

REVELATION Chapter 16

Teacher: John M. Brown, Olive Hill Church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class, November 2014

INTRODUCTION: *In this chapter we see the judgment against Rome (oppressor of God's people), announced under the sixth seal (6:12-17) and the seven trumpets (8:6-11:19, is going to be fulfilled! This will be the "final blow" against Rome! God announced in chapter 15 that there would be no more warning, and as they had failed to repent, so God's wrath is coming upon them.*

THE SEVEN ANGELS ARE INSTRUCTED TO POUR OUT THE BOWLS OF WRATH!

I. FIRST BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Land Destruction!* 16:1-2

- A. A voice out of the temple commanded, and this wrath is poured out upon the earth.
 "Go your way..." – go about the business of pouring out God's wrath! (cf. 5:8).
- B. A *grievous sore* is poured out on those with the mark of the beast (13:2-4, 14-18).
 - 1. This was a foul, malignant, evil sore, for those who had the beast's mark, and worshipped his image.
 - 2. This judgment is against Rome and her *allies, admirers, and adherents!*

II. SECOND BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Sea Destruction!* 16:3

- A. This bowl is poured out upon the *sea*, and it became as the blood of dead men: every living soul died in the sea (cf. Revelation 8:9; see also Zephaniah 1:2-4; Jeremiah 4:23 ff).
- B. Sea destruction – *commerce destroyed!*

III. THIRD BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Freshwater Destruction!* 16:4-7

- A. This bowl is poured out upon the *rivers and fountains of waters* and they became as blood.
- B. God's wrath satisfies the angel of the waters.
 - 1. This wrath is righteous (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 6:9-11).
 - 2. God has given them blood to drink (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 30:1ff).

IV. FOURTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Heavenly Bodies Affected!* 16:8-9

- A. This bowl is poured out upon the *sun*, and its purpose is to scorch men with fire
 (these men blasphemed God, they didn't repent, and they didn't glorify God).
- B. Destruction due to the *abnormal working of heavenly bodies.*

V. FIFTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Internal Decay!* 16:10-11

- A. This is poured out upon the *seat (throne)* of the beast and his *throne (kingdom)* is darkened.
 - 1. Men gnawed their tongues for pain (see Revelation 6:15-17; 9:1-12) - "sores" – see 16:2
 - 2. They blasphemed the God of heaven and would not repent.
- B. Destruction by *internal decay!*

VI. SIXTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Invading Armies!* 16:12-16

A. Notice the overall picture here: This is poured out upon the river Euphrates to dry up the water to make way for the kings from the east, v. 12.

1. Unclean spirits appear to get ready for battle, vv. 13-14
2. To Christians: be prepared (v. 15) -- Armageddon! v. 16

B. Notice the symbolism to see the meaning of the picture:

1. **Euphrates**: the land of enemies or evil (Jeremiah 1:13).
2. **River dried up**: no obstacle in the way of this invading army coming by God's direction, and used by Him, to do battle with Rome.
3. **"kings of the east"**: literally, "the kings of the rising of the sun" – eastern enemies.
4. **"frogs"**: detestable to Jews (Exodus 8:6).
5. The **dragon** (Satan, 12:9), the **beast** (sea-beast, 13:1-10), and the **false prophet** (earth-beast, 13:11-18) all rally their forces to do battle with this "army of God."
6. The **enemies of God** use deception to get others on earth to be their allies (frogs, deception, etc), but those who watch will not be deceived by the best.
7. The **final battle** against the beast would be at Armageddon:
 - a. Armageddon, "Mount of Megiddo," was the place of great battles in the past where God's people were victorious and God's enemies were defeated (see Judges 4 5:19; 7; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:28-29; Zechariah 12:11).
 - b. Thus it symbolizes a place (any place) where *those who rebel against God go down in defeat* (we shall see the results in 19:11-21).

VII. SEVENTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Complete destruction!* 16:17-21

A. This vial is poured out *in the air* (compare Ephesians 2:1-2; 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

B. The voice out of heaven says: **"It is done"**

1. What is done? *The final judgment of God against Rome!*
2. Evil has been punished; God's wrath has been demonstrated; justice has avenged!

C. Voices, thunders, lightnings, great earthquake:

1. The city (Rome – 17:1-3, 5-6, 7, 9, 15-18; 18:2-3) fell and was divided into three parts (utter destruction).
2. Cities of the nations fell (they were under Roman rule and deceived by her, 1:7).
3. God gave Rome the cup of the fierceness of His wrath (Revelation 11:16-19).
4. Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found *Symbolic speech – God shaking the nations! See Ps. 18:7-15; 97:4; Micah 1:2-4; Nahum 1:5).*
5. Great hail fell out of heaven: Still, these blasphemed God!
6. Utter destruction by *the complete judgment of God against Rome!*.

CONCLUSION: *To the Christians in the first century this is a great message of comfort, relief, and hope: God will bring down their oppressors! We'll see the utter fall of the great city in chapters 17-18 and the fall of the dragon in chapters 19-20. Then we'll see the church shining victoriously having overcome the onslaught of the enemy in chapters 20-21.*