

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 17TH, 2024 // REVELATION

A SEA OF GLASS MIXED WITH FIRE (REVELATION 15:1-4) GOD IS PERFECT IN HIS MERCY AND JUSTICE

Revelation 14 ends with a disturbing image of the outcome of this final Battle of Armageddon at the end of all things. Here, John receives **"another great and awe-inspiring sign,"** describing God's judgment in more detail.

- Luke 15 pictures God's mercy without mention of justice, but Rev. 15 gives a **picture of God's justice without mention of mercy.**

JOHN SEES 7 ANGELS WITH 7 BOWLS

The vision John describes is the completion of God's wrath. The sea of glass seen in Ch. 4 is described again, but here it is **mingled with fire, showing God's anger and wrath are stirring.**

- More than likely, Christians will be on Earth during the 7 seals and 7 Trumpets, but by the time the 7 bowls of Gods' wrath are poured out, **only godless people remain.**

"THOSE WHO HAD...VICTORY OVER THE BEAST"

Most likely, all Christians are in this scene, but special emphasis is given to those who spiritually survived the Antichrist's reign. Some scholars believe it is these Tribulation saints who are holding harps.

- In the final stages of human history, **all humanity falls into one of two groups: those who worship Jesus and those who worship Satan.**

THE BLENDING OF TWO SONGS

In vs. 3-4, we see the blending of the **"Song of Moses"** and the **"Song of the Lamb"** which this group will sing before the final judgment.

- The first part, the **Song of Moses**, is from Exodus 15 and **celebrates the release of Israel from bondage.** The second part, the **Song of the Lamb**, is a **direct response and opposition to the worship given to the beast** (13:4).

FILLED WITH SMOKE (REVELATION 15:5-8)

"AFTER THIS I LOOKED..."

John looks and sees "the tabernacle of testimony" opened in heaven. Tabernacles were elaborate but portable tents the Israelites used in the wilderness as a place to worship God.

- The use of this phrase shows that **this part of heaven and what is about to take place are temporary.** Revelation 21:22 says **there will no longer be a need for a temple or tabernacle in heaven.**

THE ANGELIC TEAM IS PREPARED

Out of the "sanctuary" came seven angels with seven plagues. They were **"dressed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes"** indicating their **purity and God-given role to inflict judgement** on the impure and godless.

- One of the four living creatures (Ch. 4) gives the angels the bowls filled (possibly from the sea of glass) with God's wrath.

GOD WANTED TO BE ALONE?

As the angels were preparing to pour out God's wrath, John records that **"the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power"** (see also Exodus 40:34-35) and **no one could enter until the plagues were completed.**

- This shows that **God will not relent** on what is about to take place and that **He does not delight in having to destroy His creation!**

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

"THEN I HEARD A LOUD VOICE..."

God alone was in the temple. Therefore, it is God who called out and ordered the sequence to begin.

- Though there are similarities between the bowl judgments and the seal and trumpet judgments, there are many more differences. These are more universal and intense and are called **"the seven last plagues"** (15:1).

THE 1ST BOWL: ON THE LAND (V. 2)

This bowl was poured out on the Earth and unleashed a plague very similar to the one in Exodus 9:8-12 that God used to judge Egypt.

- **"Severely painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast,"** leading some to speculate it is the result of the body rejecting the mark of the beast. Most likely, this is a foretaste of the eternal torment that awaits.

THE 2ND BOWL: ON THE SEA (V. 3)

This bowl is poured out into the sea and is similar to the 2nd trumpet. However, the bowl judgment is not a partial judgment. We see that **"all life in the sea died."**

- The seas turning to "blood like that of a dead person" could be literal, a metaphor (Ch. 8), or a description of the carnage caused. Either way, it indicates **the planet is coming to an end.**

THE 3RD BOWL: RIVERS AND SPRINGS (V. 4)

This bowl is poured out into freshwater sources similarly to the previous bowl poured out on saltwater. However, this would be fatal to mankind.

- The "angel of the waters" (vs. 5-6) reminds us that **the judgments of God are just, and the godless of the Earth are getting what they deserve.**

THE 4TH BOWL: ON THE SUN (V. 8)

This bowl is poured out on the sun. Instead of the sun sustaining life, it becomes threatening to life as searing heat beyond anything ever experienced will make it feel as if the atmosphere is on fire.

- Those in judgment **"blasphemed the name of God"** and they **"did not repent and give him glory."**

PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS (REVELATION 16:10-16)

DEVASTATION OF NATURE AND THE BEAST

Until this point, the bowls have affected nature, which affected life on Earth. The problem is that **the Antichrist is in control of his kingdom on Earth.**

- **The 5th and 6th bowls will directly attack the kingdom of the Antichrist**, and the 7th bowl will complete what these next two bowls set in motion.

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

Similar to the plagues during the Exodus, God will turn up the suffering by turning out the lights. This could be literal darkness or a metaphor for the Antichrist's kingdom collapsing in chaos and fear.

- With sores, no water, and scorching heat from the sun giving way to now no sun at all, we can see why they would **"[gnaw] their tongues"** in anguish.

THE 6TH BOWL: A DRIED-UP RIVER (V. 12)

This bowl is poured out "on the great river Euphrates," drying it up and opening access "for the kings from the east."

- The great river drying up will allow invading eastern armies the ability to cross over into their desired destination of Armageddon in the land of Palestine.

"THEN I SAW..."

John sees **"three unclean spirits like frogs"** coming out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet.

- This shows that this unholy trinity will use persuasive words and demonic miracles to deceive the world's armies and convince them to go into a final, ultimate battle for him.

WHO IS FIGHTING WHOM?

Some believe someone will try to rise up against the Antichrist and cross the Euphrates into the beast's territory. Others believe it is the Antichrist who crosses the Euphrates on his way to wage war against the army of God.

- Either way, the 6th bowl is what will allow this final battle to occur.

JESUS INTERJECTS

Amidst this vision of horrific judgments, demonic deception, and this final battle comes a word of encouragement to Believers.

- Jesus tells us **"Look, I am coming like a thief!"** Reminding us we do not know when He will come, so we should **"stay awake"** (NIV). Since His return will come unexpectedly, **we cannot be morally and spiritually lazy or careless.**

IT IS DONE! (REVELATION 16:17-21)

ONE LAST ELEMENT TO TARGET

Looking back at all the bowls of wrath, not one of them was poured out on one essential element for humanity to live: the atmosphere ("air"). This final bowl is signaling the final step in humanity's destruction.

- The voice of God from the temple in heaven says, **"It is done!"** With the pouring out of the last bowl, the end has come.

"HE GAVE HER THE CUP..."

V. 18 describes the biggest and final earthquake in Revelation which splits the "great city" into three parts and destroys all the cities of Earth.

- Babylon the Great is singled out among the cities (v. 19b). This scene and statement of God's remembrance show **that God will punish evil but does not delight in it.**

HEARTS OF STONE ARE DESTROYED BY STONE

God will move every mountain and island from its place and **"enormous hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, [will fall] from the sky on people."**

- God destroys everything and the sky is literally falling, and **the response of humanity is to blaspheme God and remain hardened to His truth.**

"I AM COMING LIKE A THIEF!"

- God will give us ample time to repent of our sins (2 Peter 3:8-9).
- Those who harden their hearts to God's truth are subject to His wrath as seen in Revelation.
- The cup of God's wrath is also seen in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus drank the cup bringing the punishment due to evil humanity on Himself.