

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Bowl Judgments on Earth

Revelation 16:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we enter into the third of three series of seven judgments. Those being the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets, and now the Seven Bowls of Wrath judgments.

The theme of judgment is woven throughout this book of Revelation. It is certainly for good reason because God wants us to be able to make sense of the things happening in this world. Because of all of the technology we have today, we are able to read, hear, and even see much of the evil that is happening across our world today. Sometimes even in real time. God knew that when Christians would see all of these events going on, it would be hard for us as Christians to understand how a God, Who was in control, could allow them to happen. So He sent this revelation of Jesus Christ to help us make sense out of things.

The Bible tells us that there are only two groups of people in God's eyes. These groups are referred to in many ways. Jesus often referred to them as the sheep and the goats. Revelation refers to them as those who have the **Seal of God** on their forehead and those who have the **Mark of the Beast** on their hands and foreheads.

Those with the **Seal of God** have repented and turned from their evil ways and have been forgiven of their sins. These are all of God's people. They have had their sins wiped away by the blood of the Lamb, who is Jesus. Since Jesus has made them righteous, or free of sin, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit, Who is a part of the trinity of God, is now living within us. That indicates to us that our sins HAVE been wiped away because God cannot live in unrighteousness.

Those with the **Mark of the Beast** are those who have refused to repent of their evil ways and continue to sin against God. It is God's desire that all men everywhere would turn from their evil ways and repent. So he sends these judgments throughout these last days, the time between the first and second coming of Christ, to remind the world of a greater judgment that is coming. He is signaling to us the reality of the final judgment. There is a day when every man who has ever lived will appear in court before God. They may steal, lie, cheat, or even commit murder and not get caught here on earth. But their acts of sin will not escape God's notice. Since God knows every sin they have ever committed, their sentence will be **GUILTY**. Since God is a righteous God, He cannot allow the guilty to remain unpunished and they will receive judgment for their sins. And that judgment will be an **eternal** separation from their Creator where they will be tormented forever.

For those who choose to repent and turn to God, we find great comfort in knowing that

God has provided a way through Christ for our sins to be forgiven. And even though **we** committed the crime of sin, **Christ** took on the penalty for OUR sin by dying on the cross for us. Thus when we face God in judgment, we are found **INNOCENT**.

That is why the SEAL, TRUMPET, and BOWL judgments are being sent to earth by God. It is to sound an alarm on earth to anyone who is not living for God, that they need to repent because there is a much greater final judgment to come. We are reminded that Christ will have the ultimate victory and that there is an **enormous contrast** between the future destiny of those who have the seal of God and the future destiny of those who have the mark of the beast.

So this book gives those of us who have the SEAL OF GOD great comfort and encourages us to PRESS ON as we are assured that there is this wonderful promise of eternal life with God that awaits us if we stand firm.

So now we come to the last of the three seven judgments as we now arrive at the Bowls of Wrath judgments.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 16:1-11 (NASB)

Six Bowls of Wrath

16 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.

Prayer

Our Father we thank You that You have provided a way for us to escape the judgment that we deserve. That You poured out OUR judgment upon Your Son in our place. We thank you for the life we have in Jesus Christ and the hope that we have through Him. Grant us understanding and insight to this passage before us. Help me to present this

message with clarity and accuracy that Your Son may be glorified. Help us to grow in our faith and become more like Your Son.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Let's unravel the bowl judgments.

BODY:

I. THE BOWL JUDGMENTS ON EARTH.

Revelation 16:1-11 (NASB)

When we read this passage it says that Jesus is coming like a thief. Yet we read that before the judgment...

- That unbelieving men will have sores.
- The sea will turn to blood and every living thing in the sea will die.
- The rivers and springs of water will turn to blood.
- Men will be scorched with fire.
- The water in the Euphrates river will dry up. Wait a minute, I thought it had already turned to blood?

Jesus is coming like a **thief**? Don't you think that if all this would happen, it would be pretty obvious that Jesus was coming? If the rivers, seas, and oceans all turned to blood and all of the creatures in the sea died, it **M..I..G..H..T** be a clue that Jesus was hiding behind the clouds and would be appearing in just a few seconds!

So why not wait for these events and then earnestly seek God's forgiveness? It wouldn't be very hard to be earnest, because you would be on the fringe of eternal torment!

Well, what we need to remember here is that Revelation is a vision. Thus when we read of these judgments that are being poured out, we don't want to read them literally. They are meant to be interpreted **symbolically**. It is not saying that all of the water on earth is going to instantly turn to blood.

While many of these plagues will have a historical reference in the Old Testament such as the plagues of Egypt who were holding God's people captive, they also have a symbolic meaning which has also been given to us in other places in the Bible.

We are seeing visions here, so the interpretations are not to be literal, but they are to be symbolic.

The second thing I want you to understand is that the first **five** bowl judgments take place here on earth upon those who have the Mark of the Beast during the entire period of the **last days**. And we know that the **last days** covers the entire period from Christ's ascension until His return.

The third thing I want you to understand is that these judgments do not occur in sequential order. The Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl judgments that are being brought upon the earth are all occurring all at the same time. Likewise the first bowl does not occur before the second and the second before the third, etc. They are also occurring

concurrently. And each of these series of bowls ends with the second coming of Christ. There is a lot of recapitulation (the retelling of an event from a different perspective) between each of these cycles of judgments.

We also need to understand that these plagues have a strong connection to the plagues that God brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians in Exodus. That connection exists because both the Egyptian plagues and the plagues in the last days come because men spurn God and persecute His people. So these plagues are intended for those who **were** and **are** oppressing His people in order to bring them to repentance and quit their evil ways.

That is why we see here that these plagues are poured out upon those who bear the **Mark of the Beast**. This is exactly as Deuteronomy said it would be to the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 7:15 (NASB)

¹⁵The Lord will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.

That is what is happening here. These plagues are directed toward the enemies of God and His people.

So let's break down these symbols.

II. THE MEANING OF THE SYMBOLS.

A. That men with the Mark of the Beast will have sores. (Verse 2)

The beast was pulled up out of the sea and represents kingdoms or regimes on this earth who persecute God's people. Those who have the Mark of the Beast have a devoted allegiance to him. They do his bidding to persecute the people of God. That is why the Mark of the Beast was shown as being placed on the **right hand, symbolizing action**, and the **forehead, symbolizing thought**.

We saw the historical reference in the Egyptian plagues. The sixth plague was boils. The reason for the plague of boils was because Pharaoh was oppressing the Israelites; he was refusing to let God's people go; and He was refusing to allow them to worship God.

This bowl judgment may be another perspective on the locusts in the fifth trumpet blast that had tails that stung like scorpions. Saying that when they sin, the sin will bring torment upon them. Such as drugs and alcohol ruining someone's life.

B. The sea will turn to blood and every living thing in the sea will die. (Verse 3).

This bowl judgment and the third bowl judgment has a historical reference to the first plague of Egypt where water was turned into blood.

This bowl judgment may be another perspective on the locusts in the second trumpet blast where we saw that a third of the sea became blood and a third of the creatures in the sea died.

This has not only referring to catastrophes in and on the sea, but it also relates to economic distress. Economies depend upon trade between countries. When those

economies are disturbed by sin such as cheating and stealing of cargo, those economies will be hurt. When these economies suffer greatly due to loss of food or other necessities, it brings distress and people may actually die.

The fact that this judgment affects the WHOLE indicates that there will come a time when it affects the whole earth. We may have periods of time where we go through a global crisis.

C. The rivers and springs of water will turn to blood. (Verses 4-7).

This seems to be pointing to the earth's natural resources including the drinking water.

We saw this back in the third trumpet blast where the waters were said the waters became Wormwood and many people died.

We see here that those who killed the saints and prophets and spilt their blood will now have to drink the blood of judgment for their actions. **"How long, Oh Lord, until you avenge out blood"**.

D. Men will be scorched with fire. (Verse 8-9).

God will use the sun to bring unbearable heat as judgment against a nation. It will cause drought and lack of water. Plants will not grow and cause famine and hunger.

Instead of people realizing their mortality and causing them to repent, they harden their heart, and curse God.

E. Darkness is poured out against the Beast and his kingdom.(Verses 10-11).

This darkness mirrors the ninth plague of darkness for three days in Egypt.

This darkness is not indicating that there will be many days of complete darkness. Instead the darkness referred to here is over the mind and the soul. We see this in the insanity that is associated with it. It is an insanity that is brought on by the darkening of the mind and soul as they are being corrupted by sin by worshipping and following the beast. It is as if it brings upon them a madness. Thus in their madness, they curse God for it.

CONCLUSION:

It is God's desire that all men everywhere would turn from their evil ways and repent. So he sends these judgments throughout these last days to remind the world of a greater judgment that is to come. He is signaling to us the reality of the final judgment.

Some think that being a Christian must be very boring because you cannot do whatever you desire. The opposite is really true. When we repent and follow Jesus our perspective on life changes. We no longer desire to do the worldly things of earth because we know the consequences of that life style. No matter how many good things we do here on earth, those good deeds cannot wipe out the stain of sin that is in our life. But through the grace of Jesus, we have had our sins wiped away. What pleases me now is watching God work in my life and in the life of others. So my desire is to please Him.

The difference in WHO you follow is a future of eternal rest versus a future of eternal restlessness. How wonderful it is to know that there is a reward at the end of a faithful life. You can see the reward and work toward that prize while sitting on this side of eternity. We need to have that prize set before us because it motivates us to remain steadfast to Christ.

Do you **REALLY** believe that there **is** a reward reserved for you when your life is over? **If you DO**, are you just **hearing** these words or are you **living** them?

My favorite verse in the Bible.

John 10:27-28a

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give them eternal life.

This is the Day!