



The Bowls & Babylon: Part 1

Revelation 16

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 16:1-21 NKJV] 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." 2 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. 3 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. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 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. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." 8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 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. 10 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. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. 12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. 17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation, we see 21 judgments befall humanity during the last seven years of human history. We've already studied the seven "seal judgments" and "trumpet judgments." Those kickoff the beginning of even greater devastation to come. Amid these times, a world leader, the antichrist, rises to power and rallies the kingdoms of the world together, promising peace and deliverance, even performing mighty supernatural signs and wonders through the power of the dragon Satan. But God won't have it; it's time to take it to the next level.

Before the final return of Christ, the Lamb of God goes bowling, and rebellious humanity is at the end of the lane. Chapter 16 introduces us to the last seven bowl judgments.

THE BOWLS

God doesn't forget... This Christ-rejecting world has innocent blood on its hands. Since 1980, 1.4 billion unborn, innocent children have been aborted. That would be 16% of today's global population. For every five people you meet, there's one person missing. Abortion is just one cause of the blood on this world's hands... think of the wars, the genocide, the vice, and hatred... it all cries out for God's vengeance.

All these things God has patiently waited through in order to give the time for men to be forgiven through the cross. But in the end, the bowls that have stored up His wrath for all those things will be justly and rightly poured on the earth.

On the lampstand in the temple were seven bowls full of oil that kept the flame of the candles continually burning. In the same way, these bowls of humanity's wickedness fuel the fire of the wrath of God.

Also, in the OT, any utensils that were in the temple, including several types of bowls, were declared holy unto the Lord. The fact that these bowls are exiting the temple signifies that they are holy and set apart strictly for God's use.

You will also notice some similarities to the Exodus and the plagues that God poured out on the kingdom of Egypt. I think this is partially God reminding us that the things coming are not allegorical but literal in nature. Just as real as the plagues were poured out on Egypt, so the unbelieving world will experience the fullness of God's wrath and justice.

The first 3 bowls are found in verses 1-4:

Now, regarding the plagues that come from these bowls, there is no way for us to know for sure what causes them.

- There could be natural causes.
- There could be manmade causes.
- They could very well be supernaturally inflicted.
- So, as we talk about different possibilities, please be aware that there is no way to know 100% for sure. What we do know is that the earth begins to fall apart at the seams and things are worse than ever before in history.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Rev 16:1-4 NKJV - 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." 2 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. 3 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. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

FIRST THREE BOWLS

A loud voice from the temple: The heavenly temple in chapter 15. - Indicates that the command of the judgments ultimately comes from God.

FIRST BOWL: Foul and loathsome sores.

- Only on those who have the mark. The 144,000 and the tribulation saints are still divinely protected from these coming plagues.
- Some imply that these loathsome sores might be as a result of radiation from a nuclear fallout.
- Could be some disease epidemic that spreads worldwide.
- *But here's what we see: those who have willingly yielded their bodies to the worship of the beast and his mark will receive in their bodies the marks of God's judgment.*
 - *Again, we don't know if this is a natural disease or outcome of taking the mark, or if it is miraculously inflicted. It doesn't really matter, because God can use both means and methods to impart His judgment.*
 - *God's judgment: people are always warned and made aware of why the judgment comes.*
- *[Rom 1:27 NKJV] 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

SECOND BOWL: Oceans turned to blood.

- “As of a dead man” - not literally that they become blood, but the appearance and the effects are the same.
- In chapter 8, 1/3 of the sea became contaminated due to what was probably a meteor. Now, for an unknown reason, the entire marine system is infected, leading to the death of all sea life.
 - In 2004, the Earth had a close call with a near-earth asteroid called Apophis. The name Apophis means God of chaos and darkness. Many scientists still project that on April 13, 2029, there is a possibility of an Earth impact with this asteroid, though the probability is currently very low.
- When the food chain is impacted on this level, it's all downhill.
- Well, if the entire ocean was poisonous, imagine what that would do to the hydrologic cycle. That water eventually turns to rain upon the earth, which might explain the next bowl.

THIRD BOWL: Rives and freshwater sources are contaminated.

- Obviously, with the entire world's drinking supply contaminated, mankind doesn't have much longer to survive.

At this point, it would be easy for our human understanding to question the validity and necessity of such severe judgment from God. But the heavenly audience reminds us that the justice of God is rightly deserved and fair.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 16:5-7 NKJV] 5 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. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

IT IS THEIR DUE

God has remembered every ounce of blood that His martyrs spilled on the earth at the hands of the wicked. It's as if the pleasure that the wicked derived by spilling their blood will now be turned back upon them as blood is poured into the waters.

QUOTE

“ Though divine judgment comes from God's hand, it is a response to mankind's wickedness.

Pastor Josh

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Lam 3:33-41 NKJV] 33 For He (God) does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. 34 To crush under one's feet all the prisoners of the earth, 35 To turn aside the justice due a man before the face of the Most High, 36 Or subvert a man in his cause--The Lord does not approve. 37 Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that woe and well-being proceed? 39 Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? 40 Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD; 41 let us lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven.

BIBLE PASSAGE

True and righteous:

Psa 19:9 NKJV - 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Rev 16:8-12 NKJV - 8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 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.

THE FOURTH BOWL

Well, the secular humanist leftists are right about global warming coming... but it's not by the hand of man, but the hand of God. Something will happen with the earth's relation to the sun that will cause things to really heat up!

- SUN: If something tampered with the earth's magnetic field or the ozone layer, the conditions could be right: people would be no longer shielded from the solar wind and radiation and could be literally scorched with fire and cancer.
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BIBLE PASSAGE

Isa 24:4-6 NKJV - 4 The earth mourns and fades away. The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. 5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the earth's inhabitants are burned, and few men are left.

BIBLE PASSAGE

10 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. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

APPLICATION

The tide finally turns on the antichrist. Yes, his reign started off with some lofty promises and seeming success for 3 1/2 years, but now God is showing that He is still king of kings.

- DARKNESS: The Greek word can be used both literally and metaphorically. It can mean darkness, but it can also mean blindness of the mind. The root word is used in the NT to describe an ignorance of the divine.
 - Whether it's blackness over the world, or a spiritual blindness over the kingdom of the antichrist, it causes immense pain.
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QUOTE

“**The cumulative effect of the painful soars, fouled oceans, lack of drinkable water, intense heat, all engulfed in thick blackness, will bring unbearable misery.**”

John MacArthur

ILLUSTRATION

EXAMPLE: In reality, humankind is getting a small, temporal preview of Hell. Peter and Jude describe hell as the "blackness of darkness forever." Darkness that is so black that you can feel it.

- Five times, Jesus describes this eternal state of judgment as "Outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- 3 times Jesus quotes Isaiah and describes hell as the place where "Their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched."

The rebels of the earth are experiencing a small dose in life that they will forever know in eternity.

From verse 12 on, the scene is set for the final battle between the armies of the world and God taking place in the valley of Megiddo (Armageddon).

DID NOT REPENT

All people are faced with one of two decisions when confronted with their guilt before God: complain or confess, repent or refuse.

- *A stiff neck and a hard heart will only set you against the grace of God. A humble heart and bent knees will put you on the path toward grace.*
- **[Psa 51:17 NKJV] 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.**

QUOTE

“**This is real penitence, when the man gives glory to the justice of God, even though it condemns him. O my hearer, do you thus repent? Is sin really sinful to you? Do you see its desert of hell? If not, your repentance needs to be repented of.**”

Spurgeon

BIBLE PASSAGE

12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

APPLICATION

The Euphrates River is a natural 1800-mile barrier that separates Israel from all the nations east of **Syria, Iraq, and Turkey [image]**. The river would impede the smooth movement of troops and armies Eastward from Iran into Israel. When Cyrus, the Persian king, conquered Babylon, he diverted the waters of the Euphrates to launch a surprise attack. Apparently, at a future date, the Euphrates will have portions that are so dry, that it will create the perfect highway for an invasion toward the west.

- **It's no mystery that today, one of the greatest concerns among farmers in the Middle East is the dismal state of the Euphrates River. In some portions during the summer months, the river turns into a small stream, a sad shadow of its former**

glory. Because of poor water management, damning, and drought conditions, the river is already mostly diminished in some regions.

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BIBLE PASSAGE

Rev 16:13-16 NKJV - 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

APPLICATION

DEMONIC INFLUENCE: We see that behind the decisions of the world leaders of this time is Satanic, demonic influence. And friend, if you think it's all that different today, think again.

Eph 6:12 NKJV - 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Frogs are pictures of that which is unclean. These are what the Bible calls "unclean spirits." They are convincing, alluring, and deceptive. It's frightening how susceptible the unbelieving world is to the deception and lies of demonic influences. These spirits have the ability to perform convincing signs and miracles that allure the powers of the earth to join together to come into a great battle.

- **Most likely, this "Great battle of God Almighty" refers to the scene that Jesus arrives at in Revelation 19.**
- **It's a battle of the nations against the Lord.**
- **Well, little do they know that following these frog demons will cause them to ultimately croak!**

BIBLE PASSAGE

Psalms 2:1-3 (ESV - English Standard Version)

¹ Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

³ "Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us."

A WARNING FROM JESUS

15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

There are a couple of possibilities:

1. Jesus is talking to the tribulation saints who are awaiting His return.
2. A parenthetical insert to all believers in the present who are reading this.

I think it's a general warning and reminder to all people. To those alive today, we ought to be watching for the return of Christ to take His church to be with him. For those who live in the tribulation period, they need to be steadfast in their commitment to Christ until the very end. For them, the battle of Armageddon will be a crucial sign to watch for regarding the 2nd coming of Christ.

BIBLE PASSAGE

TURN THERE - [1Th 5:1-11 NKJV] 1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others [do], but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and [as] a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[1Jo 2:28 KJV] 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

BIBLE PASSAGE

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

APPLICATION

Megiddo (Hebrew) is an ancient city in northern Israel, on the southern boundary of the Jezreel Valley, just below Mount Carmel. It's the site of numerous historical battles... from Deborah and Barak to Gideon; from Saul to General Allenby in WW1.

Today, there's an Israeli Air Force base in the **middle of the valley [image]**. When Napoleon Bonaparte saw the expansive plain of Megiddo he remarked,

QUOTE

“All the armies of the world could maneuver for battle here.”

Napoleon

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Zec 14:3-5 NKJV] 3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,

from east to west, making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.
5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.

CONCLUSION

Rev 16:17-21 NKJV - 17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

On the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished" in regard to the payment for men's sins. In the end, the cry will again declare the finality of Christ's judgment.

And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

- After the cross, there was a great earthquake declaring to the world that the savior had died. On Sunday, there was another great earthquake declaring that the Savior rose from the dead. In the end, there will be the mother of all earthquakes to signal that Savior is coming back again!

Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Whether the great city that is divided is Jerusalem or Babylon, we aren't sure, but most likely it's Jerusalem, because it's the least city left standing. According to Zechariah 14, When Jesus returns, the Mount of Olives will split in two creating a large valley.

GREAT BABYLON - Jerusalem is the capitol of God's people, and Babylon represents the capitol of the Antichrist's kingdom. We talk about who this possibly is in the next two chapters. We gather that she will be the final object of God's judgment before he returns.

Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent (up to 100 lbs). Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

EARTHQUAKE - levels the mountains of the earth. The earth has finally reached its final stage of existence. Some suggest that the heat from the 4th bowl could melt the solar caps, causing the sea levels to rise over 200 feet, causing all islands to be completely submerged.

CONCLUSION:

And yet, through all of these things, they still reject their creator and blaspheme His name, even when all hope is lost.

You know, as I read this end, it doesn't seem that far off base from how I see the world now. Satanic deception has already deceived the world into thinking that we radical Christians are the bad guys. That we and our staunch, antiquated views are holding back the progress of society. "Follow the god within" is the cry of the human heart apart from Christ... and one day they will follow that path straight into the righteous judgment of God.

They could have escaped... if only they had shown humility to God, repented of their sins, and turned to Jesus while they had the chance... hey, today, people still have the chance!
