



I AM

THE SEVEN BOWLS

Revelation 16

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

The time came for the seven angels to pour out the seven bowls of wrath on the earth, to people with the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. Indeed, these people had not repented, had not turned to the Lord, did not bring God glory, and blasphemed His name. Now they would receive God's promised wrath and judgment: painful sores, blood in the sea, blood in the fresh water, burning fire and heat, darkness, lightning, thunder, earthquakes, and 100-pound hail stones. Even still, in the midst of torture, they continued to blaspheme the Lord God Almighty and refused to repent.

Don't delay repenting and giving your life to Jesus. If you have something hidden, just stop. Let it go. Repent and say: "Lord, forgive me of my sins. I give You my life." There is no sin, no mess, and no ugly situation too far beyond God's love for you. Let your pride go. For once in your life, humble yourself, repent, and receive God's grace. *You will never fully understand His love for you until you let go of control and let His love come into your life.* Give it up and stop running from the Lord. His goodness and mercy will be with you all the days of your life.

"And people were burned by the intense heat. So they blasphemed the name of God, who had the power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give Him glory."

— Revelation 16:9

FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *Acts 3:19–20* — "Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah."
- *2 Corinthians 6:2* — "For He says: I heard you in an acceptable time, and I helped you in the day of salvation. Look, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation."
- *Revelation 16:1–2* — "Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, 'Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.' The first went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and severely painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image."



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Teaching Notes

INTRO

After the seven seals and the seven trumpets, John saw seven bowls that were held by seven angels. This period of time was all about God's wrath. God's wrath was against unbelievers, specifically those individuals who followed the Antichrist.

TEACHING

Revelation 16:1-21: John heard a loud voice come from the sanctuary. The sanctuary was in the throne room of heaven. John used multiple senses to totally grasp and understand the images and actions he experienced. Seven angels were commanded to pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath upon the earth.

In verse 2, the first angel poured out a bowl that caused painful sores to break out upon all those who worshipped the image of the beast and wore his mark. Earlier, we saw that those who had the mark of the beast were given access to buying and selling things the believers did not have access to. Now, the mark on their hands or heads meant they would suffer the wrath of God.

MacArthur explains the significance of these specific bowls of wrath: "The Septuagint (LXX) uses the same Greek word to describe the boils that plagued the Egyptians (Exodus 9:9-11) and afflicted Job (Job 2:7). In the New Testament, it describes the open sores that covered the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:21). All over the world, people will be afflicted with incurable, open, oozing sores."¹ MacArthur adds, "Only the worshippers of the Antichrist will be afflicted (see notes on 13:16; cf. 14:9-11)."² The first bowl of wrath was poured out before Christ had come again.

Another angel emptied the second bowl out on the sea. The sea turned into blood, and all the creatures of the sea died. This bowl was similar to the second trumpet. In the sequence of the seals, the trumpets, and now the bowls, the wrath of God seems to have progressively gotten worse. MacArthur explains, "This is reminiscent of the second trumpet (8:8, 9), and of the first plague against Egypt (Exodus 7:20-25)."³

In verse 4, the third angel poured out the third bowl. The result of the third bowl being poured was that fresh water rivers and springs turned to blood. All fresh water was turned to blood. There was nothing to drink. The angel of the waters could have been the same angel that poured out the third bowl.

God was described as "who is and who was" from beginning to the end. Verse 6 states the only thing to drink was the blood. The reason was because they brought about the death and destruction of the martyrs.

MacArthur explains, "Verse 6 says that the eternal God will judge justly because they have killed the believers and preachers of the gospel (6:9-11; 7:9-17; 11:18; 17:6; 18:20). This slaughter will have no parallel in history (Matthew 24:21) and neither will the vengeance of God (cf. Romans 12:19-21)."⁴ The believers had no water to clean themselves. God's judgment was explained as being fair and proper.

In verse 7, a voice came from the altar and said that the bowls of wrath were justified because God had warned everyone repeatedly that judgment would come. All were given the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ.

The fourth angel poured out the fourth bowl in verse 8. The bowl was poured out on the sun. People were burned. Their flesh was scorched and burned by the fire and the heat. At the end of verse 9, John stated that the people would not repent. These accounts and the people's refusal to repent were similar to Pharaoh's response. The people refused to give God His glory. The people spoke against God. They refused to recognize that God was in control.

Verse 10 gives the account of the fifth bowl. This bowl was poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was put in darkness. People still blasphemed God even when they realized who the God of heaven was. The result was worldwide darkness.

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), p. 2024.

² MacArthur, p. 2024.

³ MacArthur, p. 2024.

⁴ MacArthur, p. 2024.



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Bowl six is explained in verse 12. It was poured out on the Euphrates River, and the river was dried up for the kings to be able to cross. MacArthur explains, “Called ‘the great river’ five times in Scripture, it flows some 1,800 miles from its source on the slopes of Mount Ararat to the Persian Gulf. It forms the eastern boundary of the land God promised to Israel (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7, 11:24; Joshua 1:4; Revelation 9:14).”⁵

MacArthur goes on to explain: “With its flow already reduced by the prolonged drought and intensified heat, God supernaturally will dry it up to make way for the eastern confederacy to reach Israel (Isaiah 11:15).”⁶ God cleared a way for all the armies to get to this place so that they would be there for the battle of Armageddon for their own destruction. “The reason for coming may be to rebel against Antichrist; whose failure to alleviate the world’s suffering will no doubt erode his popularity. Or, this may be a final act of rabid anti-Semitism intent on destroying Israel, perhaps in retaliation for the plagues sent by her God.”⁷

In verse 13, three unclean spirits came from the mouth of the dragon. The three images were of the Antichrist, Satan, and the false prophet. They represent spirits of demons. MacArthur states the language of the “unholy trinity” was to gather the people together for the final battle of Armageddon.⁸

The bowls of wrath were still in the process of coming. But, in verse 15, God emphasized the need to be ready for Christ’s return. The image was that of a soldier ready for battle.

The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. According to MacArthur, “The voice from the temple in heaven is undoubtedly that of God Himself. ‘It is done!’ is best translated, ‘It has been and will remain done’ (cf. John 19:30). God will punctuate the completion of His wrath with a devastating earthquake—the most powerful in earth’s history (cf. vv. 18–21).”⁹ This reflected a comparison between Jerusalem and Babylon.

CLOSING

Christ has still not come back yet. The way to avoid being at this end time occurrence is to accept Christ as Savior and Lord.

⁵ MacArthur, p. 2025.

⁶ MacArthur, p. 2025.

⁷ MacArthur, p. 2025.

⁸ MacArthur, p. 2025.

⁹ MacArthur, p. 2026.



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Reading Guide Questions

1. Briefly describe the plagues of the seven bowls.
2. What will the people's reaction be toward these plagues? Why do you think they will react that way? (James 4:6; 2 Peter 3:9)
3. Who are the ones pouring out these seven bowls on the earth? Who are the bowls being poured out on?
4. What are the signs, mentioned in Revelation 16:14, designed to do? (1 Kings 22:20–23; Mark 13:22; Revelation 19:20)
5. What will God's final act of judgment be on the earth before Christ's return?
6. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Revelation 16 through the reading or the teaching?



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