

The Book Of Revelation Study 81

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.

We have been looking at the seven bowl judgments and when we last stopped we had just looked at the first four.

In a word:

1. First bowl = Malignant sores on all those who had taken the mark of the beast and had worshiped him.
2. Second bowl = Sea becomes blood, and every living thing in the sea died.
3. Third bowl = The rest of the water sources, rivers, springs etc. became blood also.
4. Fourth bowl = poured out upon the Sun, and then men were scorched with severe heat as with fire.

This time we want to take a look at the fifth and sixth bowl judgments added on top of the first four. Remember the strength of these judgments is that they are poured out all at once and thus are accumulative.

THE FIFTH BOWL

Revelation 16:10-11 (NASB)

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.*

As He did long ago in Egypt, God will turn up the intense suffering of the sinful world by turning out the lights.

After the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, his kingdom became darkened.

Commentators disagree over where specifically this **bowl** will be dumped.

Some think it will be on the actual **throne** that the **beast** sits on;

Others on his capital city of Babylon

Still others on his entire kingdom.

It is best to see the **throne** as a reference to his kingdom, since the bowl poured out on the **throne** darkens the whole kingdom.

Regardless of the exact location of where the bowl is dumped, the result is that darkness engulfs the whole earth, which is Antichrist's worldwide **kingdom**.

The **beast** will be as helpless before the power of God as anyone else.

Joel described this time of judgment;

Joel 2:2a (NASB)

² *A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness.*

Joel 3:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

¹⁵ *The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.*

Zephaniah described the Day of the Lord as;

Zephaniah 1:15-18 (NASB)

¹⁵ *A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,*

¹⁶ *A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers.*

¹⁷ *I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung.*

¹⁸ *Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.*

Jesus declared in His Olivet discourse that:

Mark 13:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ *"But in those days, after that tribulation, **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT,***

²⁵ ***AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING** from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.*

The cumulative effect of the painful sores, fouled oceans, lack of drinking water, intense heat, all engulfed in thick blackness will bring unbearable misery.

Yet incredibly, the wicked, unbelieving people of the world will still refuse to repent.

John notes here, that they **gnawed their tongues** (lit. "kept on chewing") **because of** the most intense and excruciating pain, yet with those same tongues **they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pain and their sores and they did not repent of their deeds.**

This is the ultimate act of defiance by those hopeless engulfed in Antichrist's satanic system.

This is the last reference to their unwillingness to repent.

The first five plagues were God's final call to repentance.

Sinners ignored that call, and are now confirmed in their unbelief.

The final two bowls, containing the severest of all the judgments, will be poured out on hardened, implacable impenitents.

THE SIXTH BOWL

Revelation 16:12-16 (NASB)

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.*

Unlike the previous five bowls, the sixth, like the fifth seal has no specific assault on humanity but prepares for what is to come.

When his turn came, **the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates.**

The **Euphrates** appeared earlier in Revelation in connection with the sixth trumpet judgment when 200 million demons who were bound near it were released.

As the longest and most significant river in the Middle East, the **Euphrates** deserves to be called the **great river.**

Its source is in the snowfields and ice cap high on the slopes of Mount Ararat (modern Turkey), from which it flows some eighteen hundred miles before emptying in the Persian Gulf.

In ancient times the Garden of Eden was located in the vicinity of the **Euphrates** (Gen 2:10-14)

The **Euphrates** also formed the eastern boundary of the land God gave to Israel (Gen 15:18; Duet. 1:7; 11:24; Josh 1:4)

Along with the nearby Tigris, the **Euphrates** is still the lifeblood of the Fertile Crescent.

By the time the sixth bowl is poured out, the **Euphrates** will be very different than it is today or ever has been. The blazing heat from the Sun associated with the fourth bowl will melt the snow and the ice cap on Mount Ararat.

That will vastly increase the volume of water in the **Euphrates**, causing massive damage and flooding along its course.

The bridges spanning the river will surely be destroyed.

Thus the reason for the sixth bowl becomes apparent.

As the angel dumped his bowl the Euphrates's **water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.**

The eastern armies will need to cross the Euphrates to reach their ultimate destination, Armageddon in the land of Palestine. (the valley of Megiddo)

God's act of drying up the Euphrates is not an act of kindness toward the **kings from the east**, but one of judgment.

They and their armies will be entering a deadly trap.

The evaporation of the Euphrates will lead them to their doom, just as the parting of the Red Sea led to the destruction of the Egyptian army.

Why they will make the daunting journey that will take them to their doom, through the drought, scorching heat, darkness, and their painful sores, is stated in verses 13-14

Revelation 16:13-14 (NASB)

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.*

Whatever the human motives of this invasion force, whether political, rebellion or rabid anti-Semitism, the real reason behind their advance toward Palestine soon becomes evident.

We see here each member of the unholy trinity in action, demons gathering together the nations of the world in rebellion against the God of heaven.

The real motivation is spiritual, led by the head of the world system Satan (the dragon) himself.

The word seduce is used here, showing that the power of the demons, and all of that kingdom, to turn men against God is the real reason for this march. This advance is to destroy the Jews and Christians and anything that has to do with God from the face of the earth.

As a part of that deception, the **demons** will no doubt perform supernatural signs.

Earlier in Revelation the false prophet performed, "great signs", even making fire come down out of heaven to earth in the presence of men (13:13)

That these demons will have such powers of deception is not surprising. Jesus predicted that "false Christ's and false prophets will show signs and wonders in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect

Mark 13:22 (NASB)

²² for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

These demons will have even greater powers of deception. Thus they will have little difficulty in deceiving **the kings of the whole world, to gather them together.**

The mission of the demons is to gather not just the eastern powers, but all of the world's rulers and armies to join the forces from the east **for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.**

In their pride, arrogance, and folly, the demonically deceived nations of the world will converge on Palestine to do battle with God Himself at Armageddon.

Joel prophesied of this time;

Joel 3:2 (NASB)

² I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.

Joel 3:9-13 (NASB)

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up!

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."

¹¹ Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, O LORD, Your mighty ones.

¹² Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.

¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.

Zechariah also wrote of that time;

Zechariah 14:2-3 (NASB)

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.

³ Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

And in a similar vein the psalmist wrote;

Psalms 2:1-4 (NASB)

¹ Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing?

² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

³ "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!"

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

The war will be over quickly;

Revelation 17:14a (NASB)

¹⁴ "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings"

In fact it will not be a war at all it will be a slaughter;

Revelation 19:11-21 (NASB)

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

¹² His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.

¹³ He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God,

¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Now listen, amid all the horrors of judgment, deception, and war comes a parenthetical word of encouragement to believers;

Revelation 16:15 (NASB)

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.")

This gracious word from heaven will come before the pouring out of the seventh bowl and assure believers that they will not be forgotten.

It is a parallel to the beautiful passage in Malachi;

Malachi 3:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.

¹⁷ *"They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."*

God told them not to be afraid because they are His.
He never forgets His own.

Then the Lord pronounced the third of seven beatitudes in Revelation;

("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.")

This is a picture of soldiers alert and on duty.

Only a soldier **who stays awake and keeps his clothes** on is ready for combat.

Those who are clothed by the Lord;

Isaiah 61:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ *I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

Romans 13:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*

Is ready when the judgment comes;

1 John 2:28 (NASB)

²⁸ *Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.*

Those whom Jesus find prepared when He returns will be blessed.

The battle will be over almost as soon as it starts, as the Lord Jesus Christ returns to rescue His people, and defeat His enemies.

The resulting slaughter of the world's armies will be almost unimaginable with blood splattered several feet high and perhaps running in streams throughout a distance of two hundred miles.

The sixth bowl sets the final stage, but before the brief "battle", the seventh and final plague will hit.