

Revelation Chapter 16

16:1 The Commandment to pour out judgement

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, God your ways, and pour out the vials the wrath of God upon the earth.”

A. As found in chapter 15:1, these seven vials of judgement are also called the seven last plagues.

So, in pouring out these bowls of God’s judgment, God will complete or bring to the fulness his wrathful judgements upon this world.

B. The voice from the temple is not identified, one would assume it to be the voice of God the Father or either God the Son, but it could be that of a Herald whose job it is to sound out the commandment of God.

16:2-21 The Crushing judgement of God

“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings

of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

A. The first vial judgement, verse 2. God is sending sores upon men.

(1) The entire earth is affected, “he poured his vial upon the earth;”

A. Under the seal judgements one-fourth of the earth are particularly affected, see Revelation 6:8.

B. Under the trumpet judgements one-third of the earth and sea and rivers and heavens are particularly affected, see Revelation 8:7-11.

C. These vial judgements seem to be designed to affect all the rest of the earth. 2. The followers of Antichrist are the recipients of terrible ulcerated sores that cover their bodies, it’s a noisome (disgusting and injurious to health), and grievous (painful and burdensome) sore that comes upon them. Compare Exodus 9:8-12. 3. The horror of this is that it is just a prelude to the suffering judgement of eternal hell to which they go at the death of the body, chapter 14:9-11.

B. The second vial judgement, verse 3. God is turning the seas of earth to blood.

(1) Those of the entire earth seem to be affected, “the sea, and every living soul in it”.

A. Under the seal judgements the sea are not particularly involved, Revelation 6:1-8-1.

B. Under the trumpets judgement one-third of the sea, rivers, and waters are to be affected, Revelation 8:8-11, and a third part of life in the sea is destroyed by them becoming blood.

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(2) This vial judgement is designed to affect the rest of the seas, and to kill the rest of creature life in the sea and human life upon the sea, in all boats, and submarines. And their drowning in diseased and corrupted blood is only a prelude to their suffering in an eternal hell.

C. The third vial judgement, verse 4. God is turning the fresh water supplies into blood.

(1) Under the seal judgements the water was not particularly affected, chapter 6:1-8:1.

(2) Under the trumpet judgements one-third of the fresh waters were made bitter, chapter 8:10-11, with no mention of blood.

(3) This vial judgement is designed to affect the rest of earth's rivers and fountains of water. They are turned to blood just as the seas are.

(4) After this vial judgement is poured out, in verses 5-6 we find that John heard the angel of the waters say, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou has given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. " You see, God is eternal and he is always just in whatever he does. He is giving the world blood to drink to their deaths. It is a recompense for their shedding the blood of God's people, compare Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17, 11:18, 12:10-11,17, 13:7,15.

(5) There's still another voice John hears, verse 7. This voice came from the altar. This voice simply sounds agreement with the angel of the waters.

D. The fourth vial judgement, verse 8 and 9. God is turning up the fire of the sun.

(1) Under the seal judgements the sun is darkened for a time, Revelation 6:12.

(2) Under the trumpet judgements one-third of the sun is darkened, this seems to also be for only a time, chapter 8:12.

(3) But under this vial judgement the whole sun is turned up in fire and heat for a period of time and the result is obviously a great heat wave that torments humanity. It does not say how many will die but doubtless multitudes will or either they will not be allowed to die. But whatever, their suffering will be great. Imagine some of the heat waves we've already experienced and the results of them.

(4) This ought to give people a taste of hell. But, they still remain unrepentant, compare chapter 9:20-21 and 14:9-11. Humanity is so full of sin and hatred toward God that they curse him on their way to hell. Nowhere is the depravity of mankind more apparent.

E. The fifth vial judgement, verse 10 and 11. God sends darkness upon the Antichrist kingdom.

(1) Under the seal judgements there is darkness because the sun is affected, chapter 6:12.

(2) Under the trumpet judgements there is darkness because a third part of the sun is affected, chapter 8:12.

(3) But under this vial judgement -here is darkness upon the kingdom of and particularly upon the seat of the Antichrist. This does not seem to be world wide, only upon the throne and surrounding area of Antichrist empire. And it does not say that this is a result of the sun being darkened. But whatever the reason and exact location, this is a horrible darkness that produces pain enough to cause people to gnaw their tongues. This darkness is also accompanied by painful sores. These may be a reoccurrence of the sores mentioned in verse 2 or a new out break. And evidently people suffering with them will go into convulsions. Compare Exodus 10:21-23 for God's judgement upon historical Egypt. The unrepentant heart of humanity is again referenced.

F. The sixth vial judgement, verses 12-16. God dries up the Euphrates river.

(1) The Euphrates River is the border line of the promised land given Israel. It's also the border of the old Roman Empire and the old Roman Empire will be revived under the Antichrist with ten confederated nations and kings in allegiance to him.

(2) The Euphrates River will be dried up. You will remember that the Red Sea was rolled back for the Israelites, and the Jordan likewise, but here the Euphrates is dried up, not so Israel can cross, but for some eastern kings and their armies who will evidently be coming to ally themselves with the Antichrist in his attempt to withstand the second coming of Christ to establish his kingdom. Compare Psalms 2:1-12, Zechariah 14:1-21, Revelation 14:17-20, 19:11-21. They will converge upon Jerusalem to fight against Israel and against God. But Christ will return and stand upon the Mount of Olives in victory!

(3) The vision of unclean spirits, verses 13 and 14. John sees three of these demon spirits, and they are like frogs. (Contrast this with the Holy Spirit that appears as a beautiful dove, Matthew 3:16-17). These unclean spirits are like slick, slimy, croaking frogs, and they come out of the mouth of the dragon devil, the beast Antichrist, and the beast false prophet. Evidently one comes out of each ones mouth. Evidently this is meant to show that the message going out from these three has such power because it is demonic. The unclean frog-like spirits are clearly identifies as the spirits of devils. They are said to go forth working miracles, see chapter 13:1-18, where the Antichrist and false prophet perform them. You see, all miracles are not from God! The devil quite regularly performs them, 11 Corinthians 11:13-15. These demon spirits have great persuasive powers.

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They go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, and do so to gather them to battle at that great day of God Almighty. This is of course great Armageddon, Revelation 14:17-20, 19:11-21, Zechariah 14:1-21, Joel 3:9-21, and Psalms 2:1-12. And notice this, there are two reasons why these kings and their armies converge upon Jerusalem against Israel and God.

A. A Sovereign God brings them! It is God's vial judgement that is poured out to make this possible, verse 12. And notice verse 16, "And he (God) gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Joel 3:9-21.

B. A Seducing devil allures them! Demon spirits gather them together, verse 14.

Did you know that God even uses the devil for his purposes when he needs to?

4. There is both a warning and a blessings given to those in the tribulation in verse 15.

A. The warning. "Behold I come as a thief" This indicates that he will come unexpectedly. Even though they know he's coming back right away, yet the instant is not know to them. And as a thief takes something away, Christ will take the unsaved away in judgement, chapter 19:11-21, Matthew 24:36-42. What he leaves will enter the Millennium new world.

B. The blessing. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." The tribulational saints are clearly warned to continue to refuse the Antichrist and his mark regardless of how difficult it gets, and keep themselves in the service of God. Should the tribulational saints fail to endure in their faith and allegiance to God and receive that mark they will be lost, no longer clothed with God's righteousness, Matthew 24: 13. This is clearly a different set up than we have during this church age where a believer cannot lose salvation once they've trusted Christ, John 10:28-29. Of course the bottom line in any dispensation is God's grace, but the time of salvation, the time they actually receive salvation seems to be different in both the old testament and in the tribulation to come. These of the tribulation seem to only actually receive salvation after they have believed and endured in their faith to the end of their lives. Or either the verse speaks of a believer who has turned away from Christ, still saved, but a source of ridicule to the wicked world.

G. The seventh vial judgement, verses 17-21. The completion of the vial judgements.

(1) This vial judgement is poured out into the atmosphere, and this forms the great hail stones which will fall. These hail stones will weigh as much as a talent. However, it is difficult to determine what this weight is. At different periods of history the weight of a talent has varied from eight pounds upward. But, even at weights less than this, these will be like bombs falling from the sky. The destruction to homes, all kinds of buildings, automobiles, animals, trees, plant life, and human beings will be indescribable. Great lightnings and thundering will accompany this hail storm, and so will great earthquakes.

(2) Accompanying this vial judgement is a great voice out of the temple saying, "It is done." When Jesus was about to die on the cross, He cried out, "It is finished", John 19:30. That voice was one of triumph in reference to the completion of the blood atonement plan. But this loud voice of triumph is in reference to the completion of the great vial judgements of the tribulation. This is in all probability the voice of God himself, At the very least it would be that of a Herald who relays the word of God.

(3) In verse 18 we find that there were other voices. These are intelligent beings in heaven who are either expressing agreement with God's judgements or giving the commands behind the judgements. This affirms that the great judgements of the coming tribulation are not nor can they be attributed to natural phenomenon. During this seventh vial judgement the world experiences the greatest earthquake ever, and while the cities of the nations are falling, the great city is divided into three parts. But what is this great city?

A. Jerusalem is called the great city in chapter 11:8,2. So, it could be Jerusalem.

B. However, Babylon in this verse 19 is called great Babylon. So, it would be one of these two cities for sure. However, the wording of this verse "the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came into remembrance before God." seems to indicate that Babylon is the great city that will be divided into three parts. Hence, it is either a rebuilt Babylon or modern day Rome. As stated earlier, Rome meets the demands of the text.

(4) The result of this last vial judgement is indescribable, every island fled away, and the mountains will be missing, compare Revelation 6:14. The completion of God's wrath is called the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath and means nearly utter destruction of earth. But, as seen in verses 9 and 11, man refuses to repent and will in a short time go into hell.

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