.”

Instead of warmth, the sun becomes a weapon.

But the tragedy is not in the heat. The tragedy is in the response: **"they did not repent."** They recognized the source and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues. Their theology was right; they knew it was God who was responsible for the plagues, yet their hearts were unchanged.

Walvoord observed: **"The wishful thinking of some that men would repent if they only knew the power and righteous judgment of God is shattered by frequent mention in this chapter of the hardness of the human heart in the face of the most stringent and evident divine discipline."**

Here is the sermon inside the sermon: **Those who are not won by grace will never be won by God's wrath.** Not by evidence. Not by catastrophe. Not by pain. If the cross does not melt a heart, the bowls will only harden it.

Imagine:

Temperatures rising to unprecedented levels.
Power grids failing because everyone runs air conditioning.

Wildfires consuming entire regions.

Roadways buckling.

Aircraft grounded.

Agriculture collapsing.

Satellite images showing continents covered in

smoke.

People desperately searching for shade.

The text does not attribute this to climate change.

It attributes it to God.

Pain reveals character more than it changes character.

Life reveals what is already in you. “What happens when your cup gets bumped?”

5. Bowl Five — Darkness Over the Beast’s Kingdom

Verses 10-11: “10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. His subjects ground their teeth in anguish, 11 and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not repent of their evil deeds and turn to God.”

Notice where the bowl lands: “**on the throne of the beast**”. The Antichrist's seat of power, his propaganda, his glory are all extinguished. The kingdom that promised light delivers blackness.

And “**ground their teeth in anguish.**” This is a preview of hell itself, which Jesus in Matthew 25:30 called the outer darkness. These men stand on the shore of the lake of fire and feel the first heat of it.

Still: “**they did not repent of their evil deeds.**” In man's fallen condition, judgment does not soften sin; it multiplies it. At the very moment he should forsake his sin, he clings tighter.

Imagine the modern world without electricity.

No:

Internet

GPS

Banking systems

Air traffic control

Cell phones

Hospitals functioning normally

Traffic signals

Refrigeration

Communication networks

One broken traffic light can back traffic up for half a mile.

Now imagine the globe offline.

But this is more than a blackout.

This is supernatural darkness like Egypt experienced, “darkness that can be “felt.”

Without light, technological civilization regresses instantly.

And still: **“They did not repent.”**

The greatest tragedy is not the darkness. It is the refusal to turn from sin to God.

6. Bowl Six — The Euphrates Dries Up

Verses 12-16: “12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and it dried up so that the kings from the east could march their armies toward the west without hindrance. 13 And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. 14 They are demonic spirits who work miracles and go out to all the rulers of the world to gather them for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty. 15 “Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed. 16 And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name Armageddon.”

The Euphrates was Rome's great security barrier, 1,800 miles long, 300 to 1,200 yards

wide, the wall between the Roman Empire and the East. God removes it like a man draining a ditch. When God intends to gather the nations, geography is no obstacle.

Today, portions of that river have experienced reduced water flow due to drought and dam projects. Not fulfillment, but a reminder that what once seemed unimaginable is now conceivable.

Now imagine the barrier completely gone. The world's armies mobilize toward Israel. In John's day, such movement would take years.

Today?

Military aircraft.

High-speed rail.

Mechanized armies.

Drones.

Satellite communications.

AI-assisted logistics.

Instant global coordination.
The greatest military coalition in history could
assemble rapidly.

Then John sees three demonic spirits.
The battle is not merely political.
It is spiritual.
Behind human governments stand unseen
spiritual forces.

Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6: **"We are not
fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies..."**

An unholy trinity: dragon, beast, false prophet,
and from each mouth comes a croaking demon
like a frog. To the Jew the frog was unclean and
repulsive; to the Egyptian it was divine. Alford
said we can only explain the likeness "from the
uncleanness, and the pertinacious noise, of the
frog." Swete drew the contrast that should
cause us to stop and take notice: **"Christ
expelled unclean spirits, but His enemies
send them forth."**

The nations gather for what they think is their day.

But Revelation calls it: **“that great judgment day of God the Almighty.”**

Note whose day it is: **“that great day of God Almighty.”** Not the great day of man. Not the great day of Antichrist. Not the great day of the dragon. The outcome is settled even before the armies arrive! Only God knows the end from the beginning! That's why we can trust Him!

And in the middle of the gathering Jesus interrupts: **“Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed.”**

Even in wrath, grace speaks.

Blessed are those who are watching for Jesus!
Blessed are those who keep their wedding

garments ready!

Garments in Scripture picture righteousness.

We are clothed with Christ Himself (Galatians 3:27), that is imputed righteousness, and it is a gift. But we are also commanded to **"put on"** the new man in practical holiness (Ephesians 4:20–24), that is worked-out righteousness, and it is a daily discipline.

The one thing we must not be is naked or uncovered; that represents shame. We are not to be covered by our own garments or effort. Adam and Eve stitched fig leaves (Genesis 3:7), and God replaced them with skins that cost a life. Isaiah says our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

Verse 16: **“And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name Armageddon.”**

Armageddon is an actual place in Israel known

as the Valley of Megiddo”

“**Megiddo**” appears some 12 times in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament, where it is hidden in the name “Armageddon” (Revelation 16:16).

In the Hebrew language its, “Har Megiddo”, A compound of har, meaning “hill,” and magedōn, meaning “slaughter.” Mount Megiddo will become literally “**the hill of slaughter.**”

Megiddo is in the Jezreel Valley, which is about 14 miles wide and about 24 miles long. Many battles have been fought there. Gideon defeated the Midianites, Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites, and King Saul was killed there in a battle with the Philistines. Its a valley large enough to host these enemy nations for the final, climactic battle of the tribulation period, which will be carried out against Israel.

The Jewish reader would be reminded of the prophecy of the prophet Zechariah who said in

Zechariah 14:1-4 “1 Watch, for the day of the LORD is coming when your possessions will be plundered right in front of you! 2 I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the population will be taken into captivity, and the rest will be left among the ruins of the city.

3 Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south.”

7. Bowl Seven — “It Is Done”

Verses 17–21: “17 Then the seventh angel

poured out his bowl into the air. And a mighty shout came from the throne in the Temple, saying, “It is finished!” 18 Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people were placed on the earth. 19 The great city of Babylon split into three sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So God remembered all of Babylon’s sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. 20 And every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. 21 There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.”

The final bowl is **poured into the air**. Satan is called the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). The final bowl is poured into

his own domain. Satan's throne room is the last address on God's list.

A loud voice from the throne declares:
“It is finished.”

Lightning.

Thunder.

The greatest earthquake in history.

Entire mountain ranges shift.

Islands disappear.

Cities collapse.

Babylon falls.

Then hailstones fall — weighing about a talent — approximately 75–100 pounds.

Visualize this.

The largest hailstones recorded today weigh only a few pounds.

Now imagine hailstones the size of:

Washing machines.

Large suitcases.

Heavy concrete blocks.

No building codes could withstand them.

Vehicles crushed instantly.

Glass skyscrapers shattered.

Runways unusable.

Roofs collapsed.

People have nowhere to hide.

And yet:

“They cursed God.”

The greatest miracle is not the judgment.

It is the hardness of the human heart.

Every bowl proves that humanity's deepest

problem is not environmental, political, economic, or technological.

It is spiritual.

Four Lessons for the Church Today

1. Life Is Fragile

We assume technology makes us secure.

Remember the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster happened because of a failed rubber gasket.

In days:

Shipping could stop.

Water could disappear.

Electricity could fail.

Food supplies could collapse.

Economies could implode.

COVID gave a small glimpse of fragility.

Revelation 16 describes disruption on a divinely ordained scale.

Psalm 20:7: “**7 Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God.**”

2. Sin Hardens the Heart

After nearly every bowl we read: “**They did not repent.**”

Delayed obedience is disobedience

Delayed repentance is dangerous, and in Revelation 16 its deadly

“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Every rejection makes the next easier.

3. Wrath Makes the Gospel Urgent

If these judgments are future and literal, then every gospel conversation we can have with people matters. Remember what Paul said, “one waters, one plants but God gives the increase.” My point is, one conversation about Jesus with a non-Christian is most likely not going to bring them to faith. It usually takes multiple conversations and oftentimes from multiple people for their eyes to be open to the truth. We need to redeem the time for the days are evil

Every invitation matters.

Every missionary matters.

God is patient — not wishing that any should perish.

But patience is not forever.

Today is grace.

Tomorrow could be judgment.

Here in Revelation 16, we hear it's finished or it's done. That is much different than when Jesus cried out from the Cross, "It is finished." When Jesus cried out those words, He was finishing our salvation. He paid the price of our redemption, and nothing more was needed to secure our salvation than to place our hope and trust in Him.

In Revelation 16, the words "It's done" mean the wrath of God is complete. Both are finished works. One is positive in that it made salvation possible, and the other is negative, because God's wrath is complete and there is no undoing it, no second chance, as God's judgment is final too!

4. Live Watching and Waiting

Believers are NEVER told to look for the antichrist but to be looking for Jesus Christ... The Rapture of the church could happen at any

moment.

Matthew 24:42-44, “**42 “So you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming. 43 Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. 44 You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.**

Revelation 16:15, “**Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed.”**

Jesus coming will be one of two things

- 1. Sudden rescue**
- 2. Sudden ruin**

The Core Difference: Relationship

The “thief” imagery describes unexpected timing, not evil intent.

To the believer, He is a Bridegroom.
To the unbeliever, He is a Judge.

If you're prepared, it's good news.
If you're unprepared, it's devastating

Question: Are you ready to meet the Lord?