

The Book Of Revelation Study 79

Revelation 16:1-21 (NASB)

¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple , saying to the seven angels , "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God ."

² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth ; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image .

³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea , and it became blood like that of a dead man ; and every living thing in the sea died .

⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters ; and they became blood .

⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying , "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One , because You judged these things ;

⁶ for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets , and You have given them blood to drink . They deserve it."

⁷ And I heard the altar saying , "Yes , O Lord God , the Almighty , true and righteous are Your judgments ."

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun , and it was given to it to scorch men with fire .

⁹ Men were scorched with fierce heat ; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues , and they did not repent so as to give Him glory .

¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast , and his kingdom became darkened ; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain ,

¹¹ and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores ; and they did not repent of their deeds .

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river , the Euphrates ; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east .

¹³ And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet , three unclean spirits like frogs ;

¹⁴ for they are spirits of demons , performing signs , which go out to the kings of the whole world , to gather them together for the war of the great day of God , the Almighty .

¹⁵ ("Behold , I am coming like a thief . Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes , so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame .")

¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon .

¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air , and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne , saying , "It is done ."

¹⁸ And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder ; and there was a great earthquake , such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth , so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty .

¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts , and the cities of the nations fell . Babylon the great was remembered before God , to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath .

²⁰ And every island fled away , and the mountains were not found .

²¹ And huge hailstones , about one hundred pounds each, *came down from heaven upon men ; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail , because its plague *was extremely severe .

The Bible provides the only true beacon of light and hope in the darkness and despair of the world. In its pages are comforting, encouraging, and affirming words of the peace, goodness, joy, and love of salvation.

Believers are reassured as they read of God's love and the promises, and of their eternal inheritance in His kingdom.

But while the Bible is a book of hope, it is also a book of judgment.
Because God loves righteousness and faith, He must hate sin and unbelief.

He cannot love truth unless He hates lies.

He cannot love goodness unless He hates wickedness.

He cannot reward unless He also punishes.

The Old Testament repeatedly warns of coming judgment, particularly in those passages that describe the final Day of the Lord judgments.

Joel 2:28-32 (NASB)

²⁸ *"It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind ; And your sons and daughters will prophesy , Your old men will dream dreams , Your young men will see visions .*

²⁹ *"Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days .*

³⁰ *"I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth , Blood , fire and columns of smoke .*

³¹ *"The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes .*

³² *"And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered ; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape , As the LORD has said , Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls .*

Zechariah 14:1-2 (NASB)

¹ *Behold , a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.*

² *For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle , and the city will be captured , the houses plundered , the women ravished and half of the city exiled , but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city .*

Malachi 4:1,5 (NASB)

¹ *"For behold , the day is coming , burning like a furnace ; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff ; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze ," says the LORD of hosts , "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch ."*

⁵ *"Behold , I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD .*

The New Testament also reveals God' judgment of sinners.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, preached a confronting, even harsh message of judgment.

He called some of those who came to him seeking baptism, snakes

Luke 3:7 (NASB)

⁷ *So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers , who warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?*

He also threatened them with judgment, saying;

Matthew 3:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ *"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance , but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals ; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire .*

¹² *"His winnowing fork is in His hand , and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor ; and He will gather His wheat into the barn , but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire ."*

John also warns:

John 3:36 (NASB)

³⁶ *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life ; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life , but the wrath of God abides on him."*

The Apostle Paul also said;

Romans 3:5b (NASB)

⁵ *The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous , is He?*

Colossians 3:6 (NASB)

⁶ *For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience ,*

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 (NASB)

⁷ *and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire ,*

⁸ *dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus .*

⁹ *These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction , away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power ,*

The wrath of God against sin and His final, eschatological judgments of sinner, in recurring themes in the Bible, take center stage in Revelation.

The wrath, displayed earlier in Revelation in the seal and trumpet judgments, reaches its devastating climax with the bowl judgments described in this chapter.

And these bowl judgments executed in rapid fire sequence mark the final hour of the day of the Lord.

They are the final outpouring of God's wrath on the unbelieving world before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are the last expression of divine wrath against the sin, unrighteousness, and blasphemy that is rampant on the earth.

The return of Jesus Christ described in **Chapter 19** immediately follows these seven judgments.

Chapters 17 and 18 go back in time to describe the destruction of Antichrist's worldwide political and religious empire of Babylon.

Immediately following the seven bowl judgments, the Lord Jesus Christ will return, destroy the world's armies at the Battle of Armageddon, and establish His universal rule on the earth.

In fact, the bowl judgments foreshadow the Battle of Armageddon.

The drying up of the Euphrates River as a result of the sixth bowl will pave the way for the forces of the east to come to that destruction.

Since they are the final outpouring of God's wrath, the bowl judgments will be more severe than all the earlier judgments.

Their severity is strong proof of how God feels about those who persistently, willfully, reject Him.

This particular epoch in human history will be a fitting time for God's wrath to reach its apex, for mankind's rebellion against God will also then be at its apex.

The rebellion, defiance, and rejection of God by mankind will increase until the final judgments fall. Even though they have heard the word preached throughout their days before this time, by the 144,000, the two witnesses, many other believers, and last but not least the angels in heaven proclaiming the gospel for all the world to hear and see.

These seven plagues, which are the last, had precursors in two other sets of plagues in Scripture;

Egypt; *Exodus chapters 7-12*

The seven trumpet judgments; *Revelation chapters 8-11*

There are similarities and differences between the three sets of plagues.

The first plagues were very localized, affecting only Egypt.

The second set of judgments destroyed a third of the world.

The final judgments here spoken of will affect the entire world.

All three sets of plagues include hail, darkness, water turned to blood, and an invasion from the east, whether by insects, demons, or men.

The seven bowl judgments will gather together all the horrors and terrors from all the previous judgments of God. They will completely inundate the world bringing it to the brink of utter ruin.

As the vision of the bowl judgments began to unfold, John **heard a loud voice from the temple.**

The startling impact of loud voices is heard some twenty times in Revelation.

This **loud voice** is certainly that of God, since there was no one else in the **temple.**

Revelation 15:8 (NASB)

⁸ *And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power ; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished .*

His loud cry of judgment is reminiscent of Isaiah;

Isaiah 66:6 (NASB)

⁶ *"A voice of uproar from the city , a voice from the temple , The voice of the LORD who is rendering recompense to His enemies .*

The word **loud** here is the word *Megale*, and it appears half a dozen times in this chapter, (often translated "great") again emphasizing the magnitude of the judgments recorded here.

His loud voice will be heard again after the seventh bowl is poured out (*v 17*)

The seven angels were introduced in *chapter 15:1, 6-8.*

There they were given the seven bowls containing the final judgments.

Here God commands all seven of them **"Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."**

As all the judgments, the seven bowls will be supernatural acts of God.

The text here does not tolerate the attempts of some commentators to give them a purely natural, scientific explanation.

They will hit far to rapidly for any explanation other than that they come from God Himself. In fact, there is only a brief pause, just long enough for one of the angels to affirm that the bowl judgments are just and righteous (*vv. 5-7*)

Some writers have seen these bowl judgments as recapitulating the seal and trumpet judgments.

There are similarities, but many more differences, especially in the degree of devastation.

The fourth bowl has no parallel in earlier judgments.

No personal suffering accompanies the first four trumpets, but the bowls bring torment from the start.

The bowls are universal, more intense than the previous judgments, and are called “the last “ judgments (*15:1*)

This shows that they do not go back in time to repeat earlier plagues.

THE FIRST BOWL

Revelation 16:2 (NASB)

² *So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth ; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image .*

Responding immediately to God’s command, **the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth.**

Remember, the bowls were actually shallow saucers.

Their contents are not slowly, gradually poured out, but dumped all at once.

The sloshing out of the first bowl results in a **loathsome and malignant sore** that afflicts people.

Loathsome and **malignant** translate two general Greek words for evil (*kakos* and *ponereos*).

Used together, they stress that the sores will be festering, painful, and incurable.

Sore translates (*helkos*) the Greek equivalent of the Latin word from which the English word *ulcer* derives.

It describes inflamed, oozing, ulcerous sores, such as those that affected the Egyptians (*Ex9:9-11*)

The same word is used to describe the sores on Lazarus the beggar in *Luke 16:21*

They will bring unrelieved physical torment to those who have rejected Jesus Christ.

The sores will not affect believers, whose names have been “written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain: (*13:8*)

They will come only upon those who chose to follow Antichrist, received his **mark** to show their allegiance, and **worshipped his image**

An angel described their ultimate fate:

Revelation 14:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ *Then another angel , a third one , followed them, saying with a loud voice , "If anyone worships the beast and his image , and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand ,*

¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God , which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger ; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb .

¹¹ "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever ; they have no rest day and night , those who worship the beast and his image , and whoever receives the mark of his name ."

This passage we have just read describes eternal judgment:
Our present passage describes a temporal judgment.

Antichrist's followers are suffering the consequences of having rejected the preaching of the gospel and the warning of the angel given in *14:7*

Revelation 14:7 (NASB)

⁷ and he said with a loud voice , "Fear God , and give Him glory , because the hour of His judgment has come ; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

These inflamed, incurable sores may be similar to those Zechariah wrote about;

Zechariah 14:12 (NASB)

¹² Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem ; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet , and their eyes will rot in their sockets , and their tongue will rot in their mouth .

Now next week we will not have our Revelation Study as we will be getting ready for VBS.
But when we do come together again for study we will look at the other bowls.