

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Message #19
Revelation 16:1-11 – The Bowls of Wrath (1/3/2010 PM)

Refer to the overview handout sheet. The seal, trumpet and bowl judgments advance chronologically through the Tribulation. In our last message we considered chapter 15 which introduces the final seven judgments referred to as “the bowls of wrath” (16:1). We saw that “in them the wrath of God is complete.” The number seven appears 56 times in Revelation. It appears to be the number of perfection or completion. These are called “last” because the Seal and Trumpet Judgments preceded them as the Seven Sealed Scroll contained all three sets. The Bowl Judgments finish “the wrath of God.” God’s wrath is not reserved for a part of the Tribulation but is poured out throughout the entire seven years.

(1) Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

The voice must be the voice of God commanding the seven angels to empty out their saucer like bowls. These final seven judgments are similar to the seal and trumpet judgments but are universal in their extent. Some believe these are symbolic rather than literal judgments. However there is no biblical reason for this approach. God as in the past turned water to blood, struck men with sores, dried up rivers, and brought a penetrating darkness. These are now however worldwide rather than local judgments.

1. **Bowl #1 – Ulcerous Sores (2)**

Loathsome and Malignant

“So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”

This judgment specifically falls upon human beings. The word “sore” is the Greek equivalent of the Latin word which is our English word for ulcer. The same word is used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, for the plague of sores inflicted upon the Egyptians.

• **The sores will not affect believers**

God had sent an angel flying through the sky to warn men not to take this mark (14:9-11). These people will experience a small preview of eternal retribution. The earth dwellers will suffer the consequences of their decision to reject the Gospel and continue in their sins. As we saw earlier these people will experience the full measure of God’s wrath.

When Grace Is Refused Only Wrath Remains

2. **Bowl #2 – The Pollution of the World’s Oceans (3)**

The Oceans Are Turned into Blood

“Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.”

Whenever the Bible uses the word, “every”, it means exactly that. In the Second Trumpet Judgment only a third of the sea had become blood. All life in the sea will die. The stench will be unimaginable. These judgments must occur at the end of the Tribulation period as prolonged life on planet earth will not be possible without the oceans.

The Creator Will Display His Power Those Who Have Worshipped the Creation

3. Bowl #3 – The Pollution of the Earth’s Water (4-7)

All Water Sources Are Turned into Blood

(4) “Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.”

This is similar to the first plague upon Egypt. Fresh water will already be in short supply and now it will be polluted. There will be no water to drink or to cleanse their sores. It seems likely that God will provide for the saved in some way.

- **How could a God of grace inflict such horrific judgment?**

God needs no defense but as a token of His grace the angels in heaven defend His actions.

(5-7) And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

The angels declare that God’s judgments are righteous. These people will bear their own burden of guilt. They will have rejected the witness of the 144,000, the two witnesses, and the angels flying in the heavens. Not only will they persist in their sin but they will persecute and kill millions of believers in Christ. The phrase “For it is their just due” means they deserve it.

Hebrews 10:26-27, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” Jesus suffered so we would not have to. But if we reject His substitutionary suffering we will suffer for our sins. Men come under God’s judgment because they refuse God’s salvation.

That God’s Judgments Are True and Righteous Is Consistently Taught throughout the Bible

Genesis 18:25, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Psalms 119:75, “I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right”

Romans 2:5, “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

4. Bowl #4 – The Scorching Sun (8-9)

Upon Unrepentant Unbelievers

This judgment will again be upon those who have received the mark of the Antichrist.

“Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.”

Wiersbee, “As it were a foretaste of hell.”

This is what the prophets predicted in the Day of the Lord.

Malachi 4:1, “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”

Says the Lord of hosts, ‘That will leave them neither root nor branch’.”

- **God’s judgment produces either repentance or hardness**

The earth dwellers like Pharaoh before them will harden their hearts even more. Even though they know these judgments are coming from God Almighty they will refuse to give Him glory. In their arrogant pride they will continue to defy Him. Dr. Newell, "Men who will not be won by grace will never be won at all."

Men Will Have No Rescue and No Relief

5. **Bowl #5 – Worldwide Darkness (10-11)**

God Will Humble the Antichrist

This is similar to the ninth plague upon Egypt. At that time all the children of Israel had light.

"Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds."

These people have rejected Jesus and loved darkness rather than light.

• **God will give them what they have chosen for themselves**

The prophets predicted that the day of the Lord would be a dark time.

Zephaniah 1:15, "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness."

Joel 2:1-2, "...For the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness..."

These people will not only continue to blaspheme God but will continue in their immoral and ungodly actions.

These people are hardened impenitent sinners who have refused every offer of God's grace. Even as they "kept on chewing" their tongues because of the pain they defy God.

Kroll, "Is there any question as to whether there will be any repentance in hell?"

This Is the Last Reference to the Unbeliever's Refusal of Repentance