

### The Seven Bowls of the Wrath of God

#### Revelation 16

Revelation 16 - *"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."<sup>2</sup> So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."*

*<sup>7</sup> And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."<sup>8</sup> Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.*

*<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."<sup>16</sup> And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon,*

*<sup>17</sup> 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!"<sup>18</sup> And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.<sup>19</sup> Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.<sup>20</sup> Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.<sup>21</sup> And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great."*

#### Background Notes

At the end of Revelation 15 we saw seven angels coming out of the temple of God in heaven. The seven angels had seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. In Revelation 16 the seven bowls of judgment are poured out on this earth.

This is the third set of 7 judgments on this earth during the future Tribulation Period. First will be the 7 Seal Judgments. After seventh Seal Judgment is opened, the 7 Trumpet Judgments will begin. After the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11, the 7 Bowl Judgments will be poured out (Revelation 16).

Because the seventh Trumpet Judgment and the seventh Bowl Judgment both bring us to the end of the Tribulation Period, some expositors believe that the Trumpet Judgments and the Bowl Judgments will run simultaneously, especially since there is a lot of similarity between them (as we'll see). However, other expositors believe that the Bowl Judgments will take place after the Trumpet Judgments because there are some significant differences, and they're definitely more intense. In this second view, the Bowl Judgments will occur in rapid sequence after the seventh Trumpet Judgment, so that all the Bowl Judgments and the seventh Trumpet Judgment come near the end of the Tribulation Period.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The bowls of God's wrath cause the righteous to praise God.

In verse 2 the first bowl of God's wrath is poured out on this earth. The people under judgment are those people who will worship the image of the Beast, and will take the mark of the Roman Beast, the number 666. These people will become incapacitated with loathsome and malignant ulcerous sores. There's no room for pride when your body is in that condition.

In verse 3 the second angel pours out his bowl of judgment into the sea. It will become blood, and every living creature in the sea will die. Under the second Trumpet Judgment 1/3 of the sea will become blood, and 1/3 of life in the sea will die. Now under the second Bowl Judgment, the entire sea, which comprises most of the earth's surface, is turned into blood. Will it be real blood or will it just look like blood? There's no reason not to interpret this Scripture literally, just as in the first plague of the water turned to blood at the time of the Exodus.

In verse 4 the third golden bowl of God's judgment is poured out, and the rivers and springs of water on earth become blood. Under the third Trumpet Judgment 1/3 of the rivers and springs will become bitter and poisoned. Under the third Bowl Judgment, all the rivers and streams will become blood. Can you imagine the death that will result from these judgments?

"Is all this judgment fair?" you may ask. Not only is it fair for God to judge the guilty world in this way, but in verses 5-7 we see that the righteous will praise God for His wrath upon this world! In verses 5-6, one of the holy angels who is given charge over the waters of the earth says, *"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."* In verse 7 we hear the righteous martyrs that are seen under the altar in Revelation 9:6. Here they cry out from the altar, and say, *"Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

So, the holy angels and the righteous martyrs will praise God for His wrath and righteous judgment upon those who rejected the message of the saints and the prophets. Believers in heaven will praise God forever, because His righteousness will be vindicated and upheld by the punishment and judgment of those who have rejected His love and salvation. The bowls of God's wrath cause the righteous to praise God.

## **2. The bowls of God's wrath cause the unrighteous to blaspheme God.**

In verses 8-9 we have the fourth bowl of God's wrath, and it affects the sun. Under the fourth Trumpet Judgment, 1/3 of the sun will be darkened. Under the fourth Bowl Judgment there is such intense heat from the sun that people will be scorched and burned. Will this cause people on this earth to repent of their sins? No! Instead, they blaspheme God!

In verses 10-11 the fifth angel pours out his bowl of judgment. Darkness will come upon "the kingdom of the Beast," the revived Roman Empire. Unbelievers will be inflicted with further pain, but still they will not repent. Instead, they will curse God even further. It has often been asked, why the punishment of hell is eternal. The answer is that it is eternal because the unrepentant will eternally be unrepentant!

In verses 12-16 the sixth bowl of the wrath of God is poured out on this earth. Under this judgment the Euphrates River will be dried up to prepare the way for the huge armies of the Far East that we saw under the sixth Trumpet Judgment. These armies will be gathered together with the rest of the world's leaders and their armies in Israel. These leaders will all think that they are coming to do battle against Israel, as Zechariah prophesied in Zechariah 12:3.

Satan will give power to the Roman Beast and the False Prophet to do miraculous signs in order to deceive this world's leaders to join in the attack against Israel. They will gather in the large plain of Jezreel, before Har Megiddo (the Hill of Megiddo) for the final war of the Tribulation Period, usually called the Battle of Armageddon. Little will they know that God Himself will be gathering them together in Israel, where they will meet their end.

In verses 17-21 we have the seventh and final bowl of judgment poured out on this earth. Notice the loud voice from the throne saying, "It is done!" Under the seventh Bowl Judgment there will be geologic events of catastrophic proportions. The greatest earthquake of all time will take place. As a result of the earthquake, all the great cities of the world will be brought down, including the great city of Babylon, which will be split into three parts. The cataclysm will be so great that entire islands will disappear and mountains will be flattened. Hailstones, weighing 100 pounds each, will rain down from heaven. Wouldn't you think that these disasters would be enough to cause people to repent? No -- they will curse God even more! The bowls of God's wrath cause the unrighteous to blaspheme God.

## **Practical Application**

### **Don't miss out on the blessing of staying awake!**

We're not talking here about staying awake in church or while you're praying! No, we're talking about being ready for the Lord's return. The Lord Himself says, *"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame"* (v15). In context, this verse specifically refers to the people who will be living during the time of the Tribulation period, but it certainly has an application for today.

For the unbeliever, the Return of the Lord will be like a thief coming in the night. Unbelievers will be caught off-guard. For the believer, the Rapture of the church should not be a surprise.

The question is, are we ready? Are we awake? Are we walking in righteousness, or will we be ashamed when the Lord returns because we're "asleep" -- or even involved in sin?

A blessing is pronounced for those who are ready and watching. As the Lord Jesus said in Luke 12:37, *"Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them."* Don't miss out on the blessing of staying awake!