

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 27TH, 2019 // BOOK OF REVELATION

## A SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE (15:1-4)

John sees 7 angels with 7 bowls which he describes as, "great and amazing".

- With these bowls, "the wrath of God is finished"- meaning, it is "completed".
- The sea of glass from chapter 4 is described again, but here it's shown mixed with fire symbolizing God's anger stirring and His countenance changing.

The time for 2nd chances is over for those on the earth and now the wrath of God's final judgment is about to be poured out.

- At this point, believers in Jesus have been "harvested" (taken up or raptured) from the earth and stand near the sea as a victorious people with "harps in their hands".
- These are the believers that survived the Antichrist's reign during the tribulation (vs. 2).

Most likely, all Christians are in this scene, but special emphasis is given to tribulation saints.

- This final series of events is directed towards those who have rejected God and worshiped the Antichrist and his false prophet.
- We see that in the final stages of human history, all of humanity boils down to 2 distinct groups- those who worship Jesus and those who worship Satan.

Vs. 3 & 4 records the "song of Moses" and the "song of the Lamb" that this group will sing before the final judgment.

- The song of Moses (vs. 3) is from Exodus 15, celebrating the release of Israel from bondage (look at the parallels!)
- The song of the Lamb (vs. 4) is a direct response and opposition to the worship given to the beast (Revelation 13:4).

## ALONE AMONGST SMOKE (15:5-8)

John now looks and sees "the sanctuary of the tent of witness" (the tabernacle) opened in heaven.

- This was the portable tent that the Israelites used in the wilderness to worship God.
- The use of the phrase signifies that this part of heaven (or the actions that God is about to take) is temporary (21:22 says there will be no temple in heaven).

Out of the "sanctuary" came seven angels with seven plagues.

- They were clothed in pure, bright linen and adorned in gold- this shows their purity and their God-given role to inflict judgment on impurity.
- One of the 4 living creatures gives the angels the "bowls" filled with God's wrath.
- More accurately translated "goblets", possibly filled from the sea of glass.

When these angels received their commission standing outside the temple, something extraordinary happens from within the temple.

- The temple was filled with "smoke from the glory of God and from His power" and no-one could enter it until the plagues were finished.
- This is an allusion to Ex. 40:34-35 when God's glory filled the tabernacle so that Moses couldn't enter.

So God is alone in His temple and no-one is permitted to enter.

- This shows God's power, His sovereignty, and His transcendence.
- But we must also consider what's about to happen- God is about to destroy those whom He's created and who have turned their back on Him, worshiped other false gods, and have chosen to not repent after multiple chances.

## HOW IT ENDS...(16:1-9)

God alone is in His smoke-filled temple, therefore it is God Himself that calls out in a loud voice and orders the sequence to begin.

- Some have seen these 7 bowl judgments as repeating the seal and trumpet judgments.
- There are similarities, but many more differences, especially in the degree of devastation.
- These are more universal and intense judgments, called "the last" judgments (15:1)

## THE 1ST BOWL: ON THE LAND (VS. 2)

Proclaims an "eternal gospel"-this is a warning and proclamation that the time of judgment is near.

- This bowl unleashed a plague upon the earth very similar to the one found in Exodus 9:8-12 that God used to judge Egypt.
- Harmful and painful sores came upon all the people who "bore the mark" and worshiped the image of the beast.
- Some speculate this may be a result of the untested technology of the mark.

## THE 2ND BOWL: ON THE SEA (VS. 3)

- The 2nd trumpet judgment had fallen on the sea, but it was only partial.
- Here we see that "every living thing in the sea died", signaling the death of our planet.
- Since the oceans cover 70% of the earth's surface, the effects of this judgment will be worldwide- without life in the oceans, life on earth can't exist for long.

## THE 3RD BOWL: RIVERS AND SPRINGS OF WATER (VS. 4)

- The bowl was poured out on freshwater sources, which would be fatal to mankind.
- The angel in vs. 5 & 6 gives the reason for such a horrifying judgment on humanity- those who have spilled so much innocent blood are given blood to drink.
- God's judgments are always just (vs. 5)!

## THE 4TH BOWL: ON THE SUN (VS. 8)

- In the 4th bowl judgment, the sun was given power from God to become a curse.
- Searing heat beyond anything anyone has ever experienced will scorch humanity so severely that it will seem like the atmosphere is on fire.
- Those in judgment "cursed God's name", "didn't repent", and "didn't give Him glory"

## PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS(16:10-16)

So far the bowls have affected nature, which affected human life.

- The problem is, at this point, the Antichrist is still in control of his kingdom on earth.
- Bowls 5 & 6 will directly attack the kingdom of "the beast" (Antichrist), and the 7th bowl completes the final devastation of nature and of the Beast.

## THE 5TH BOWL: PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS (VS. 10)

- Just like He did in Egypt, God will turn up the suffering by turning out the lights.
- Some see this as a literal darkness, others see it as a metaphor for Antichrist's kingdom collapsing in chaos and fear.
- With sores, no water, scorching heat from the sun, and now no sun at all- we can see why individuals would gnaw their tongues in agony.

## THE 6TH BOWL: A RIVER DRIED UP (VS. 12)

- The 6th angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates- the longest and most significant river in the Middle East.
- The river dries up to "prepare the way for the kings from the east".
- Invading eastern armies will now be able to cross to reach their ultimate destination of Armageddon in the land of Palestine.

The Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet will have "unclean spirits" that John sees as frogs come from their mouths.

- This will be persuasive words and demonic miracles that will deceive the world's armies to go into a final, ultimate battle.
- Who will fight who? Some believe that someone will try to rise up against the Antichrist and cross the Euphrates into the beast's territory.

Others believe that the Antichrist is the one crossing the Euphrates on his way to wage war against God's army.

- Either way, the Euphrates drying up will miraculously allow this final battle to occur.
- The armies of the world will assemble to the place called "Har-Magedon".
- Most likely a reference to the country surrounding the Plain of Megiddo

Amidst all the horrors of judgment, demonic deception, and a final war comes a word of encouragement to believers (vs. 15).

- Jesus tells us, "Look, I'm coming like a thief!" - a thief comes unexpectedly.
- We're encouraged to "stay awake"-don't be morally or spiritually lazy or careless!

## DRAINING THE CUP (16:17-21)

The one element that has escaped the bowls thus far is the atmosphere.

- The most necessary ingredient to life is now struck, signaling the final step in humanity's destruction.
- "It is done!" is the voice of God proclaiming that the end has finally come.
- Vs. 18 describes the biggest and final earthquake in Revelation that not only splits the "great city" into 3 parts, but will destroy all cities.

Specifically singled out amongst the cities is Babylon the great, which it says, "God remembered to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath".

- Some believe this a statement of God's grief.
- We'll learn more about Babylon in chapters 17-18, but as the capital city of Antichrist's empire, Babylon specifically will be made to drink the cup of God's wrath.

Every mountain and island is then "moved from its place"- maybe as a result of the earthquake or some other supernatural phenomena.

- When the last bowl is drained, the sky then begins to literally fall as 100 pound hailstones falling on earth, destroying everything.
- Still unrepentant, tortured humanity will blaspheme God and remained hardened to His truth (vs. 21).

## THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH