

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

THE BOWLS OF GOD'S WRATH AND RESPONSE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

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I. INTRODUCTION (Rev. 15-16)

- A. These two chapters continue the story that was paused in **Rev. 11:15** when the angel sounded the 7th trumpet. **Chap. 12-14** are the third explanatory section to present: **1. Chap. 12** presents the faithful remnant of Israel throughout history being persecuted by Satan. **2. Chap. 13** explains the origin and performance of the antichrist and the false prophet. **3. Chap. 14** shows the lamb on Mount Zion with the 144,000 and the six angels announcing the events that will occur immediately.
- B. The sounding of the 7th or last trumpet begins the procession of the 2nd coming of Jesus with the rapture of the saints (**Rev. 11:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16-17**). The 7th trumpet is the third woe and describes important events as well as the outpouring of the seven bowls. The wrath of God on the wicked is not completed until the cups are poured out. (**Rev. 15:8**).

II. WHERE DO THE BOWLS OF WRATH COME FROM?

Rev. 15:5 *'After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law—and it was opened.'*

Rev. 16:1 *"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."*

- A. **FROM THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE:** The temple was opened in the 7th trumpet in **Rev. 11:15-19**. Which is before this chapter (**Rev. 15:1-8**), but now we see that the seven angels come out of there with the seven bowls of wrath.
- B. **Rev. 15: 6** *"Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests."*
- C. **HOLY ANGELS ARE ASSIGNED TO POUR OUT THE BOWLS:** Each of these judgments that will happen on earth come from the holiest and most righteous place in the universe that is the tabernacle in heaven and are administered by angels dressed in clean linen which speaks of justice in priestly action; This same description is used for the garments of the Bride (**Rev. 19:8, 14**). The purity of their garments points to their role in the purification of the earth.

Rev. 15:7 *"Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever."*

- D. The living creatures who were involved in unleashing the seals (**Rev. 6:1-8**) are also associated and agreeing with God's judgments in the bowls of wrath. In fact it is one of the four living beings who delivers the cups to each angel.

Ap. 15:8 *"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."*

- E. **THE GLORY OF GOD MANIFESTS:** This is not the smoke of prayer incense, but the smoke of judgment and no one could enter because no one can offer intercession

until God's wrath is finished. Having rejected God's mercy so many times only leaves room for the alternative of His wrath on the wicked.

III. THE SEVEN BOWLS OF GOD'S WRATH (Rev. 16:1-21)

Rev. 15:1 *"I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed."*

- A. The seven bowls of wrath will be the final outpouring of divine judgment in this age. Jesus will come as the "greater than Moses" who will unleash the cups of wrath (**Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22**). In the same way that Moses freed Israel from captivity with the ten plagues so Jesus will march through the Jordan to fight the final battle in the Armageddon campaign for Jerusalem and to rescue the unsaved remnant of Israel (**Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-5; Is. 63:1-6; Hab. 3:3-16**).
- B. The word "**plague**" is used to connect these judgments of recent times with the ten plagues of Egypt.

1st. Bowl (Rev. 16:2): He fell on the earth and came to them *"and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image."* Similar to the 6th plague in Egypt (**Ex. 9:9-11**).

2nd. Bowl (Rev. 16:3): It fell on the sea (Mediterranean)... *"and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died"* Complete what started the 2nd trumpet and is similar to the 1st plague on Egypt (**Ex.7:14-25**).

3rd, Bowl (Rev. 16:4): He fell on the rivers, and... *"and the springs of water, and they became blood."* This bowl completes what the 3rd trumpet started (**Rev. 8:10-12**) and there is an expression of agreement with God from the angel that spills this cup. It is the judgment for innocent blood shed.

4th Bowl (Rev.16:8): Fell on the sun and *"and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire."* In other judgments demons are used but these cups are the work of God not of the devil.

5th Bowl (Rev. 16:10): Fell over *"the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony."* It will affect light and electrical energy and cause distress. Similar to the 9th plague on Egypt (**Ex. 10:21**). The antichrist cannot solve this problem even with all his satanism.

6th Bowl (Rev. 16:12): Fell over *"the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East."* Jesus paves the way for the great final battle in which Jesus in the Armageddon campaign for Jerusalem. (**Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-5; Is. 63:1-6; Hab. 3:3-16**)

7th Bowl (Rev. 16:18 y 21): The 7th cup coincides with the judgments associated with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (**Rev. 19:11-21; Ez. 38:22; Zech. 14:12-15**) and it will be spilled in the air and will cause *"...and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth... ²¹ [and] From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people."*

IV. THE REACTION OF THE WICKED AND THE DEVIL.

- A. **THE WICKED WILL HARDEN EVEN MORE:** Faced with these events, instead of repenting, the wicked are enraged against God, they feel victims instead of being responsible for everything they have caused with their sin and rebellion.

Rev. 16:9 *"They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him."*

Rev. 16:11 *"[in the 5th bowl] and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done."*

Rev. 16:21b *"And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible."*

- B. THE DEVIL, THE ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET WILL STRENGTHEN THEIR INFLUENCE TO DECEIVE THE NATIONS.** Faced with such stormy events that the beast worshipers are experiencing, he and the false prophet reinforce their tactics of deception to incite the presidents to go fight against Jesus.

Rev. 16:13-14 *"Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty."*

V. THE RESPONSE OF THE SAINTS

Ap. 15:2-4 *"And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God ³ and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. ⁴ Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

- A. IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH:** After the 7th trumpet, the saints are seen here standing in a crystal sea in victory singing. The end times church will be prepared and will be victorious (**Rev. 19:7**). It is possible that some of these saints are on earth marching to Jerusalem with Jesus while others will witness these dramatic events from this "amphitheater of heaven".
- B. "those who had been victorious over the beast ...[tenían] They held harps given them by God"** The harps and trumpets are the only musical instruments pointed out in the Apocalypse. They are touched by the elders (**Rev. 5:8**) and the heavenly worshipers (**Rev. 14:2**) to accompany the hymns of worship to the Father and the Lamb.
- C. "the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb"** Moses sang about Israel's victory over Pharaoh at the beginning and at the end of his ministry (**Ex. 15** and **Deut. 32**). and the song of the Lamb will celebrate the victory of Christ in all the earth. **These beautiful songs contrast sharply with the complaints and blasphemies of the wicked during these judgments.**
- D. "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways"** It is the great works of God that will destroy the kingdom of the antichrist. The saints join the 24 elders who worshiped God for their judgments in the 7th trumpet

(Rev. 11:15-18), which makes us see that the enlightened saints proclaim while all this occurs on earth.

- E. **THE ANGELS ALSO AGREE WITH THESE CUPS AND PRAISE GOD.** Rev.16:5-7 *"Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were; 6 for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve." 7 And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."*

Psalm 19:9b *"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."*

- F. The innocent blood that is shed demands a judgment and that is why there is a song of praise because this judgment was finally executed. Abortion is a very serious sin of nations.
- G. The reason why there is joy in all of us who agree with God both in heaven and on earth, is because God has judged evil by putting an end to so much injustice and iniquity. **"All nations will worship"**: when God's judgments are completed, then all nations will worship Jesus (Ps. 86:9-10; 66:1-7; 72:1-4; Is. 2:3; 49:22-23; 66:23-24; Mic. 4: 2; Zeph. 2:11; Zech. 8:20-22; 14:16-16).

VI. REVELATION NOW

- A. The judgments of God that are manifested in the bowls are just, **that is, they are neither as severe nor as forgiving, neither too long nor too short; they are neither late** nor ahead but fair and true. We must agree with Jesus' leadership and break with any agreement we have with secular visions that hate God and His judgments.
- B. God's final victory over every work of evil must lead us to live in the light of that great day even when we suffer any kind of injustice.

Rom. 12:19-21 *"Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"*

- C. This response is radically different than our natural thinking and requires the presence of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us.
- D. The church has a mandate to warn the world about the cups of the wrath to come because God's justice requires that even the guilty be warned in advance about the judgment against sin; in doing so we testify of the person of Jesus in truth and in all His magnitude.

VII. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **Why do we know that all God's judgments are righteous?**
2. **How can you renew your mind to agree with everything God does now and will do in the end times?**
3. **What should be the result of applying the truths of these chapters when you live or see some kind of injustice in the world?**